**Uniquely Jesus** May 14, 17

Mark 14:12-17

Mother’s Day Salute

**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WLRs29PmOmg**

(what moms think about themselves…)

Blessing: 2 Thessalonians 3:16

Coffee Question: Think of some reasons why people hide?

Feedback:

**Review**: the days of Jesus’ last week.

What happened on Saturday?

– banquet at the home of Simon the Leper; anointing with nard

What happened on Sunday?

– the triumphant entrance into Jerusalem

What happened on Monday?

– the cursing of the fig tree and the clearing of the Temple

What happened on Tuesday?

– the dead fig tree; a day of debate in the Temple and teaching on the

Mount of Olives

Read Mark 14:1. On Wednesday the religious leaders were still scheming how to get rid of Jesus.

Read Mark 14:12-17.

On Thursday Jesus sent two of his disciples to make the necessary preparations for the Passover meal.

But where was Jesus; what did he do on Wednesday and Thursday until evening?

John in his gospel tells us - John 12:36b.

Jesus hid himself…. on Wednesday and Thursday.

He stayed outside of the city.

But why?

Before we attempt to answer that question, there is something else, something extraordinary that happened on the Tuesday afternoon before Jesus withdrew from the public eye.

When I read of what happened, it made me question - having seen what they saw and heard what they heard, how could they have continued to reject Jesus?

There is a mystery to unbelief!

How is it that human heart can become so hardened; and be so hostile towards the One who created us?????

What happened on Tuesday afternoon? John 12:28-30.

The Father audibly spoke.

There is a context here that is important for us to understand.

Let’s back up in this chapter to verse 20.

v.20-22.

This was not unusual - people wanting to meet Jesus.

But do we know why... these Greeks wanted to meet Jesus?

Did they want to become followers of his?

It would seem so.

v.23-26.

If these Greeks weren’t interested in following Jesus, what Jesus said to them was not your typical meet and greet conversation – how are you? Nice to meet you. Where did you come from? Who told you about me? etc., etc., etc.

But if they were interested, then what Jesus said makes sense.

As he talked with these Greeks, Jesus didn’t forget about or ignore the crowd who had been listening to him teach.

*“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.”*

Glorified - how? and in what way?

It’s subtle - but it is nonetheless there – Jesus would be glorified by his death:

*…a kernel of wheat that dies…*

We see death as a tragedy, or as an enemy. But glory?

And while many of you know this, I still need to remind you, Jesus was not a masochist; or deranged.

In the wisdom of God, and in a manner, that showed the immensity of his love,

Jesus understood that God the Father was about to act through him to undo humanity’s fatal choice that had brought upon us all, the ruin of sin and death.

And God did so by the most unlikely of means – the death of Jesus on a cross.

Jesus knew that his death would bring life to many.

Jesus also said to these Greeks and the crowd, that what would happen to him would happen to all who follow him.

Again, this is consistent with what he’d always taught - “count the cost.”

See Luke 14.

But Jesus also spoke this assurance: the cost of following him will never outweigh the reward of eternal life and being honored by the Father.

Is it an easy thing to glorify God?

And is glorifying God, a matter of just saying the words?

v.27a: *Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour?’ No.*

To follow God and to do what he wants, is not always easy.

Jesus often spoke of it being like a narrow path.

it is challenging to go in the opposite direction of one’s culture; to “march to a different drummer.”

We learn from Jesus, that pursuing God’s will can be very difficult and even bring unrest to one’s heart.

I want to tell you about a friend I had.

John worked for Corel.

They were developing at that time software that while it was not the intended goal, would nonetheless make the accessing of pornography much easier.

John didn’t want to do this; but neither did he want to lose his job.

Finally, after much inner struggle he went in to see his boss, to tell him that he couldn’t work on this software project.

John was prepared to lose his job in order to stay faithful to God.

John learned that it can be costly to walk the narrow path.

His loyalty brought great unrest to his heart as he wrestled with these matters.

