**Uniquely Jesus** May 21, 2017

Mark 14

Coffee/question:

What emotion/reaction does the word “betray,” “desert,” and “tempt,” trigger in you?

**Read Mark 14:16-52**

There is much in this passage to unpack.

But for this morning, we’re going to focus on the first two themes – betrayal and desertion.

Next week we’ll deal with the third - temptation.

These are darker themes, but they are part of our human story, as well as God’s salvation story.

In the events we’ll study, we will see how incredibly good is Jesus, our Savior; and be surprised by what he did – it isn’t what we could have ever imagined.

**Betrayal**

Judas’ betrayal wasn’t accidental; it was deliberate.

He… went to the religious leaders - v.10.

They didn’t come to him.

Jesus’ rebuke of Judas, at the dinner party held at Simon the Leper’s home, when Judas had harshly reprimanded Mary for her act of extravagant worship, had been the last straw for Judas.

It was this that convinced him to approach the religious leaders and offer them his services - for a price.

No one knew what Judas had done.

No one that is, except Jesus.

As everyone heard Jesus say, *“I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me...”* the silence of the text regarding Judas’ response is deafening - Judas didn’t even blink.

He would have made a great poker player.

Two days earlier, on Tuesday, Jesus had stated, at the temple, that his heart was troubled (John 12:27). John in his gospel, 13:21, tells us that as Jesus and his disciples ate the Passover meal, Jesus again *“…was troubled in spirit…”*

Jesus knew the prophecies about Judas.

[Psalm 41:9](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2041.9): *Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heal against me.*

But knowing this, did not diminish the pain Jesus experienced.

It hurt him deeply.

How did the others react to this news?

John 13:22: “*His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant.”*

Nobody suspected Judas.

No one looked over at him and said, “I knew it!”

We’re not told who started, but someone did, and then one by one, each asked Jesus, *“Surely not I?”*

Even as this happened, and it quickly became his turn, Judas refused to admit that he’d approached the religious leaders.

Matthew tells us that Judas too asked, *“Surely not I, Rabbi?”* and that Jesus answered him, 26:25, *“Yes, it is you.”*

How did everyone else miss hearing Jesus identify Judas as the betrayer?

Luke explains.

As the question was put to Jesus, *“Surely not I?”* a long-standing disagreement between the Twelve, flared up, yet again.

Luke 22:23-24: *They began to question among themselves as to which of them it might be who would do this. Also, a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be the greatest.*

As each disciple asked Jesus, *“Is it I?”* here’s what I think happened: they also began to comment to each another that they would never turn on Jesus, and then they each gave some reason, or retold some incident, that in their mind, illustrated why they were the greatest of Jesus’ disciples.

Do you see how ordinary these guys were?

But that’s what Jesus does.

He takes ordinary people; warts and all, and his life in them makes all the difference, in who they become and what they do.

It is the same with you and I.

Look at **2 Corinthians 4:7-9**.

Disputes are normally noisy.

The sheer volume of the multiple cross-conversations taking place, masked the moment when Judas asked, *“Is it me?”* and Jesus answered, *“Yes, it is you.”*

The gospel of John adds important information.

 As this was happening, John 13:24-30 says: *Simon Peter motioned to [John] and said, “Ask him which one he means.”*

Obviously, Peter hadn’t heard what Jesus said to Judas; and neither had John.

***25****Leaning back against Jesus, [John] asked him, “Lord, who is it?”* ***26****Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.” Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.****27****As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him.*

Judas had increasingly closed his life to God and in doing so, had progressively opened his life to dark influences.

When Judas stubbornly resisted the two opportunities given to him by Jesus that night to confess what he’d done, he crossed a line, which finally gave Satan the opportunity to enter into him.

*So, Jesus told him, “What you are about to do, do quickly.”****28****But no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him.*

Again, Jesus let Judas know that he knew what he was planning to do.

And again, Judas didn’t flinch.

***29****Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the festival, or to give something to the poor.****30****As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.*

I think Mark stating “it was night,” is more than a commentary to let us know that the sun had set.

Jesus later stated to those whe’d come to arrest him, *“This is your hour – when darkness reigns.”* Luke 22:53.

That night, a great spiritual darkness settled upon Jerusalem.

