

Mark 14:32-52 ~ Scripture Verses

Jesus Agonizes and Prays in the Garden

³² They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” ³³ He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. ³⁴ “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,” he said to them. “Stay here and keep watch.”

³⁵ Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. ³⁶ “Abba, Father,” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

³⁷ 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? ³⁸ Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”

³⁹ Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. ⁴⁰ When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him.

⁴¹ 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. ⁴² Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

Jesus is Betrayed and Arrested

⁴³ Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders.

⁴⁴ Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: “The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.” ⁴⁵ Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Rabbi!” and kissed him. ⁴⁶ The men seized Jesus and arrested him. ⁴⁷ Then one of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

⁴⁸ “Am I leading a rebellion,” said Jesus, “that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? ⁴⁹ Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.” ⁵⁰ Then everyone deserted him and fled.

⁵¹ A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him, ⁵² he fled naked, leaving his garment behind.

Mark 14:32-52 ~ Discussion Questions

1. Some pastors do not preach the Easter story every year because they feel that everyone knows it and will be bored if they hear it too often or perhaps they think that “familiarity breeds contempt.” What do you think about this?
2. What’s it like to have a friend let you down when you really need support? Have you ever had a friendship go sour? Why did it?
3. What emotions was Jesus feeling? (14:33-34) Was he trying to get out of his task? (14:36. Also see Hebrews 5:7-9)
4. What does the fact that God did not grant Jesus’ request (“don’t let this happen to me” [CEV] and “Take this cup from me”) teach us about prayer? What did Jesus add to his prayer? Should we add an additional phrase to our prayers?
5. What distressed Jesus when he returned to his disciples? (14:37, 40, 41) Why did the disciples have so much trouble watching and praying with Jesus? (14:38) What stops you from helping a friend who asked or a person (“neighbor”) in need?
6. In times of stress, we are vulnerable to temptation (or inaction), even if we have a willing spirit. By example, Jesus gave us three ways to resist; what are they?
7. Judas was first a hypocrite (how? when?), which led to him betraying Jesus. The Bible has only 11 examples of “betrayal” but 75 of “hypocrisy.” The Bible often refers to hypocrisy as yeast (Luke 12:1b-3). What does this mean to us?
8. What is the image of Christians and the Christian church in the mind of young (age 16-29) non-Christians? [Hint: see #7.] What does this mean to us?
9. Jesus said, “the scriptures must be fulfilled.” (14:49) What scripture was it?
10. Why did Jesus’ disciples desert him? (14:50) What had these disciples said just hours earlier? (Matthew 26:35) What would you have done?
11. When are you most tempted to compromise your commitment to Christ?
12. How can we guard against saying one thing and doing another?
13. What can you do now to prepare for times when your dedication to Christ is tested at work, at home, or around others?

Mark 14:32-52 — Leader's Guide

1. Some pastors do not preach the Easter story every year because they feel that everyone knows it and will be bored if they hear it too often or perhaps they think that “familiarity breeds contempt.” What do you think about this?

There is always something new to be learned, a new truth to be recognized. You can study the Bible your whole life and still find new things in it every day. God is infinite; we can't possibly hope to understand all he has created.

2. What's it like to have a friend let you down when you really need support? Have you ever had a friendship go sour? Why did it?

3. What emotions was Jesus feeling? (14:33-34) Was he trying to get out of his task? (14:36. Also see Hebrews 5:7-9)

Jesus was truly and fully human at this point and must have been experiencing many conflicting emotions: distressed, troubled, and sorrow as it says in verses 33-34, but also fear, anticipation, perhaps even relief that the end was near and he would shortly be rejoining the Father.

In a recent episode of the British drama, MI-5, two agents were captured by terrorists and knew they would be tortured. The female agent knew she could not hold out under torture and begged the other agent to kill her before the torture began. Might Jesus be feeling some kind of similar emotion?

Hebrews 5:7-9 – ⁷During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. ⁸Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered ⁹and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

4. What does the fact that God did not grant Jesus' request (“don't let this happen to me” [CEV] and “Take this cup from me”) teach us about prayer? What did Jesus add to his prayer? Should we add an additional phrase to our prayers?

As we know, all prayers are heard and answered by God, but sometimes the answer is “no” or “wait” or “I have something else in mind” or “that's not my plan.” Clearly we don't like these answers, but if God turned down a request from Jesus, can we expect anything different?

We've frequently spoken of the four elements of prayer:

A – acclamation, awe, adore, praise, honor, glorify, worship

C – confession, repentance, humble oneself

T – thanks (or thanksgiving)

S – supplication, request, petition

However, to these elements Jesus adds a phrase: “Yet not what I will, but what you will.” In the LORD’s prayer, the fourth line is “your will be done.”

5. What distressed Jesus when he returned to his disciples? (14:37, 40, 41) Why did the disciples have so much trouble watching and praying with Jesus? (14:38) What stops you from helping a friend who asked or a person (“neighbor”) in need?

