

Sermon Title: Dismal Night For Disciples
Scripture Text: Mark 14:26-42

Speaker: Jim Harris
Date: 12-15-19

Please join me in Mark Chapter 14. As we continue in Mark's record of these final days—and we're actually on *the* final day before the Cross—there's a lot recorded in the four Gospels, and it's kind of like, as you go from week to week, watching a serial television program: we pick up right where we left off.

The Characters for our venue this morning are the same ones we've seen: We're going to see Jesus, and He's going to have with Him the 11 remaining disciples who stayed with Him after Judas's exit from the Passover meal. Later, just as we get to the end of this passage—what we'll see next time—they're going to encounter Judas and a mob who come to arrest Jesus.

The Scene is going to be actually two different places. It's Thursday night of Passion Week. The Passover meal has just been concluded, and Jesus is about to lead the Eleven to a garden called Gethsemane, at the foot of the Mount of Olives, right outside of the city of Jerusalem.

The Storyline that we're picking up: Remember, just the day before this—or maybe two days before this, depending on how you reckon the days of that week—probably in the wee hours of the morning, Judas Iscariot had met in secret with the Sanhedrin; that's the "high council" of the Jews, if you will; Rome allowed them to have a certain amount of autonomy over the affairs of the Jews. Judas met with them, and for the paltry sum of 30 pieces of silver (Zech. 11:13), he volunteered to betray Jesus in a setting outside of the public eye, so that they could arrest Him and *finally* get to the plan they had been working on for over a year: kill Jesus.

The Sanhedrin had wanted to wait until the crowds thinned out after the Passover and the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:5-6), but they could not resist the opportunity presented by Judas. With Judas now on their side, serving as a mole in the inner circle of disciples, they could be sure that they would have a chance, now, to seize Jesus in a situation that would avoid the riot that they feared would happen if they tried to arrest Him out in the open (Matt. 26:5; cf. 21:46). In the providence of God, then, this arrest, this trial, and this crucifixion were going to happen *precisely* on the timetable that was determined by Jesus and His Father (Acts 2:23; 4:27-28). The timetable of these wicked men—who, in their religious hypocrisy, wanted to kill their Savior—their timetable didn't matter at all. "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29) was going to be crucified on the Passover at precisely the time for the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb (see 1 Cor. 5:7).

Now, once the Sanhedrin had decided that it was time to actually put the plan into action and to murder Jesus, the first step was the arrangement that they made with Judas, to make sure that the death of Jesus was not now going to be put off any longer. The next wrinkle in the unfolding of these events: Over about our last three visits to Mark, we saw how Jesus kept secret from Judas the exact location of the Passover meal in advance. Why would He do that? Well, had Judas known in advance, that would have been the very best opportunity for the Sanhedrin to arrest Him; it would have taken place at night, it would have been in a private home, it would have been *totally* out of the public eye—it's just what they wanted! That would have been the most logical thing; and of course, Jesus knew that; Jesus knew what was in the heart of Judas (Jn. 2:24-25), and so He kept the location from Judas until after they all arrived.

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This overarching lesson that keeps looming in all of these passages that have to do with these days leading up to the Crucifixion is that the *will* of God is always done according to the *timing* of God; there is absolutely nothing on your "things-to-worry-about-today" list *that you need to worry about!* God has it under control. Now, I don't mean, don't plan; I don't mean that it's awful if you feel a little bit overwrought with all of the things that you might be doing in the holiday season; but understand: God is sovereign! He is in complete control. Nothing in your life is outside of His care, and nothing in your life is worthy of sinful worry (Phil. 4:6). Just put it in God's hands (1 Pet. 5:7), be faithful (Ps. 37:3), and you will watch His plan work out (vs. 5).

Now, during that Passover meal, Jesus had let all of the disciples know that one of them was going to betray Him. Now, Judas's hypocrisy was so polished that none of the others suspected him anymore than they suspected themselves. What might they have been thinking when they said, "Is it I, Lord?" They weren't going to *intentionally* sell Him out, like Judas did; the others were probably thinking, "Oh, no! Might I have said something inadvertent? Might I have tipped somebody off, where we're going? Could I be responsible for Jesus being arrested?" Well, only Judas and Jesus knew that it was going to be Judas's willful act.

Once Jesus let Judas know that *He knew* what Judas was planning, that was when Judas left the gathering around the table; he did it on the pretense of running an errand that Jesus sent him on. Apparently, what Judas did is, he ran across town to the Sanhedrin to let them know that he knew where they were going next. John 18 tells us that Judas knew it was Jesus's custom to take them to the Garden of Gethsemane when they were around Jerusalem and it was nighttime (vs. 2), and that was a place of quiet and they could pray there—*Jesus could pray there, anyway.* Or, maybe Jesus even told them that, "After this, we'll go to the garden." Anyway, Judas knew by that time.