Judas led a mob, put together by the religious leaders, to the place where he knew Jesus would be - the Garden of Gethsemane, and the mob knew, that the one Judas greeted with a kiss, was the one they were to arrest.

gotquestions.org says:

“In the culture of first-century Israel, a [kiss](https://www.gotquestions.org/holy-kiss.html)  on the cheek was a sign of respect, honor and brotherly love. Judas’ actions towards Jesus were hypocritical in the extreme. What would normally have been a sign of affection, actually was used to unleash a great surge of hatred.” https://www.gotquestions.org/betrayed-with-a-kiss.html

Luke also tells us that before Judas kissed him, Jesus asked him a question.

Luke 22:48: *“Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”*

Why did Jesus do this?

Jesus didn’t ask this question because he was uncertain of Judas’ motives.

He asked this question for Judas’ sake.

And even though, Satan had taken control of Judas, Jesus in his question, sought to speak, yet one more time to Judas.

Why would it have mattered at that moment?

The betrayal was done.

I believe Jesus asked this question because he wanted to give one last opportunity for Judas to repent; to turn his life around and towards God.

As we see this, you and I need to recognize that God’s mercy is not like ours; it is vast and immeasurable.

Here we are reminded – he is God and we are not.

Mark wants us to be surprised that Jesus didn’t react with anger to Judas.

Judas’ betrayal pained him greatly.

But Jesus’ words to Judas’ were spoken to Judas’ heart – they were an attempt to turn Judas back.

When God shows his kindness, he does so, as Romans 2:5 says, in order to lead a person to repentance.

If the thief on the cross, could be forgiven, after verbally abusing and mocking Jesus, along with the long list of crimes he had committed…then so could have Judas.

If you ever think you’re a hopeless case, or have someone tell you that they are beyond hope, you need to recognize whose voice is speaking into their mind.

Hours later, when he was gripped by remorse for what he had done, Judas chose suicide over repentance.

What, or better said, who, convinced him there was no hope for him?

It was not the voice of God; but that of Satan.

Peter wrote in 2 Peter 3:9, that God is not willing that anyone perish, but that everyone should come to repentance.

The word – everyone – is important for us to hear.

There is only one sin that cannot be forgiven.

Matthew 12:31-32: *And so, I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.****32****Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.*

The unpardonable sin is for a person to reject the Holy Spirit’s tug on their life to come home to God.

This is what Judas did.

And in him, we are confronted with the mystery of unbelief.

**Desertion**

Judas left Jesus before the Passover meal was finished; but in the Garden, the rest of the disciples would also leave Jesus.

Their desertion was not deliberate, but unintentional – they ran out of fear.

Before leaving to go to the Garden, Jesus said this to them - John 13:33-37.

*“My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.* ***34****“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.****35****By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

36 Simon Peter asked him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus replied, “Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.”

37 Peter asked, “Lord, why can’t I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.”

Peter, along with the others, saw himself as being more solid in his faith than he really was.

He along with the rest, thought they were capable of dying for Jesus, if needed.

But Jesus knew that was not the case.

In the gospel of Luke, we learn that at this very moment Jesus spoke directly to Peter. 22:31-32: *“Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat.*

*“…Satan has asked…”*

Satan couldn’t shake down the 12 without permission from God, the Father.

“That’s because Satan is not sovereign; he does not have the freedom to act in any manner he chooses.”

Remember Job?

Satan could not do anything to him, unless God permitted it.

“This image of “sifting like wheat,” is graphic. The picture is of grain in a sieve, where the head of grain is pulled apart. Satan wanted to pull Peter apart, along with the rest, and leave their lives in shattered pieces.” http://counselingoneanother.com/2013/10/25/satans-permission-to-sift-you-like-wheat/

But I remind you, everything that touches our lives passes through the Father’s hands. And whatever happens, is so that God’s will may be done.

Ephesians 1:11: *In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according*

*to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will…*

This verse says that God works out...*“everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.”*

And that “everything” for Peter included Satan’s desire to shake him down.

Jesus had more to say to Peter.

***32****But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”*

What Jesus did for Peter is what he does for every follower of his.

And here we are meant to be surprised by the goodness of our Savior.

Hebrews 7:25: *Therefore [Jesus] is able to save completely those who come to God through him…*

Philippians 1:6: *…being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ.*

Both of these verses use the word “complete.”

