

Mark

Chapter Fourteen

Introduction

The events of Mark Fourteen surround Jesus' final Passover meal with His disciples:

Mark 14:1 After two days it was the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread...

The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were held yearly in Jerusalem to commemorate the deliverance of God's people from Egypt. God had sent ten plagues upon the Egyptians in order that they might release the Israelites from slavery. The final plague was the death of the firstborn in every home not marked with blood. The death angel *passed over* the homes which were marked with blood.

On the eve of God delivering them from their four hundred years of slavery, the head of each Jewish family took a male lamb and sacrificed it. The lamb had been chosen four days prior and had been carefully examined to determine that it was perfect for sacrifice. At the prescribed time it was taken to the doorway to have its throat slit. The blood was collected in a basin, then applied to the horizontal and vertical frame of the doorway. As the Jews ate the roasted lamb, the death angel *passed over* them, and they walked through their bloodstained doors to freedom.

In Mark Fourteen Jesus is in Jerusalem to celebrate Passover with His disciples. During their meal,

Mark 14:22 ...as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."

Mark 14:23 Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

Mark 14:24 And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many.

Mark 14:25 "Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

Jesus was telling them that He was God's Passover, He was God's Lamb. Just as the Passover lamb was selected four days prior to its sacrifice, Jesus had entered Jerusalem four days prior... Just as the Passover lamb was carefully inspected for spots and blemishes, Jesus had been carefully examined by the Jewish religious leaders and was found to be perfect, without spot and without blemish... Just as the blood of the Passover lamb was applied to the horizontal and vertical frame of the door - marking the outline of a cross - Jesus would be crucified on Calvary's cross... Just as God's people walked through their bloodstained doors to freedom, Jesus was and is "the door"¹ to eternal life for all those who have applied or who will apply His precious blood to their sin.

John the Baptist identified Jesus as "the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world."² The Apostle Peter said that Jesus was "...a Lamb, without blemish and without spot."³ The Apostle Paul said, "For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us."⁴

The people in this chapter all, in a sense, looked upon the body and blood of Jesus. Mary, Judas, Peter, and the members of the Jewish Sanhedrin, have one of four responses as they looked upon the body and blood of Jesus:

{ Mary responded with *brokenness*...
 { Judas responded with *betrayal*...
 { Peter responded with *backsliding*...
 { The Sanhedrin responded with *blasphemy*...

We want to identify these responses in our own lives as we look upon the body and blood of Jesus, our Passover Lamb.

#1 Do You Look Upon The Lord's
Body & Blood With Mary's Brokenness?
(14:1-9)

¹John 10:9

²John 1:29

³1 Peter 1:19

⁴1 Corinthians 5:7

It would soon be Passover, and the Jewish religious leaders were seeking a way to put Jesus to death:

Mark 14:1 After two days it was the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by trickery and put Him to death.

Mark 14:2 But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people."

At this point Mark takes us back to the Saturday before Jesus entered Jerusalem. He wants to tell us the story of the anointing of Jesus at Bethany:

Mark 14:3 And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured it on His head.

The other Gospels identify this woman as Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha.

This was a celebration of the healing of Simon from his leprosy. "Simon" is still called "the leper," even though he had been healed by Jesus. Why retain the title? To magnify the Lord! "Hi! I'm Simon, the leper." "Really? Then why don't you have leprosy?" "I'm so very glad you asked..."

Lazarus was there, too. He had been raised from the dead! So you have a dead man and a leper who had been transformed by Jesus Christ...

Mark 14:4 But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, "Why was this fragrant oil wasted?"

Mark 14:5 "For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they criticized her sharply.

It was Judas who led the criticism against Mary. John, in his Gospel, tells us why: Judas held the money bag and was a thief!

Mark 14:6 But Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me.

Mark 14:7 "For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always.

Mark 14:8 "She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial.

Mark 14:9 "Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her."

This comment of the Lord's about the poor has troubled many through the years. Is Jesus insensitive to the poor? Not at all! What He is saying is that, since the poor will always be with you, you will have plenty of opportunities to minister to them. He, on the other hand, was going to the cross; opportunities to minister to Jesus were slipping away from them.

Are you letting opportunities slip away - on either level?

Mary anointed Jesus' body for burial while He was still alive, *before* His burial. She alone understood two great truths Jesus had been teaching: Jesus would shortly die, and soon thereafter He would rise from the grave!