But is it worth it…to be faithful to God?

Jesus thought so.

He affirmed, “Father, glorify your name through me.”

At that moment, in spite of his soul being troubled, Jesus said yes to the Father, like he had said yes to the Father, every day of his life.

Jesus lived to do the Father’s will.

Remember what he told his disciples at the well outside of the town of Sychar? He said, his food, that which nourished him, that which gave him energy, “was to do the will of the Father who sent me.” John 4:34.

The unwavering passion of Jesus’ heart was to please the Father.

The book of Hebrews confirms: “For the joy set before him [Jesus] endured the cross.” 12:2

Jesus endured the cross, because Jesus trusted… that the Father knew what he was doing; that the cross was not a mistake.

And Jesus called all who would follow him to place that same trust in the Father. He assured his own – the Father is faithful; the Father is good; the Father is wise; the Father makes no mistakes.

v.28b-29.

God’s voice was heard by those Greeks and by the crowd listening to Jesus.

What was it that the Father said?

*“I have glorified it...”*

Through Jesus, the Father had made himself known.

*“…and will glorify it again.”*

What would come upon Jesus in a few days, would be the means by which the Father would further make himself known.

The fact that it was the Father’s will for Jesus to go to the cross, teaches us that will of God doesn’t always make us comfortable or give us easy things to do.

In his death, Jesus stood in for sinful humanity.

He who knew no sin became sin for us – 2 Corinthians 5:21.

However, the cross upon which Jesus hung was the definitive declaration of God’s love for humanity. If you ever wonder, “Does God love me?” look to the cross.

v.30-33.

There is a profound contrast, made by Jesus, in this statement.

***Driven out / draw to.***

These two actions are connected.

Jesus said, the prince of this world (Satan) will be driven out.

This tells us Satan did not willing relinquish his power.

It was taken from him.

Someone greater unseated him; and that greater One was Jesus.

Satan had kept people from God.

But finally, at just the right time, God’s moment came for the usurper to be judged.

The death of Jesus would drive Satan out; it would disarm him; it would take from him, the power that he had used to keep people from God.

Now through the death of Jesus, the way was opened for men and women to come to God.

To follow Jesus is a personal decision – another person can’t make that choice for you. But while there is a personal aspect to our faith, to follow Jesus is to enter into a drama that is cosmic in its scope.

Transformed lives are just the beginning.

Every passing day brings us closer to that moment when Jesus will appear, and everything, in heaven and on earth will be made new.

v.34.

This is the great question of every generation - who is Jesus?

Get the answer right and a person will experience life to the full.

Get it wrong, and a person’s life, will be defined by fruitless efforts to fill a void within them that can only be filled by God.

Did Jesus answer this question?

v.35-36a, 44-50.

Jesus is the light of the world.

Jesus is the invisible God made visible.

To see Jesus is to see God.

Jesus came into the world to rescue people from the darkness.

But to be saved, people have to come to him.

ONLY by believing in Jesus does one move from darkness to light; from death to life; from disconnect to belonging.

When Jesus finished saying these things, he walked out of the temple, never to return - v.36b.

Why did Jesus do this? Why did he hide himself?

v.37-41 explains.

Jesus withdrew and hid because of their unbelief.

The unbelief of many in Jerusalem wasn’t because of a lack of evidence.

What had Jesus done?

He had performed “SO MANY” miraculous signs the previous 3 ½ half years.

In addition, he had extensively taught them truth.

Their unbelief was not because of ignorance.

They refused to believe.

But why?

There is a sickness of soul that not only had infected people in Jesus’ day; but has infected everyone, in every generation, including ours.

1 John 3: 4 tells us this sickness is lawlessness – “sin is lawlessness;” and the prophet Jeremiah wrote in 17:9, that this infection is “beyond cure.”

We all are rebels at heart.

We resist giving God his rightful place in our lives.

We want to be the masters of our own destiny.

We don’t want anyone telling us what to do.