What does Jesus do in order to save us completely; how does he complete in us what he began?

The answer is given in the latter half of Hebrews 7:25: ...***he always lives to intercede for [us].***

When we follow Jesus, he prays for us, asking his Spirit to work in us,

to transform us.

Jesus’ desire as he prays for us, is that the new person we become, when we trust in him, and are born of the Spirit; his desire is that the new person we’ve become will extend into every aspect of who we are, in greater and in more profound ways, over the years we follow Jesus.

As Philippians 2:13 says, *“God [is at] work in us... to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.”*

And knowing this, is the reason why, we are, as Philippians 2:12 says, *“to work out our salvation...”*

We work out our salvation, as we say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions.

We work out our salvation, as we say ‘Yes’ to the voice of the Spirit,

Learning to keep in step with him and his ways.

But being born of the Spirit, does not mean we are now perfect.

What it means is that God has begun a work of transformation in us.

That said, thee will be occasions, when regrettably, we make poor choices.

There will be times when we won’t do what we should.

There will be moments when we will do, what we shouldn’t.

There may be even instances when we too, out of fear, will desert Jesus.

But the grace of God that saved us, is more than sufficient to forgive us “when we turn back.”

And Jesus prays for us, that this is what we will do.

1 John 1:9: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

2000 years ago, Jesus took on himself our sin in its entirety.

That was an historical event.

But right now, at this very moment, Jesus prays for you and me.

He speaks your name to the Father.

He asks for your needs to be met.

How incredible is this!!??

This truth needs to sink into our minds and permeate our hearts.

This may be a season of growth for some of you; a time when things are going well.

Jesus is praying for you.

This may be a season for others of you, where you feel like you’re being shredded.

Jesus is praying for you.

It may be that some of you question how God could forgive you yet again.

Jesus is praying for you.

I remind you that whatever you are living at this moment - Jesus is praying for you, as he did for Peter, that your faith may not fail; that you may go the distance; that you would be found faithful at his appearing or when you appear before him.

You are never out of his mind; nor out of his sight.

You may not always perceive his nearness.

But he is always near to you.

And he is committed to finish in you what he began.

Knowing this is what motivates us to turn to him when we mess up.

But it is also what motivates us to live with passion for him.

Ours is a great salvation!!!!

Ours is a great Savior!!!!

**Life Group Discussion Questions, Mark 14:16-52**

Bible Study Questions

When Jesus says to his disciples in 14:27, “you will all fall away,” did he mean that they would lose their faith in Jesus or did he mean something else? (see also Matthew 26:56)

Why do you think that Jesus sometimes chose to reveal to his disciples what would happen in the future and at other times left them in the dark?

Do you feel that the Bible is sometimes like that—perfectly clear on some things, but leaving you in the dark on others?

How does that make you feel?

Why do you think God does this?

Peter insisted emphatically that he would never disown Christ yet within the next six hours, he did so three times.

What is the benefit in knowing we are vulnerable to failure?

Why do some Christians fall away from following Christ?

How are we to respond if another believer falls away from his faith?

Jesus’ control over the events leading to his death are a major theme in Mark 14. List all the ways that Jesus shows his authority in the verses studied this week.

Group Application Questions

Jesus’ arrest caused all the disciples to flee. What in your life most tests your loyalty to Christ? Be specific.

What role does accountability play in your ability to remain loyal to Christ?

In what specific situations do you find it more or less difficult?

Some months later, when Peter preached in the Temple, after the healing of a crippled man, he said to his audience, *“**You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.*

How had that crowd listening to Peter, killed Jesus, the author of life?

Many of them had been out front of Pilate’s palace, and had called out for Jesus’ crucifixion.

The crowd wanted Peter to explain how a crippled man could now walk. And so, Peter told them - this man walks because the One you killed has been raised to life by God.

***16****By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.*

***17****“Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders.****18****But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer.*

***19****Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,****20****and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus.****21****Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.”* Acts 3:15-21

How could those people have acted in ignorance and yet be held responsible for what they had done, especially when as Peter said, through their actions God had fulfilled what he had foretold?

Here we confront mystery - the mystery of God’s sovereignty and the ability, which God gave to his creatures, human and angelic, to make real choices; to act, either in accordance with or contrary to his will.