



The Gospel of Mark

A Living Word Independent Bible Study



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Part 37
Mark 14:32-42

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Mark 14:32-42 ***(NIV)***

INTRODUCTION

We are now in our third session covering the long 14th chapter of Mark's Gospel.

The familiar scenes in this chapter include:

The Anointing of Jesus (lesson 35)

The Lord's Supper (lesson 36)

The Prediction of Peter's Denial (lesson 36)

The Garden of Gethsemane (this lesson)

The Arrest of Jesus (next lesson)

Jesus' Jewish Trial (next lesson)

Peter's Denial

We will be looking at Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane in this lesson.

This, of course, is one of the most famous scenes in the entire Gospel story.

Mark 14:32 (NIV)

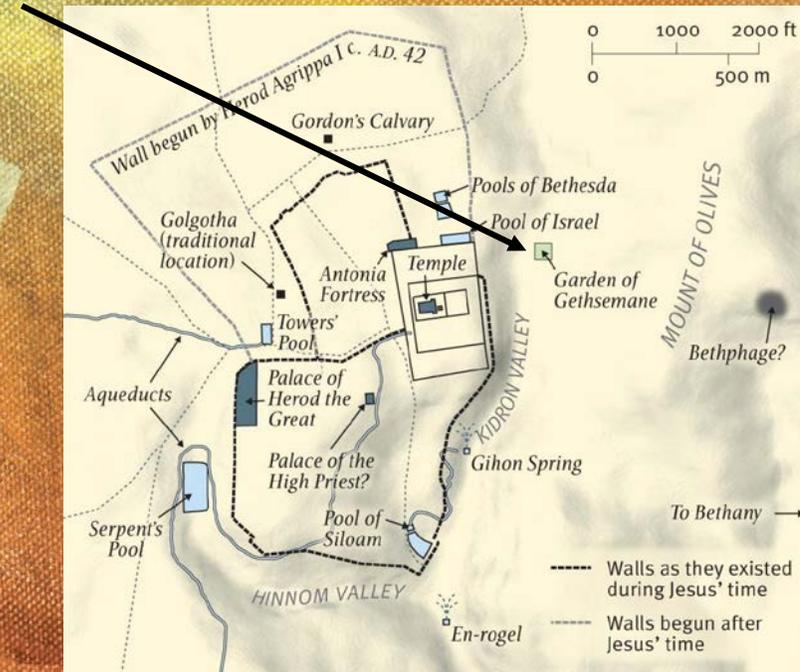
They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.”

“Gethsemane”

The word is Aramaic for “oil-press”.

John’s Gospel calls it a “garden” – for Mark, it is just a “place called Gethsemane”.

It is near the foot of the Mount of Olives overlooking the Kidron Valley.



<https://maps-jerusalem.com/garden-of-gethsemane-map>

“sit here while I pray”

See Mark 1:35 and 6:46 for other examples in Mark of Jesus going off separately to pray.

Mark 14:33 (NIV)

He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled.

“Peter, James and John”

Jesus has taken these three aside three other times:

The raising of Jairus’ daughter (5:37)

The transfiguration (9:2)

The eschatological discourse (with Andrew also,

13:3)

Here, he needs and wants their company as friends.

“deeply distressed and troubled”

The words denote great emotion – anguish.

Mark 14:34 (NIV)

“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,” he said to them. “Stay here and keep watch.”

“overwhelmed with sorrow”

Again, “grieved” is the traditional translation.

“to the point of death”

Jesus may have had a quote from the apocryphal book of Sirach in mind here:

Sirach 37:2 – “Is it not a sorrow like that for death itself when a dear friend turns into an enemy?”

The words imply a near collapse, emotionally.

“stay here and keep watch”

That is, to be sentries, and to watch for Judas’ coming.

Although we have not been told directly in Mark of Judas’ departure, it is clear that he has left, from his arrival about to be narrated in 14:43.

Mark 14:35 (NIV)

***Going a little farther, he
fell to the ground and
prayed that if possible
the hour might pass
from him.***

“going a little farther”

Luke’s Gospel says it is a “stone’s throw” away.

“fell to the ground and prayed”

Usually, Jews prayed standing up and looking to heaven.

But in the Bible, a posture of falling to the ground in prayer accompanies distress or awe while in God’s presence.

“if possible the hour might pass from him”

Remember what Jesus has taught about the “possible”:

Mark 9:23 – “Everything is possible for him who believes.”

Mark 10:27 – “With man this is not possible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.”

Jesus prays for this whole experience to “pass from him”.
IF it is possible, Jesus knows God can prevent it.

It happens, though, so it was NOT possible for it to pass from him.