How did Mary grasp what none of the others did? *Reverence* opened her mind to *revelation*. You see Mary three times in the Gospels, and each time she is at Jesus' feet, reverencing Him, worshipping Him.

As she broke her expensive alabaster box, Mary symbolizes her spiritual *brokenness*. In Psalm 34:18 you read,

Psalms 34:18 The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit.

Psalm 51:17 says,

Psalms 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart; These, O God, You will not despise.

Brokenness is costly. The alabaster box with spikenard was worth a years wages! Spiritual brokenness doesn't usually cost money, although it can... It usually costs you your pride, as you humble yourself at the Lord's feet.

But it is always beneficial. The Gospel of John notes that Mary, after she anointed Jesus, wiped His feet with her hair. Her hair took on the fragrance of Jesus' anointing. When she rose, wherever she went, the fragrance of Jesus filled the room.

We need the fragrance of Jesus to fill our rooms. When your life stinks, you need to be broken so that the fragrance of His anointing can overcome the stench of your flesh.

Do you look upon the Lord's body and blood with Mary's brokenness? You can! Take the time to humble yourself in prayer at the Lord's feet. Don't harden your will against His. Let yourself be broken.

#2 Do You Look Upon The Lord's Body & Blood With Judas' Betrayal? (14:10-21)

Judas, the treasurer, had had enough. Whatever kind of kingdom Jesus had in mind, there was no profit in it. He moved to betray the Lord for as much as he could get.

Mark 14:10 Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Him to them.

Mark 14:11 And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. So he sought how he might conveniently betray Him.

'Judas' means *praise*; 'Iscariot' probably referred to the town of Carioth in southern Israel.

Mark 14:12 Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover lamb, His disciples said to Him, "Where do You want us to go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover?"

Mark 14:13 And He sent out two of His disciples and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him.

Mark 14:14 "Wherever he goes in, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"'

Mark 14:15 "Then he will show you a large upper room, furnished and prepared; there make ready for us."

Mark 14:16 So His disciples went out, and came into the city, and found it just as He had said to them; and they prepared the Passover.

There are conflicting estimates, but conservatively there were as many as 2.5 million people in Jerusalem at this Passover. In that vast crowd, one man would be carrying a pitcher of water. It was women's work to fetch and carry water, so this would be unusual. This was likely a prearranged signal...

Scripture is largely silent about this man, so we don't want to say too much. But we don't want to just ignore him. He was an unnamed servant who worked diligently behind the scenes for his Lord. He never expected or received any recognition. He simply went about the Lord's business as unto the Lord. He "furnished" and "prepared" for Jesus... *I want to meet him in heaven!* We'll know him because he will be rewarded openly in heaven by our Father who sees our service in secret.

Mark 14:17 In the evening He came with the twelve.

Mark 14:18 Now as they sat and ate, Jesus said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you who eats with Me will betray Me."

Mark 14:19 And they began to be sorrowful, and to say to Him one by one, "Is it I?" And another said, "Is it I?"

Mark 14:20 He answered and said to them, "It is one of the twelve, who dips with Me in the dish.

Mark 14:21 "The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born."

"Is it I" is really a statement of denial. It's like saying, "Not me!" But Judas had already put the plan in motion, even as he shared a meal with the Lord.

Judas is a controversial character. Was he predestined to betray the Lord? It sounds like it when Jesus says in verse twenty-one,

Mark 14:21 "The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him..."

Or was Judas a free moral agent, making choices, and being held responsible for his decisions? It sounds like it when Jesus goes on to say in verse twenty-one,

"...but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born."

Notice, too, that Jesus doesn't immediately point to Judas as His betrayer. He gave Judas space to repent.

Jesus was teaching both divine sovereignty and human responsibility. According to God's sovereign plan Jesus must be betrayed; yet Judas was not compelled to be the betrayer, and he

was held personally responsible for ultimately yielding to Satan. God is absolutely sovereign over the affairs of all men; at the same time, He holds all men personally responsible. With responsibility there must be ability.

The apparent conflict between sovereignty and free will cannot be reconciled. Here is how I have come to understand them:

Love cannot be forced and remain love. You must be able to freely choose to love God. God is absolutely sovereign, and in His sovereignty God gives you free will.

