

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK
55. Jesus Safeguards the Last Supper
Mark 14:10-16

We're picking up tonight in Mark 14:10

Mark 14:10–11 (CSB) ¹⁰Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. ¹¹And when they heard this, they were glad and promised to give him money. So he started looking for a good opportunity to betray him.

But as always, we need to get our feet planted firmly in the context in which those verses live.

Mark 14:3–5 (CSB) ³While he was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured it on his head. ⁴But some were expressing indignation to one another: “Why has this perfume been wasted? ⁵For this perfume might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.” And they began to scold her.

One of those scolding Mary stood out to the apostle John

John 12:4–6 (CSB) ⁴Then one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot (who was about to betray him), said, ⁵“Why wasn’t this perfume sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” ⁶He didn’t say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief. He was in charge of the money-bag and would steal part of what was put in it.

Those two acts of radical devotion to Jesus that we looked at last week exposed Judas for who he really was. Simon the former leper not only provided his new house for the feast — he actually risked his personal safety by being with Jesus and for not reporting the whereabouts of Jesus to the authorities. Mary was radical and extravagant in the expression of her love and devotion to Jesus. Judas is heard above everyone else scolding her — criticizing Mary in front of every other guest attending the feast

But then Jesus defended Mary and connected her devotion with His suffering and death.

Mark 14:6; 9 (CSB) ⁶Jesus replied, “Leave her alone. Why are you bothering her? She has done a noble thing for me (ESV — she has done a beautiful thing to Me).⁸She has done what she could; she has anointed my body in advance for burial.

Mark tells us that THEN Judas went to the religious rulers and asked what they’d give him for betraying Jesus out of the public view. In that very moment Judas was totally out on Jesus. You see, Judas was looking forward to a high position in the kingdom he thought Jesus had come to establish — after all, back in **Matthew 19** Jesus had said

Matthew 19:29 (ESV) “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

But now Jesus was talking about dying (by the way — not for the first time). Judas should serve as a warning to how the desires of our hearts cause us to be **very selective** in what we hear and how we hear.

DON’T MISS THIS — Judas was disillusioned with the Jesus he had been following. Judas had been following Jesus for what Judas was going to gain. So Judas is saying — *I’m getting out now while there’s something to be gotten.*

Check this out! **Luke 22:4** gives us the parallel account of **Mark 14:10**. The **NKJV** reads **Luke 22:4** like this —

*So he went **his way** and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them.*

Satan found an entrance into this whole scene through **the way** Judas thought and lived. The way of Judas was this: *I’m getting out of this world what I can get.*

QUOTE: Augustine — *There can be only two basic loves: Of God unto the forgetfulness of self, or of self, unto the denial of God.*

QUOTE: Tim Keller — *If Jesus is King, you cannot make him a means to your end.*

Jesus never ruled the heart of Judas. For Judas, Jesus was a means to an end.

Are you ready for this? Judas lived among the believers without being a believer! Judas served Jesus with the believers without ever being a believer. Judas listened to Jesus teach and preach with the other believers without ever being a believer.

Judas was just a hitchhiker — pretending to be what he never was towards Jesus and pretending to feel what he never felt towards Jesus — all in the hopes of getting what he wanted. The tragedy is that Judas probably came to believe he really was a disciple of Jesus.

In significant parts of 21st century church culture Jesus is presented as the way to have your way — *come to Jesus to have your best life right now*. Tragically, Jesus is presented in a way that appeals to covetousness in the hearts of men and women. There's a traitor that lives in every one of us (if you haven't noticed).

THIS IS HUGE — Judas was what the world thought to be an authentic believer. In fact — when Jesus was eating His last meal with the apostles, Jesus told them that the one who would betray Him was at the table the with Him. No one looked at Judas! None of them looked at Judas and thought: *He must be talking about Judas — if any one at this table is a traitor it has to be Judas*. John's Gospel tells us that *the disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke (John 13:22)*. Matthew's Gospel tells us that *they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another, "Is it I, Lord? (Matthew 26:22)*. Judas was really good at looking like a believer while all the while he was following Jesus for what he hoped to gain in earthly currency. And no one at the table had a clue.

Judas went his way — he never went the Lord's way.

QUOTE: Keller — *You cannot have Jesus' rescue without accepting his rule.*

Judas betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver! About \$20 - \$30. The last words we hear from Judas are: *I have sinned by betraying innocent blood (Matthew 27:4)* — and after he said it he threw the 30 pieces of silver down in the temple.