Well, that's where we left off last time. It was the end of the Passover meal, so we'll overlap one verse with last week. It says, in Mark 14:26—"After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives" (NASB, and throughout, unless otherwise noted). That describes the typical traditional end of the Passover meal: the singing of a hymn. As a matter of fact, the Greek word is actually a verb: *hymneō*—our word "hymn" comes from it. Why do we have a silent "n" on the end of "hymn"? Because the Greek word is *h-u-m-N-e-ō*—there's a silent "n" that we inherited from another language, so blame it on the Greeks! That's where the word comes from. And it's actually not "after singing a hymn"—it's a verb in Greek; it's literally: "after having *hymned*, they went out to the Mount of Olives." What were they "hymning"? Well, we told you last time: the "Hallel"—the collection of psalms that were the praise songs that were always sung in conjunction with the Passover: Psalms 113 through 118; and at the end, they may have sung Psalm 115, 116, 117, and 118 to close that Passover meal.

Now, what you can't see in Mark is something very significant. Between Verses 25 and 26—when they had finished the meal and they sang that hymn and went out—there is something very significant that Mark didn't record, but the Apostle John did. Everything that is included in John 14, 15, 16, and 17 fits chronologically in the white space between Mark 14:25 and Mark 14:26. It becomes very obvious, from our perspective, *why* Jesus prevented Judas from knowing where this place was: so that Judas couldn't do his evil deed during that meal.

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It was going to be around that table, at that meal that night, that Jesus delivered some of the most precious words and some of the most magnificent promises in all the Bible. He was telling them, in advance, about the age in which we live, *after* He would go to the Cross, *after* He would rise from the debt, *after* He would ascend to the Father, *after* He would send the Holy Spirit to empower His people. It was about the hatred of the world that they could expect. It's precious stuff; and if you want a blessing, go home today and read John 14, 15, 16, and 17. As a matter fact, that offer stands *anytime*—you'll *always* be blessed as you read those chapters. John includes a lot more *teaching* than the other Gospels do; less action, more instruction, so only John included the foot washing—that's in Chapter 13—and then everything in 14 through 17.

After that great teaching, and before they sang that hymn, Jesus prayed a prayer; it's the longest of any of His prayers recorded in the Bible: that's John Chapter 17. So 14, 15, 16—the teaching; Chapter 17 is the *real* "Lord's Prayer." We usually label the "Disciples' Prayer" in Matthew 6 as "The Lord's Prayer," but actually, the Lord *praying* is what's in John Chapter 17.

And do you realize: in this majestic prayer of Jesus, *you* are the subject of part of it? You need to know that Jesus was thinking about *you*, among other things, when He went to the Cross (see Gal. 2:20). He prayed, specifically, *not only* for "these"—referring to His remaining 11 disciples—but He says: "for those also who believe in Me through their word" (vs. 20)—through the Apostolic writing, through the Scriptures (see Jn. 13:20; 1 Thess. 4:2; 2 Pet. 3:2)—that's *us*. And according to what Jesus prayed that night, He prayed that God the Father will keep you and protect you. Do you realize that, that means: you are perfectly secure in Christ? (see Jn. 10:29) God *does* answer the prayers of His Son. He also prayed that you would have the fullness of *His joy* in your life. Do you realize that, nothing can make you happier than knowing and following Jesus Christ? He prayed that you will be safe from "the evil one" as you live in this world, which is not your home (Phil. 3:20)—this world *is* the domain of "the evil one" (1 Jn. 5:19), who is "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4), "the god of this age" (2 Cor. 4:4, NKJV); so, do you realize that, that means that *you* are the object of God's special protection? You are, to use the words of John Chapter 10, safe in His hand, and no one can get you out of it?

All that, and more, was in His prayer. He prayed about His plan for you to live in this world as His representative (Acts 1:8), for you to be one of the ones who carry the baton of the gospel and pass it on (Acts 8:4; cf. 2 Tim. 2:2)—so, do you realize that, there are people whom Jesus wants you to introduce to Him, and that He has a plan for you being alive right now, in *this* generation, at *this* time, in *this* city, in the neighborhood that you live in, at the place that you work, with the relatives—good, bad, and ugly—that will be around your table a Christmas? He has you there, and it's *all* part of His plan!

I was listening to something on the way to church this morning, and a guy who does evangelism was saying, "This is the way that people are: You say, 'We did this outdoor crusade, we preached the gospel here,' and they say, 'How many people did you lead to Christ?' " And he had the great answer; he said: "*Every single one of them!* And now it's up to them, what they do with where we led them." (see Mk. 16:15-16; Jn. 3:18; cf. Lk. 12:47-48) Great perspective, isn't it? We are part of His plan!