Mark 14:36 (NIV)

***“Abba, Father,” he said,
“everything is possible
for you. Take this cup
from me. Yet not what I
will, but what you will.”***

“Abba, Father”

The words are in the text in both Aramaic and Greek.
God is sometimes addressed as Father in the Old

Testament:

Psalm 89:26 – “He will call out to me, ‘You are my Father, my God, the Rock my Savior.’”

Isaiah 9:6 – “And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

Isaiah 63:16 – “But you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us or Israel acknowledge us; you, O LORD, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name.”

Isaiah 64:8 – “Yet, O LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.”

Malachi 2:10 – “Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our fathers by breaking faith with one another?”

But Jesus personalizes the address uniquely.

In the Old Testament and other ancient writings, addressing God as Father was often done in the context of distress, as here in Gethsemane.

Jesus is not stoically strong, but beside himself in grief.

Yet his words also demonstrate that even in distress, Jesus maintained intimacy with God.

Mark 14:36 (NIV)

***“Abba, Father,” he said,
“everything is possible
for you. Take this cup
from me. Yet not what I
will, but what you will.”***

“everything is possible for you”

It is not just intimacy, though, but TRUST that God WOULD raise him from the dead.

“take this cup from me”

In the Old Testament “the cup” implied God’s wrath:

Isaiah 51:17 – “Awake, awake! Rise up O Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the hand of the LORD the cup of his wrath, you who have drained to its dregs the goblet that makes men stagger.”

Isaiah 51:22 – “This is what the Sovereign LORD says, your God, who defends his people: ‘See, I have taken out of your hand the cup that made you stagger; from that cup, the goblet of my wrath, you will never drink again.’”

Ezekiel 23:32-34 – “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: ‘You will drink your sister’s cup, a cup large and deep; it will bring scorn and derision, for it holds so much. You will be filled with drunkenness and sorrow, the cup of ruin and desolation, the cup of your sister Samaria. You will drink it and drain it dry; you will dash it to pieces and tear your breasts.’”

Lamentations 4:21 – “Rejoice and be glad, O Daughter of Edom, you who live in the land of Uz. But to you also the cup will be passed; you will be drunk and stripped naked.”

“not what I will, but what you will”

Early Christians had some difficulty with any hint that the will of the Son of God and the will of the Father could be at all different!

This points toward the doctrine of the two natures of Christ – he WAS also fully human.

Mark 14:37 (NIV)

Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Simon,” he said to Peter, “are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour?”

“found them sleeping”

And, failing to be obedient to Jesus direct command in verse 34.

“for one hour”

Apparently, only an hour has elapsed at this point.

Note how this, and succeeding verses, build the depiction of Jesus as increasingly isolated, from even his closest disciples.

Peter alone is addressed in Jesus’ words here – it is a singular “you” in Greek.

Mark 14:38 (NIV)

“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”

“watch and pray”

Now, plural verbs are used in the Greek – James and John are included in this address.

“And pray” is added to Jesus’ earlier directions.

They are to do what Jesus is doing, as part of their “watchfulness”.

“so that you will not fall into temptation”

Temptation to what, exactly, we might ask.

Not just the temptation to sleep, but looking ahead to what will come, the temptation to abandon the cause, to fall away, and to betray the Kingdom.

“spirit is willing, but the body is weak”

Jesus has in mind those from the parable of the sower:

Mark 4:16-17 – “Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.”

The human temptation is to fall at the hint of persecution, even if they are willing to follow otherwise.

In fact, the word translated “willing” here could be translated “eager”.

Mark 14:39-40

(NIV)

Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him.

“went away and prayed the same thing”

He is teaching the disciples by example.

“again found them sleeping”

Jesus’ direction has had no effect.

“eyes were heavy”

The word is the Greek idiom commonly used for “they were sleepy”.

“did not know what to say”

This conveys the disciples’ embarrassment at letting Jesus down.

Mark 14:41 (NIV)

Returning the third time, he said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.”

“returning the third time”

Three failures to follow Jesus’ command foreshadows Peter’s coming three denials.

This failure contrasts with Jesus’ intense prayer of preparation.

The implication is that Jesus was able to face with comes because of prayer – and the disciples fail, in part, because they did not pray.

“Enough! The hour has come”

“Enough!” is a very difficult Greek word to translate.

It may mean closer to “Is it far off?” – which, for us, may be approximated by “Do you really think that what I’ve told you is going to happen is still far off in the future?”

No, “the hour has come” – implying that the disciples sleep because they really don’t realize how close the end really is.

Other translators believe the word translated “Enough!” should be taken as a reference to Judas, and means “He’s getting what he paid for”, or “He has now received in full.”

“betrayed into the hands of sinners”

This begins the fulfillment of the passion predictions.

Note how Jesus was accused of associating with “sinners”, but now calls those coming for him “sinners”.