Jesus was unhappy that these yo-yos just couldn’t seem to stay awake for an hour. We criticize the disciples, but with all that good food and wine from the Passover meal, a nice warm evening with no distractions (like TV, video game or text messages, or an iPod), wouldn’t you fall asleep? I certainly would.

It wasn’t as though the disciples were deliberately disrespecting Jesus’ wishes, but as Jesus himself observed, “The spirit is willing, but the body (or human nature) is weak.” That expression is modified from Psalm 51:12 (“grant me a willing spirit to sustain me.”)

Psalm 51:10-12 is a prayer for purity—for a pure heart and a steadfast spirit of faithfulness and a willing spirit of service. David writes that these can be his only if God does not reject him and take his Holy Spirit from him.

Why didn’t they help each other stay awake? When you see a friend doing the wrong thing (commission) or not doing the right thing (omission), what stops you from saying or doing something about it? Wouldn’t it be better to say or do something and risk possible annoyance from your friend than to sit idly by and watch your friend get into trouble?

Another question: What stops you from helping a friend who asked for help or a person (“neighbor”) in need?

6. In times of stress, we are vulnerable to temptation (or inaction), even if we have a willing spirit. By example, Jesus gave us three ways to resist; what are they?

- 1) Pray to God (14:35)
- 2) Seek support of friends and loved ones (14:33, 37, 40, 41)
- 3) Focus on the purpose God has given us (14:36)

Jesus specifically tells his disciples to “pray so that you will not fall into temptation.” Temptation can work two ways. The one we most commonly think of is being tempted to do something you shouldn’t. But the other side is equally important, i.e., being tempted to not do something you should. In this instance the temptation was to be unfaithful in the face of threatening circumstances.

7. Judas was first a hypocrite (how? when?), which led to him betraying Jesus. The Bible has only 11 examples of “betrayal” but 75 of “hypocrisy.” The Bible often refers to hypocrisy as yeast (Luke 12:1b-3). What does this mean to us?

Examples of Judas' hypocrisy:

John 12:4-6 – ⁴ But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, ⁵ “Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages.” ⁶ He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

Mark 14:18-19 – ¹⁸ While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me.”

¹⁹ They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, "Surely not I?"

Hypocrisy likened to yeast:

Luke 12:1b-3 – Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, saying: "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. ² There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. ³ What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs.

A small amount of yeast expands and multiplies throughout dough. Similarly, if one person is hypocritical (saying one thing but doing another), you're likely to follow that example rather than stick to the correct (but more difficult) way.

8. What is the image of Christians and the Christian church in the mind of young (age 16-29) non-Christians? [Hint: see #7.] What does this mean to us?

In a recent study (reported in the book, *UnChristian* by David Kinnaman), young people (16-29) had this image of Christians:

	A lot	A lot or some
Anti-homosexual	66%	91%
Judgmental	57	87
<i>Hypocritical</i>	54	85
Out of touch with reality	37	72

9. Jesus said, “the scriptures must be fulfilled.” (14:49) What scripture was it?

This referred to Isaiah 53:7-12, one of the most prophetic and descriptive scriptures in the Old Testament about the coming of the Messiah.

Isaiah 53:7-12 – ⁷ He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. ⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken ⁹ He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

¹⁰ Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. ¹¹ After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. ¹² Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

10. Why did Jesus' disciples desert him? (14:50) What had these disciples said just hours earlier? (Matthew 26:35) What would you have done?

Again, let's not be too critical of the disciples. If you were in a small group of 11 guys in Central Park and 90 or 100 NYPD officers, National Guard troops, and armed civilian "deputies" came roaring in to arrest one of your group, would you stick around? Sure they said they'd support Jesus, but they weren't anticipating this kind of event.

I happily support several missionaries financially, gladly add encouraging comments on their blog or Facebook, and even go on some missions trips to Central America, the Middle East, and Africa, but if a missionary said, "hey, how about coming along with me on a trip to Kandahar or Peshawar?" I think I'd find some reason why I couldn't go.

As I mentioned in the last lesson, we're frequently critical of Peter, probably because he's impetuous and Jesus often singles him out, but it was only Peter of the 11 who stayed with Jesus on the night of his arrest. Yes, he disavowed Jesus three times, but the other disciples were nowhere to be found at all.

In times of crisis, how do you respond? Like Peter? Like Judas? Like the other ten? Or like the "streaking young man?" (14:51-52) What would help you to react like Jesus?

The "young man" follower of Jesus is mentioned only in the Gospel of Mark. He is not specifically identified but some commentators think he might be John Mark himself, the writer of the Gospel.

11. When are you most tempted to compromise your commitment to Christ?

12. How can we guard against saying one thing and doing another?

13. What can you do now to prepare for times when your dedication to Christ is tested at work, at home, or around others?