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All that, and more, was on the mind of Jesus as He finished up that Passover meal, as He prayed that prayer, as He went to the garden, as He prayed again, as He gave Himself to those who came to arrest Him. Now, that's all background to the text before us.

Today, we're going to kind of major on the 11 remaining disciples; and I called this "A Dismal Night For Disciples." They floundered in the fog of the mixture of their love for Jesus with their excruciating fatigue, having followed Him around for all that had been happening that week; their still-limited understanding of what was happening—this wasn't their best night.

We're going to look at Mark 14:26 to 42, and we'll take two parts out of the text: Number 1—"We Will Die With You!" say these big, brave disciples; and secondly—these aren't the exact words in your Bible, but it's like they said: "But We Need A Nap."

Alright, let's look at this: "We Will Die With You!" That majestic prayer—John 17—was in the presence of the disciples; Jesus apparently wanted them to eavesdrop on it—He wanted them to hear what He was asking (cf. Jn. 11:42). Now is going to come a much different prayer, one that will take place in private—just between Jesus and the Father. The next prayer that we're going to see here, we would not know about except that it was made known to us by special revelation through Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Have you pondered how you would do, if you were there that night with those 11? I have a really good idea: You would have fallen on your face, too. You would have run away, too. But we have the whole story now. Have you pondered the depth of *your* commitment to Jesus Christ, and how it would hold up if *you* were in the crucible of intense persecution?

Do you remember the story, now famous, of the high school girl, whose name I can't remember, but she was at Columbine High School 20 years ago, on the day of the massacre there? She was known to the murderers as a Christian, and one of the murderers pointed his gun at her head and said something like, "Do you *still* believe in Jesus Christ?" And she answered, "Yes!" And in that moment of his demonic anger and bitterness, he squeezed that trigger and spread around the room the messy remains of a now-empty body. He sent that dear girl instantly into the presence of Jesus Christ (see Lk. 16:22; 23:43; Acts 7:56, 59; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:21, 23).

How do you think you would hold up in a moment like that? You know, that's pretty brave! That's taking a stand! But, do you know what? That's not likely to happen to you. The more likely scenario is *a whole lot harder* than one instant decision to stand for your Lord. More realistically, it's: How do you hold up when someone around you starts *mocking* your Lord? How do you hold up when somebody on the job rather relentlessly makes fun of you for believing in Jesus Christ? Or, how do you do when the moment presents itself in which you have a wide open opportunity to explain to someone that the most important thing about you in your life is to know God through Jesus Christ, and to glorify Him forever? *Those* are the more likely scenarios when you will be put to the test. Do you speak up, or do you just slink away, or change the subject, or just clam up?

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Well, Jesus knew the state of the disciples that night, and here's something really interesting: He knew *every single one of them* was going to crumble. Nevertheless, He made sure He didn't abandon them, even though they abandoned Him (see Ps. 37:24).

Let's look at how He warns them, and then how this unfolds. Verse 27 in Mark 14—"And Jesus said to them, 'You will all fall away, because it is written' "—and now He, interestingly, pulls out Zechariah Chapter 13, Verse 7; and He makes an application from that—"It is written, 'I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.'" He probably said that while they were on the way from the upper room to of the Garden of Gethsemane at the Mount of Olives. What He predicted is: "You will all fall away."

Now, I want to explain a little bit about that terminology. I would whether they didn't translate it "fall away" because that's the best English translation of the Greek word for "apostasy." "Apostasy" describes people who profess to follow Jesus Christ, but they never actually put their faith in Him, and eventually, they fall away from the faith—they deny Christ, they go back to their former way of life (see Heb. 3:12, 14; 1 Jn. 2:19; cf. Jn. 8:31). Apostates are worse off than those who have never heard the gospel, because they've heard it and ignored it and rejected it (see 2 Pet. 2:20-21; cf. Heb. 6:4-6; 10:29).

So I don't like the idea of "fall away" because *these guys didn't fall away* (see Matt. 13:21; 24:10; 1 Tim. 4:1; cf. Phil. 1:6; Jer. 32:40; 1 Pet. 1:5). They became *very* influential spokesmen for the gospel. So I prefer the translation: "You will be offended" (as ASV, KJV)—but, it's not like they took a *personal* offense; or: "You will be made to stumble" (NKJV)—maybe that's the *best* way to put it: "You're all going to stumble very badly tonight."

Those variations give you the idea of what the meaning of this Greek word actually is; it's not super-easy to convey in English because we don't have an exact equivalent. Nevertheless, something serious happened to them: they scattered and they fled. The only exception to that was Peter, who didn't scatter quickly; *he* stuck around long enough to humiliate himself worse than the rest of them—to curse and to swear and say, "I never knew Him!"