Mark 14:42 (NIV)

“Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

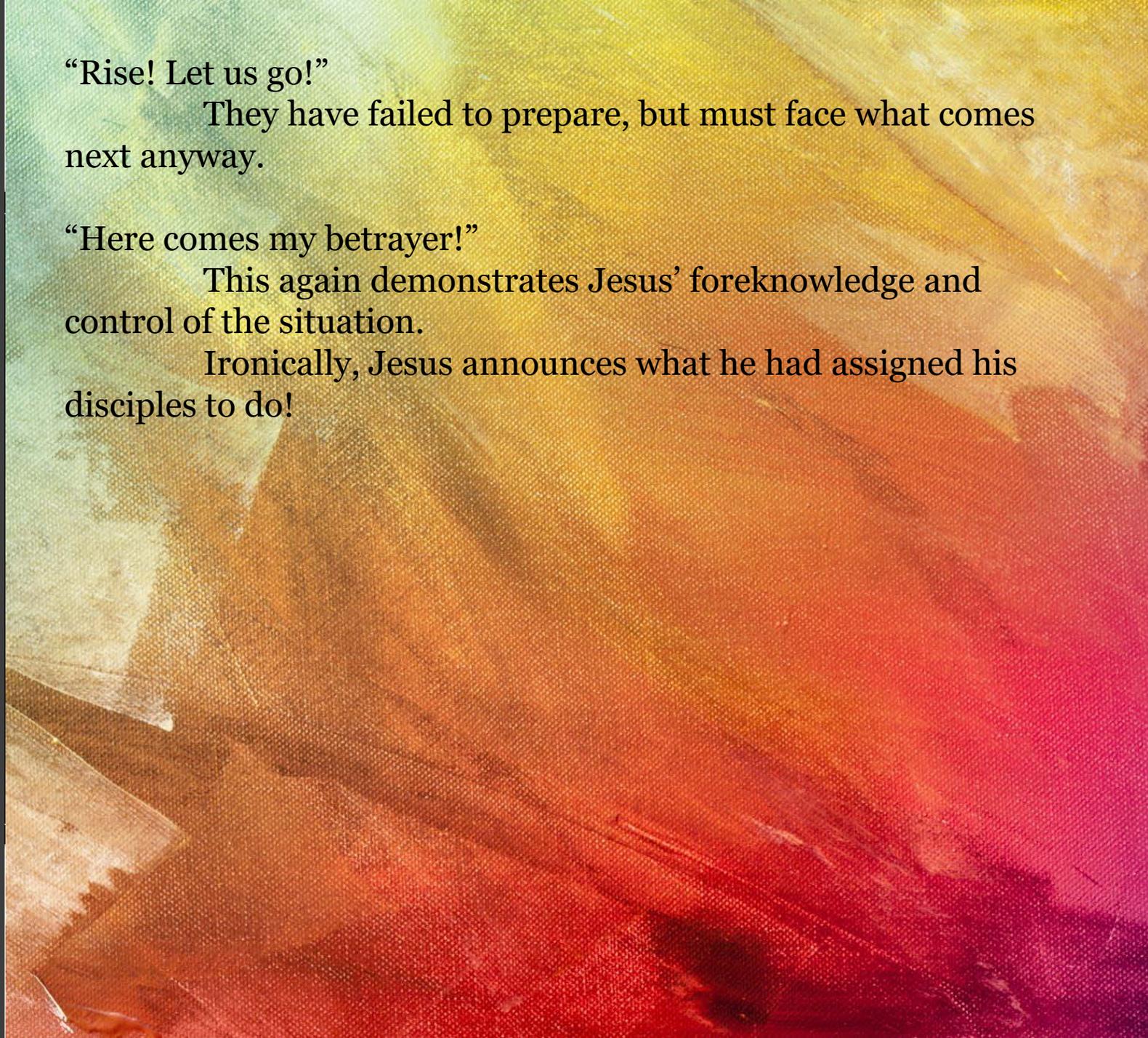
“Rise! Let us go!”

They have failed to prepare, but must face what comes next anyway.

“Here comes my betrayer!”

This again demonstrates Jesus’ foreknowledge and control of the situation.

Ironically, Jesus announces what he had assigned his disciples to do!



Mark 14:32-42

(NIV)

SUMMARY

Mark does not refer to Gethsemane as a garden – that information comes to us from John’s Gospel.

For the fourth time, Jesus pulls his inner circle aside.

Jesus desires both friendly companionship in a time of deep distress, and a guard to watch for the betrayal that he knows is imminent.

Jesus’ prayer demonstrates his humanity, and was directly linked to the early church’s development of the doctrine of the two natures of Christ.

Because Jesus has taught that all things are possible with God, and because Jesus prays for the cup to be taken from him IF POSSIBLE, then it was NOT POSSIBLE for the coming events to be passed by.

Prayer helps to empower Jesus to face what comes, while there is an implication that the disciples’ failure to pray may be linked to their coming abandonment of Jesus.



Bibliography

The following materials have been used as sources for this Bible study:

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