

Gospel of Mark Chapter 14D

Every October it seems that our society takes deeper and deeper steps into the darkness.

- Amusement parks hold “Shocktober Fest” where people can experience fear.
- Films glorifying witchcraft and the occult are released and the special effects just keep getting more and more bizarre.
- Haunted houses, warehouses and prisons pop up all over the place

I have always tried to avoid things that arouse fear in my life:

In the Text that we will study this morning we will uncover two very different types of fear. One that causes men to stumble and a one that brings significant distress to the Son of God.

1. The Fear of Man that Lays a Snare (Prov 29:25)
2. The Fear of God that surrounds his righteous and holy wrath

Here are my goals for our study this morning:

1. Consider these two types of fear as we look at the Narrative
2. We will think about what the passage teaches us about God.
3. We will ponder what it all means to US
 - We begin where we left off last week:

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

- The Passover celebration concluded with the singing of the Hallel. Psalms 115 - 118.
- The disciples move through the streets of Jerusalem winding their way past the Temple gates and throughout the journey Jesus encourages and instructs his disciples
 - As they pass the golden vine on the gate of the Temple, Jesus exhorts them: **“I am the true vine and my Father is the vinedresser. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. (John 15)**
 - He comforts them, (John 14:1 **“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 2 In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.**
 - He warns them, 18 **“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.**
 - He prays that beautiful High Priestly prayer of John 17....
 - When they arrive at the Mount of Olives they enter the Garden of Gethsemane. They frequently come to this garden to escape the crowds of Jerusalem.
 - It is in this place of refuge, after many comforting words Jesus says something to his disciples that stuns them: (Place of the Press – new meaning tonight)

Mark 14:27 **And Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away, for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’**

- I have to believe that the disciples were shocked by Jesus’ prediction.

- The term: “*falling away*” describes the act of stumbling, tripping, it speaks of defection. These men have been with him from the beginning. They left their homes, their jobs to follow him WHY would they fall away NOW?

As you might expect Peter reacts with the same bravado that we have come to anticipate.

Mark 14:29 Peter said to him, “Even though they all fall away, I will not.” 30 And Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.” 31 But he said emphatically, “If I must die with you, I will not deny you.” And they all said the same.

- The rest of the disciples joined with Peter in a strong declaration of their allegiance. Later that night Peter would actually back up his words with a sword.
- BUT as the night progresses the words of Jesus, that originated in the prophecy of Zechariah, come to pass exactly as written.

Zechariah 13:7 “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who stands next to me,” declares the LORD of hosts. “Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; I will turn my hand against the little ones.

- (Think) This is amazing! God the Father is the speaker and he calls for a sword against: “the man who stands next to me”
- Here in Zechariah The Father is actually commands. “O sword, strike the Shepherd.”
- Zechariah predicted the Lord’s death.
- We know that:
 - The Sanhedrin plotted and planned to destroy Jesus,
 - Judas betrayed his Master,
 - Pilate would acquiesce to the desires of the Priests,
 - Peter would deny Jesus,
 - The Roman soldiers would carry out their orders and crucify him.

BUT behind the scene, beyond all of the players there is a sovereign and gracious hand at work, it is the hand of the Father leading his one and only Son, like Abraham leading Isaac to the top of Mount Moriah to offer his life as a sacrifice. (Gen 22)

Zechariah warned that when God strikes His Shepherd, the sheep will be scattered

- Jesus knows from the Written Word that the time has come, he is about to be stricken and he is warning his sheep before it happens.
- Not long after midnight the solace of the disciple’s garden refuge was violently interrupted by what we might consider a “Lynch-mob.”

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

- Try to imagine what the disciples experienced that night. From the garden it is easy to see the advance of the approaching army with their lanterns and weapons.
- John tells us that there was a detachment of Roman Soldiers and Temple guards who came with swords and clubs backing up the Chief Priests, the Scribes and Pharisees.
- Matthew told us it was a large crowd. Most commentators say there were somewhere between 500 - 700 people who came out to arrest the Lord Jesus.

- WELL eventually, the disciples all ran away just as Zechariah said.

MARK 14: 50 **And they all left him and fled. 51 And a young man followed him, with nothing but a linen cloth about his body. And they seized him, 52 but he left the linen cloth and ran away naked.**

On that night, the price was just too high, the fear of man gripped their hearts and they fled to safety and scattered. The sudden invasion literally dissolved them.

Now Peter sneaks around in the darkness on the fringes at a distance, trying to deal with the tension that he feels between his love for Christ and fear for his own life.

- These emotions are not unfamiliar to many young believers today. Confrontations with radical, abusive unbelievers arouse fearful emotions.
- IN various parts of the world the difficulty of being caught between one's love for Christ and fear for one's life is a daily struggle.
 - While believers in the US may be concerned about governmental interference, believers in Egypt, Iraq and other oppressive countries are fearful of losing their lives.
 - The fear of man is a significant reality for man believers today:

The author of Hebrews compels us in these times of anxiety to "Look to Christ."

Hebrews 12:2 **looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.**

When we look to Jesus what do we see? We see amazing courage. Strength beyond that of any mortal man, to bear the hatred, to bear the pain, to bear the indignity, to bear the betrayal, to be beaten and flogged, to face death, even death on a cross

To bear sin willingly for the sake of men who fell asleep when he needed them most, men who ran away in the garden, most of whom were M.I.A. when he hung on the cross. AND still he loved them. He bore their sins and carried their iniquity and by his stripes they are healed.