It is dangerous to draw applications from the life of Judas, and I want to be careful in doing so. Judas was ultimately demon possessed, possessed by Satan himself. If you are a believer, by definition you cannot be possessed by the devil or his demons. But professing Christians do sometimes willfully betray the Lord.

Judas coveted. In the end, all betrayal can be traced back to coveting.

Beloved, don't sell-out for something you covet - for some person, for some power, or for some pleasure. When you do, you are looking upon the Lord's body and blood with the mentality of Judas' betrayal.

#3 Do You Look Upon The Lord's Body & Blood With Peter's Backsliding? (14:22-52 & 66-72)

Mark's attention turns to Peter as Jesus fulfills Passover and establishes Communion.

Mark 14:22 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."

Mark 14:23 Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

Mark 14:24 And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many.

Mark 14:25 "Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

Mark 14:26 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

The Passover meal became a new celebration. We call it communion, or the Lord's Supper, or the Eucharist. 'Eucharist' comes from the word Jesus used for giving thanks. Communion is a memorial - nothing more, but nothing less. You see, it's a memorial, but it's a memorial of a Person Who is still alive!!

As we partake of communion elements we experience the spiritual presence of Jesus Christ by looking backward at the Cross, inward at our own lives, and forward to the Lord's soon return. To me the most marvelous aspect of communion is looking forward to the Lord's return to establish His kingdom on earth.

Mark 14:27 Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered.'

Mark 14:28 "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."

The Lord knew they would all fail Him. Yet He spoke of faithfulness to go before them into Galilee. Jesus already knows all of your failures, your fickleness, and your flakiness; all the time He is already promising to go to heaven before you and prepare a mansion there, so that where He is you may be also!

Peter becomes a lesson for you in avoiding failure. There are four distinct steps to his backsliding: *Pride, prayerlessness, presumption, and profanity.*

Peter's Pride:

Mark 14:29 Peter said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble, yet I will not be."

Mark 14:30 Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that today, even this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times."

Mark 14:31 But he spoke more vehemently, "If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And they all said likewise.

Someone pointed out that the middle letter of 'pride' is 'I.' Peter had an 'I' problem. He was overconfident in himself. He ought to have humbled himself and been broken before the Lord's prediction. Instead he stood his own ground.

Peter's Prayerlessness:

Mark 14:32 Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray."

Mark 14:33 And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed.

Mark 14:34 Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch."

Mark 14:35 He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him.

Mark 14:36 And He said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will."

Mark 14:37 Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour?"

Mark 14:38 "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Mark 14:39 Again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words.

Mark 14:40 And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him.

Mark 14:41 Then He came the third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Mark 14:42 "Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

'Gethsemane' means *oil press*. The presses used to squeeze and crush the olives into oil were a fitting stage for Jesus' crushing anguish as He approached the Cross.

Before we look at Peter, just a word about Jesus. He prayed that "if it were possible the hour might pass from Him." It is not possible for you to be saved any other way than by the body and blood of Jesus on Calvary...

Peter is singled out for his prayerlessness. Pride always leads to prayerlessness! There is no reason to pray whenever you are overconfident in yourself. His falling asleep shows you the weakness of the flesh despite your own claims to the contrary.

Peter's Presumption:

Mark 14:43 And immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

Mark 14:44 Now His betrayer had given them a signal, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him and lead Him away safely."

Mark 14:45 As soon as He had come, immediately he went up to Him and said to Him, "Rabbi, Rabbi!" and kissed Him.

Mark 14:46 Then they laid their hands on Him and took Him.

Mark 14:47 And one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

Mark 14:48 Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me?"

Mark 14:49 "I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled."

Mark 14:50 Then they all forsook Him and fled.

Mark 14:51 Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around his naked body. And the young men laid hold of him,

Mark 14:52 and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked.

Jesus was so ordinary looking that He had to be identified in order to be arrested. The "one...who stood by [and] drew his sword," cutting off the servant's ear, was Peter. He presumed that Jesus needed to be defended by force. Jesus went on to heal the servant's ear, then explained that He was in control.

If prayerlessness follows pride, then presumption follows prayerlessness. Peter didn't have a clue what to do, so he acted presumptuously. Deeds cannot replace devotion. Devotion is the seed bed for your deeds - where you discover the good works that God has *already* ordained for you to perform.