HERE'S THE DEAL — There isn't anything that we betray Jesus for that ever *can* or ever *will* deliver what it promised. Whatever it is that you choose over Jesus — you will end up throwing down because whatever it is that you choose over Jesus NEVER fulfills.

People take sides over the question: *Could he have repented? or Was he predestined?* I don't know any of that. But I do know that when I look at him there is a sobering challenge to my own heart! Why did Jesus pick Judas? Maybe he chose him for you and me! Maybe he chose Judas so we could see him playing the game — wearing the mask — never bowing to the authority of Jesus — never stepping into His Kingdom. I pray that's not anyone here this evening or watching on line. I pray you're coming to the house of God to meet with the God of the house.

Jesus chose Judas for us — to hold his life up in front of us to show us how the human heart can **be** when presented with the reality of Jesus — what the human heart can **want** instead of Jesus — how we can want to sit on the throne instead having Him sit on the throne.

Mark 14:12–16 (CSB) ¹²On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrifice the Passover lamb, his disciples asked him, “Where do you want us to go and prepare the Passover so that you may eat it?”

Before the cross, Jesus wanted to eat the Passover meal with his disciples one last time. Luke says he greatly longed to eat the meal with them (Luke 22:15).

¹³So he sent two of his disciples

Luke tells us (Luke 22:8) that the two were Peter and John.

¹³So he sent two of his disciples and told them, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. ¹⁴Wherever he (the man carrying the jar of water) enters, tell the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher says, “Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?” ’

¹⁵He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make the preparations for us there.”

The other disciples were oblivious to Judas’ intentions, but not Jesus. Jesus had prearranged a secret venue. He sent Peter and John into Jerusalem to look for something that would have stood out to them — a man with a water pot on his head (Luke 22:8). This would have stood out to them because that was not the task of men in that culture. Once they saw that man, they were to follow him to a house and **ask the owner** to show them the large, furnished rooftop patio room that they had already prearranged for Jesus to use for the meal — and they were to make the preparations there.

DON’T MISS THIS — As we have seen time and again — Jesus was in absolute control of everything leading to His death on the cross.

Here we see that Jesus made sure that Judas wouldn’t be able to interrupt the last meal Jesus would have with them before His betrayal, suffering and death because *that* meal was the most important meal eaten in the history of the world! Think about all the things Jesus taught them that were absolutely ESSENTIAL to these men; absolutely ESSENTIAL to the church in its infancy and throughout the ages; absolutely ESSENTIAL for every man and woman who would come to faith in Jesus.

1. At this table Jesus told the apostles (and us) how His disciples are to **live for Him in this world**

***John 13:34–35 (CSB)** ³⁴“I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

2. At this table Jesus comforted them and assured them about our future hope.

***John 14:1–3 (CSB)** ¹“Don’t let your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ²In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? ³If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also.*

It was so crucial that Jesus have the place and the time to say these things to these eleven men (10 of whom would die violent deaths for their faith in Jesus). These words were crucial to millions of believers in the early church who would suffer violent persecution and death for their faith in Jesus. These words are crucial to every believer in every age and every culture faced with the reality of the brevity of life in this broken world. Jesus essentially say to them — *Death is troubling, betrayal is troubling, suffering is troubling — but Heaven is real. It's where I am. I'm going to prepare a place for you and I will come for you so that where I am you will be.*

It was crucial that Jesus impress upon these men — and ALL who would come to faith through them — that **this world is not heaven**. We are troubled by death, betrayal, suffering for the simple reason that this world is not heaven! Men and women think that a few more possessions, the right address, a better president, will make this world heaven.

QUOTE: C.S. Lewis — *Human history is the long terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy.*

Those things don't change the reality of sin and death. Even the best of fallen mankind have all discovered that when they think things are starting to look and feel like heaven someone dies, someone betrays us, and we lose the things that made us comfortable in this fallen world. We can never expect to be exempt from such trouble.

Jesus wanted this time at this table to impress upon these men — who would in turn impress upon all who would come to faith in Jesus the fact that heaven IS NOT a state of mind. He speaks of heaven as real place. There is no state of mind that can remedy the troubled heart. Before I was saved heaven was merely a concept; hell was merely a concept. Both were merely subjects for philosophical or theological debate, but not something literal that could change my heart or my values.