- We who believe bear the same fleshly frailties as the disciples. We sleep when we should be praying, we think more highly of our own devotion than we should, we run at times when we should stand firm.
- But Jesus is patient, kind and longsuffering he gives his disciples time and grace to grow.
- When he rises from the dead, he finds them, shows himself alive over a period of 40 days. What He began in them he will surely bring to completion. He is our Savior:

Php 1:6 **And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.**

Moving further into the Garden of Gethsemane the spotlight is on the Lord Jesus. He is about to face something more fearful than the Roman Cohort, a more horrifying than anything man has ever confronted. Here in the Garden he will gaze into the cup of the fury of God's holy wrath that has been stored up since the sin of the first man and women in the Garden.

Mark 14:32 **And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.”** 33 **And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled.**

- Mark tells us that Jesus began to be greatly distressed and troubled.
- The Word translated “Distressed” is a form of the verb to be “Amazed.”
- You might ask yourself, what could possibly amaze Jesus? He knows everything. What is it that would stun Him? What could possibly shock Him?
- Is there any experience He’s never had? Is there anything He doesn’t know?

Answer: yes, there is an experience Jesus never had BUT He is quickly headed toward.

He is about to experience something totally alien to everything he has ever known.

It is this experience that causes Him to be troubled, to be astonished. This is something totally foreign to Him.

- For all of eternity he has dwelt in unblemished perfect holiness. He has lived in an unbroken love relationship with the Father and the Spirit.
- He has never known sin. He has never known separation from the Father. He has never known the wrath of God.

We battle continually against the compelling impulses of evil that are within us.

- Not so with Jesus. He struggled in the exact opposite way because of His holy nature, because of His sinless purity, because of His perfect righteousness, because of His perfect love and obedience to the Father.

And NOW He will become the sin bearer...not a sinner, but He would bear OUR sin.

- As the Sin bearer he would endure the wrath of God on our behalf; he would receive the full and just punishment for sin that should have been OURS.

We struggle because the power of sin is so strong in us. He struggled because the power of holiness was the only power that existed in Him. How can He possibly become a sin bearer and endure the wrath of God.

- This is the turmoil that drove him to cry out:

34 **“My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch.”** 35 **And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.** 36 **And he said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”**

The relinquishment of Jesus body on the cross is dependent upon a prior surrender of his WILL to the will of the Father and that surrender takes place, not on a hill outside of Jerusalem but in a valley beneath it.

- Here in the Garden the mere contemplation of God’s fiery wrath has such a significant effect on Jesus that His physical body cannot endure it.
- As the cup of God’s Wrath is revealed to him he almost DIES! Right there in the Garden the capillaries carrying blood BURST from the pressure so that an angel must be dispatched to revive him.

Friends the wrath of God for sin is an absolute reality and it is more horrifying than anything that anyone could possibly face:

- Jesus faced Satan himself and was unmoved.
- He commanded a legion of demons to depart from an oppressed man in the Gadarenes without flinching.
- He Spoke to the raging sea and commanded the winds to be still and they obeyed.
- BUT when he came face to face with the wrath of Almighty God while he was dwelling in human flesh. His body could not bear it.

36 And he said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me.

What does the scripture say about this cup?

In one place, the prophet Isaiah calls this “A cup of trembling.” (Isaiah 51:17 & 22)

For those who drink it, the prophet says it is “A cup of Staggering.”

Psalm 11:6 Let him rain coals on the wicked; fire and sulfur and a scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup.

Psalm 75:8 For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup with foaming wine, well mixed, and he pours out from it, and all the wicked of the earth shall drain it down to the dregs.

C.J. Mahaney

“With vivid imagery the O.T. portrays this as a cup filled with fire and sulfur and scorching wind. Like the great eruption of Mount St Helens concentrated within a coffee mug.”

Wait a minute! Psalm 11 said, This cup of God’s wrath is “for the one who loves violence,” it is “The wicked of the earth who will drain it down to the dregs.” WHY would Jesus (who never sinned) drink the cup of God’s wrath?

That brings us to the Theological truth behind this portion of Mark’s Gospel: “Propitiation.”

- The term Propitiation carries the basic idea of appeasement or satisfaction

If you are angry with me because I offended you, because I hurt you, and I do something to satisfy your anger, or appease you, then I am restored to your favor and the problem is removed.

- Sin is an offense to God. The problem is that there is nothing that man can do on his own to appease God. Man is wholly corrupted by sin and by himself he cannot regain a righteous standing with God.
- The Only possible appeasement of God’s holy wrath must come through the work of a substitute.
- It must be a man but a man who is not corrupted by sin... Only Jesus

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross perfectly satisfied the justice of God and therefore removed once and for all the wrath of God for sin on behalf of God’s elect people, all those throughout human history who would believe.

1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

What does the Propitiation of Jesus Christ mean to us???

- It means that we do not have to live in fear of that great day when God judges the world in righteousness.
- We do not need to fear the wrath of God that will come upon the unbelieving world.

1 Thessalonians 1:9 **For they themselves** (Testimony of a new life) **report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,** 10 **and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.**

1 Thess 5:9 **For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,** 10 **who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him.**

- Yesterday at Food Bank, I shared a preview of this morning's sermon..
- As I spoke of the wrath of God the room was absolutely SILENT.
- Because God is righteous and God is just He cannot allow sin to go unpunished.
- His WRATH is Certain! His Wrath is Eternal! It is accompanied by unquenchable fire and everlasting torment it is a prison that NO sinner can escape.
 - Only Jesus holds the key to hell and death. The Key is found in the Gospel.
- You can pay it yourself OR you can repent of your sin and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Receive His Payment for your sin. Then You can say with confidence:

1 Thess 5:9 **For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,**