And here there is great mystery – the mystery of unbelief.

Barb and I have a friend who recently told us about sharing Jesus with a 95-year-old man.

The man’s response to her, when she asked him if he wanted to welcome Jesus into his life, was this: “I’m going to wait until I’m sick before I do that.”

None of us know at what point, God steps back from a person who has repeatedly rejected him. But at 95 years of age, this is an extremely dangerous choice – especially when one’s eternity is at stake.

But then, so it is, whether one is 95 or 25.

I can remember well my own rebellion – resisting the tug of God on my heart. How foolish I was – presuming that there would be many future opportunities to choose to turn my heart towards Jesus.

I am forever grateful that Jesus didn’t give up on me when I told him to get lost.

It is only because God is good and his mercy is great, that he gives any of us repeated opportunities.

But no one knows just how many they’ll get.

There is a warning given in Hebrews 3:7: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts…”

Today… that is all we have.

Today if God tugs on your heart – respond to him.

In our worship in song, there will be opportunity for those of you who would want to welcome Jesus into your life, to come to the prayer corner here, and speak with Janet or Mike, and pray with them.

I urge you to come to Jesus.

Look at v.42-43.

There were many who believed in Jesus, but fear held them back.

For some it was the fear of what others would think of them.

Here again, we are reminded of Jesus’ words to count the cost.

Jesus is to be loved supremely – he is to be given first place in our lives, above that of our parents, our spouse, our children, our siblings.

Jesus is to be followed no matter what it may cost us; because no matter what the cost, it will never be greater than what it cost him to save us.

Jesus is to be the center, that not only influences, but decides every aspect of our life. Pleasing him is to our greatest passion.

Some of us, as we hear these words from Scripture, feel the conviction of the Holy Spirit that things in us are not as they need to be.

It could be there are fears that are holding some of you back.

It could be there are relationships that have superseded your love for Jesus.

It could be some of you are resisting Jesus in some area – insisting your will be done, instead of his.

Today if you hear his voice, if the Spirit convicts your heart, act.

Don’t quench the Spirit; don’t ignore his voice.

You too, as we sing and respond, come to the prayer corner, and deal with these things.

One of the songs we’re going to sing says, “O come to the altar, the Father’s arms are open wide.”

In the OT, the altar was the place where one’s broken relationship with God could be made right.

This song uses this imagery.

But instead of an altar made of stones, upon which a sacrifice was placed, the altar, this song speaks of is the person of Jesus.

He was the sacrifice that made it possible for our broken relationship with God to be made right.

Jesus is calling.

Come to him this morning.

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS WEEK OF MAY 14, 17

Mark 14:12-17; John 12:20-50

1. Why would Greeks celebrate the feast and go to Jerusalem to worship?
2. Explain Jesus’ response in light of the fact that they were coming to tell Him the Greeks wanted to talk to Him.
3. What is the meaning of the parable in verse 24? How is it connected, if at all, to verse 23?
4. What is the world’s teaching on how to be successful? What character qualities does the world look for in a successful person?
5. How is this the same or different from the character qualities that a successful person in God’s eyes must have?
6. Is verse 25 teaching suicide? Should we not value our own lives?
7. Describe what a person looks like or does who “loves his own life.”

Describe what a person looks like or does who “hates his life”.

What will the servant of Christ do?

Is it possible to serve Christ, but do it “our own way”?

What will the results be of dying, hating our life, serving Christ, and following Him?

1. Why was Jesus troubled? Why was He troubled about His coming death? Isn’t He God? Shouldn’t he have reacted differently?
2. What does the crowds reactions in verse 29 tell us about the condition of their hearts?
3. What does Jesus mean in verse 30? How was this voice for their sakes?

What judgment was about to come?

1. If Satan has been driven out, why does it look like he’s still in control?

1. Why did the crowd question Jesus that He would die?

Is their interpretation accurate?