By the way, most commentators feel that the young man who ran off naked was none other than the author of this Gospel, Mark. The Passover meal may have been held at his father's house. Judas probably brought the soldiers there first. Mark, being awakened, then ran half-dressed to warn the Lord - but it was too late.

Peter's Profanity:

Go to verse sixty-six:

Mark 14:66 Now as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came.

Mark 14:67 And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You also were with Jesus of Nazareth."

Mark 14:68 But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are saying." And he went out on the porch, and a rooster crowed.

Mark 14:69 And the servant girl saw him again, and began to say to those who stood by, "This is one of them."

Mark 14:70 But he denied it again. And a little later those who stood by said to Peter again, "Surely you are one of them; for you are a Galilean, and your speech shows it."

Mark 14:71 Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this Man of whom you speak!"

Mark 14:72 A second time the rooster crowed. Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And when he thought about it, he wept.

Luke's Gospel tells you that, as the cock crowed twice, Jesus was being led out of the hall, and that He turned to look upon Peter. His look told Peter that He knew Peter would deny Him. It also told Him that He loved Him, that He would forgive him, that He would restore him.

For now, look at Peter's backsliding. In verses fifty-three and fifty-four you learn that he followed the Lord from a safe distance, warmed himself by the enemies fire, and fell back into using profanity. When you lose some of your passion for the Lord, you begin to follow Him from a safe distance. Having grown spiritually cold, you are tempted to return to the fires of the world. When you do, you have become profane. 'Profane' really means *outside of the Temple*. You are outside of the presence of the Lord. Peter's use of profanity was only an outward indication of his inward profanity.

Peter backslid, but "when he thought about it, he wept." He came to a place of brokenness over his denial.

Beloved, don't follow Peter in his backsliding. Take the 'I' out of pride by remaining broken.

#4 Do You Look Upon The Lord's Body & Blood With The Sanhedrin's Blasphemy? (14:53-65)

The Jewish Sanhedrin was the supreme ruling court of the Jews. It was headed by the high priest and granted limited authority by Rome over civil and especially religious matters. These are the men Jesus faced - an emergency meeting of a majority of the Jewish ruling council.

Mark 14:53 And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and with him were assembled all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes.

Mark 14:54 But Peter followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he sat with the servants and warmed himself at the fire.

Mark 14:55 Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none.

Mark 14:56 For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree.

Mark 14:57 Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying,

Mark 14:58 "We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.'"

Mark 14:59 But not even then did their testimony agree.

Mark 14:60 And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, "Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?"

Mark 14:61 But He kept silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"

Mark 14:62 Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."

Mark 14:63 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "What further need do we have of witnesses?"

Mark 14:64 "You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.

Mark 14:65 Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, "Prophecy!" And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands.

Jesus says clearly and unequivocally "I am." Not only is He answering the high priest's question; He is also taking for Himself the name of God - 'I am.' They accuse Jesus of blasphemy in that He made Himself equal with God - punishable by death.

In Jesus' case He *was* equal with God because He *was* God come in the flesh! It was the Sanhedrin's trial, and their sentence upon Jesus, that were blasphemous. It was the brutal, illegal beating they subjected Jesus to that was blasphemous.

Everyone who looks upon the Lord's body and blood, and denies that He is God come in the flesh, commits this same blasphemy. If you are an unbeliever, by your unbelief you are saying that Jesus deserved to die a criminal's death. Like the false witnesses, you try to explain away things Jesus said but you find yourself not making any sense. If you reject Him as God and Savior, you participate in beating Him and sending Him to the Cross.

Do you look upon the Lord's body and blood with the Sanhedrin's blasphemy? It was for you He allowed Himself to be captured and crucified!

Conclusion

Unbelievers look upon the Lord's body and blood with *blasphemy*.

Believers can look upon the Lord's body and blood with *betrayal*, with *backsliding*, or with *brokenness*.

Look upon your Lord with brokenness!

Pastor Jon Courson tells of a statue he has seen, a life-size granite carving of Jesus by the Danish sculptor Thors Walden. Walden sculpted the body of Jesus in such a way that you can't see His face from a standing position. But a sign next to the statue reads:

"If you want to see the face of Jesus,
You must sit at His feet"

Take the time to sit at Jesus' feet.