Colossians 1:3–6 (ESV) ³We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, ⁵because of the hope laid up for you

in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, ⁶which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth,

3. At this table Jesus taught them about the person and work of the Holy Spirit

*John 14:16; 26 (ESV) ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you **another Helper**, to be with you forever.... ²⁶But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.*

QUOTE: A.T. Robertson — ἄλλον παρακλητον [*allon paraklēton*]). Another of like kind (ἄλλον [*allon*], not ἕτερον [*heteron*])¹

Jesus wanted this time at this table to impress upon these men — and all who would come to faith in Jesus through them (us) — that ¹. the Holy Spirit is fully and equally God **AND** ². that while Jesus is in heaven God the Holy Spirit would be their helper (and our helper) even as Jesus helped them while He was with them on earth.

Helper = parakletos — It was used to speak of someone **called in to help in time of trouble or need**. The Phillips Translation reads it as — “someone else to stand by you.”

QUOTE: A handbook on the Gospel of John — *In some languages the concept of Helper may be expressed quite idiomatically. For example, in one language in Central Africa a helper is “one who falls down beside another.” This is a figurative expression, relating to circumstances in which one person finds another collapsed from exhaustion along the pathway. The individual who “falls down beside him” is one who stoops down, picks up the exhausted individual, and helps him reach his destination.*²

¹Robertson, A. (1997). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Jn 14:16). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems.

²Newman, B. M., & Nida, E. A. (1993). *A handbook on the Gospel of John*. Helps for translators; UBS handbook series (467). New York: United Bible Societies.

Jesus made sure that He had this time at this table to promise that in His absence the Holy Spirit would **come in** and strengthen them and give them courage.

The Spirit living within the disciples would take the place of the Savior living beside the disciples.³

4. At this table Jesus explained to them the very essence and nature of the Christian life

John 15:5 (CSB) ⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me.

The branch is not the vine, nor is the vine the branch. Yet their union is the closest union that can be conceived. Yet despite such close union the branch **cannot** produce its own life — it must derive its life from the vine.

Jesus made sure that He had this time to use this imagery to communicate the intimate union between the believer and Jesus. THAT IS the nature and reality of Christianity.

A Christian is not someone merely religious or moral — a Christian is man or woman united to Christ — receiving LIFE from Jesus (*I am the way, the Truth, THE LIFE*).

The vine produces its fruit through the branches. THAT is the nature of the Christian life.

The Christian derives his or her life from Jesus. Jesus produces HIS fruit through the believer.

The living branch is truly 'in' the vine — the life of the vine is truly 'in' the branch. There is NO LIFE and NO FRUIT apart from Jesus. The sooner the Christian discovers that he is nothing but a branch, the more fruitful he will become,

³ Wiersbe, W. W. (1997). *Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament* (250). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

because he will realize that he has NO LIFE apart from Jesus and can bear NO FRUIT apart from Jesus

QUOTE: J.C. RYLE — *It is the whole secret of the branch's life, strength, vigor, beauty, and fertility. Separate from the parent stem, it has no life of its own. The sap and juice that flow from the stem are the origin and maintaining power of all its leaves, buds, blossoms, and fruit. Cut off from the stem, it must soon wither and die.*

5. At this table the true and forever King demonstrated the fact that He is unlike any other King — and for that reason His Kingdom is unlike any other kingdom — and that it would be by way of His citizens that the ethos of the King would be expressed on the earth until He returns.

John 13:5; 12-15 (CSB) ⁵Next, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet and to dry them with the towel tied around him..... ¹²When Jesus had washed their feet and put on his outer clothing, he reclined again and said to them, "Do you know what I have done for you? ¹³You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are speaking rightly, since that is what I am. ¹⁴So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done for you.

I believe that Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. I believe that He is still in charge of human events. I believe He goes before us to prepare moments and safeguard settings in which He meets with us

to teach us about how we are to **live for Him in this world**

to comfort and assure us about our future hope

to teach us about the person and work of the Holy Spirit

to remind us that we derive life from HIM — and that HE produces HIS fruit through us.

to remind us that He is unlike any other King — and for that He has reason His Kingdom is unlike any other kingdom — and that it would be by way of His citizens that the ethos of the King would be expressed on the earth until He returns.

Sometimes He prepares and preserves those moments in the places, ways and times the local church meets

Sometimes He prepares and preserves those moments in places and moments that are unexpected — or even uncomfortable — but within them He meets us in ways that change our lives — and through our lives other lives are changed.

Jesus not only safeguarded that meal to instruct and comfort — He safeguarded *that* meal because within that meal Jesus revealed HIMSELF as the Passover lamb who would deliver Israel.

THAT is for our next time together in Mark 14.