1. Why were the people not believing?
2. Does God harden people’s hearts? See Romans 1.

Why would He harden the hearts of the people of Israel?

Doesn’t He want to save them?

If He did harden their hearts, how come in verse 42 some people were believing?

1. If God hardens a person’s heart, does this mean they aren’t responsible?
2. Why wouldn’t the leaders confess Jesus?

What does this tell us about their faith?

1. Why is the approval of others a temptation?

How can we resist this temptation?

The fact that Jesus had gone into hiding, helps us to better understand the secretive way in which Jesus planned to celebrate the Passover meal with his followers. No names were given:

- follow a man carrying a jar of water

- say this to the owner of the house

It also explains why Jesus waited until the evening to arrive in Jerusalem.

By that time everyone would have gone into wherever they were going to eat their own Passover meal.

Know this - Jesus was not hiding for fear.

When he had wept over Jerusalem, as he looked at the city from the Mount of Olives, he had said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace – but not it is hidden from your eyes.” Luke 19:41.

Jesus hid because a door of opportunity had closed.

Please don’t let that door close for you.

In our worship in song, there will be opportunity for those of you who would want to welcome Jesus into your life.

I urge you to come to him.

Coming to him must be understood within the greater story of what he did as he died in our place.

Special moments are marked with significant meals.

- weddings

- anniversaries

- birthdays

The Passover was a meal that retold the story of that great moment in history when God rescued the nation of Israel from Egypt.

The Hebrew people had been enslaved for 400+ years. Finally, at the right time, God had sent Moses to demand that Pharaoh let his people go.

When Pharaoh refused, God sent plagues to demonstrate his authority and to reveal the powerlessness of Egypt’s gods.

Each time, Pharaoh said he would release the people, only to recant once the plague ended.

To show the distinction between his people and the Egyptians, none of the first nine plagues touched the Hebrews.

But the tenth and final plague would strike the firstborn of everyone in Egypt – Egyptian and Hebrew.

There was however, a way of escape – a family had to place their faith in God’s sacrificial provision – a lamb that would be slain, and whose blood would be put on the sides and the top of the door frame of their home.

Tim Keller writes, “When God’s justice came down, either it fell on one’s family, or a family took shelter under the substitute, the blood of the lamb. To those who took shelter, then death ‘passed-over,’ and they were saved.”

King’s Cross, p.163.

During the Passover meal, there were four cups of wine that were drunk, which represented the four promises made by God in Exodus 6:6-7: “*I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgement. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God.”*

God promised he would:

1. rescue from Egypt
2. free from slavery
3. redeem by his power
4. take them as his own people

The Passover meal Jesus celebrated with his followers was different.

Tom Wright says, “If you want to understand…what happened on Golgotha, this meal is the place to start.” Mark for Everyone, p.194.

When Jesus, who presided over the meal, came to the third cup, he diverted from the script.

After giving thanks for, and then breaking the bread, he said, “This is my body.”

He did the same with the cup of wine, saying, “This is my blood.”

Instead of remembering an ancient covenant, Jesus said his life blood would enact a new one.

Like the old, the new would require a sacrifice.

The first covenant, using the blood of a lamb, was temporary.

This new one, using the blood of Jesus was permanent.

Like the first that had rescued, freed, redeemed and taken, this new covenant would rescue from death, free from sin, redeem from emptiness and take, that is adopt those who came to him, to be his sons and daughters.

The cost for us to come home to God was so great; it required Jesus to do what we could not do for ourselves.

Listen to these phrases from the song, "Raised To Life"

Precious compassion that pours  
From the wounds that have won our salvation  
Sin was strong but the Savior is stronger  
  
Great was the debt that we owed  
And how high was the price of our healing  
Paid in full by the One who is worthy  
  
Raised to life with Christ the Savior  
In His name a new creation  
  
‘Jesus Saves’ is our song everlasting  
  
Sin was strong, but Jesus is stronger  
Our shame was great, but Jesus You're greater

Take it… Drink it…Jesus said.