The word that describes this here—I'm going to say it, because it's one of those Greek words that you will be able to remember because we have an English word that's just a transliteration of it. The word is: *skandalizō*. If that sounds a lot like "scandalize," it's because that's where the word "scandalize" comes from. Now, the root of it—which is *skandalon*, or, "scandal" in Greek—that word describes a bait stick. Picture the kind of trap in which you want to catch a rat or whatever: you could tip up a box, put a little bit of bait inside, prop it up with a stick, and then tie the bait to that stick, and when the animal goes around to the side where the bait is and tugs on the bait, it pulls the stick out and the trap is sprung, and the animal is caught. That stick was called the *skandalon*, and to be trapped that way was to be "scandalized"—so, it's to be caught in a trap. Jesus was saying that He knew that the circumstances were going to be so intense that all His disciples were going to crumble and cave in. He wasn't going to give up on them, but He knew they would need to be regathered and restored after the Resurrection.

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Now, here's a thought—maybe you've never pondered this before: If Jesus hadn't allowed the disciples to be scattered, they might actually have died with Him (see Jn. 18:8-9). We're going to see where they said, "Oh, no! Even if we have to die with You, we're not going to leave You alone!"—but that wasn't the plan of God. If He had snuffed out all the Apostles that same day, that would have been problematical for the plan (see Acts 1:8). Now, Judas *did* fall away; he *did* apostasize; he *is* "the son of perdition" (Jn. 17:12; cf. Jn. 6:64, 70-71; Acts 1:25), but the others became powerful servants of the Lord.

So immediately, Jesus followed up that application of Zechariah 13:7 with this promise: that even though they would desert Him and scatter in fear, He was going to gather them together again; He would reassemble the group, He would lead them again for a little while before He ascended to the Father. He knew what was going to happen that night; He knew what was going to happen to the disciples as soon as He was arrested; so He warned them about it, and He also let them know: He had a plan to restore them (cf. Lk. 22:31-32).

So as we look at this text—and I'm kind of focusing on the disciples—it was a dismal night for the disciples. As you see their frailty, see also, God's majesty! Remember, Jesus is in charge of *all of this*! Nothing frustrates the plan of God (Prov. 19:21; 21:30; Is. 46:10b). So He says to them, after He says "You're going to be scattered," Verse 28—"But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee." Guess what? That's exactly how it happened—just as He promised! We're going to study it when we come to the Resurrection text in Mark.

What you're about to hear next is going to sound like an echo of something that you've already heard: we saw it earlier in Mark—Peter tried to forbid Jesus from going to the Cross (8:31-32). If you read Matthew's version of it, it's the time when Jesus says: "Get behind Me, Satan!" (Matt. 16:23)—"You don't know what you're saying." Well, Peter leads the charge, again, to protest what Jesus has just said: "You're all going to be scattered, but don't worry—after I'm raised from the dead, I will go before you into Galilee." Look at Verses 29 through 31—"But Peter said to Him, 'Even though all may fall away, yet I will not.' And Jesus said to him"—He zeroes in on Peter; you're going to see in a moment that they're all saying this, but He zeroes in on Peter: "Jesus said to him, 'Truly I say to you, that this very night, before a rooster crows twice, you yourself will deny Me three times.' But Peter kept saying insistently, 'Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!' And they all were saying the same thing also."

Now, they were led by Peter. Peter is always the one with the biggest mouth; he's always the one who speaks most brashly—but "they were all saying the same thing." If you or I were there, we would have probably said the same thing...and we probably would have been trampling the other disciples to get away when they came and arrested Jesus. They all needed to learn a very important spiritual principle: the lesson of "Never" and "Always." It goes something like this: "*Never* tell God you will never do something." If it's something bad that you never *want* to do, lean on His grace, declare your faithfulness (Ps. 19:13; 119:133, 173). But if you say, "I'll *never* do that," you're just inviting the world, the flesh, and the devil to tempt you as you've never been tempted before, to lure you in. If it's something *good* that you never want to do, God is likely going to lead you into it someday, just to show you His power.

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I remember when I said to of a young lady: "After I get my degree, I'm going to be going to seminary. I hope you will marry me, but *don't worry*—I'm not going to be a pastor or a missionary!" Here we sit, about a half-century later—a pastor, totally in love with missions; a wife, totally in love with that pastor. By the way, she said: "Don't worry—I have no *intention* to be a wife of a pastor or a missionary." Look: that's the spiritual lesson of "Never."

Never tell God that you will "always" be faithful to something...Because I know you! You'll fail. And if you've been so pompous enough to say, "I will *always* be faithful," and then you fail, you're just going to make yourself all the more miserable because of the self-condemnation and the humiliation brought onto you by your pomposity! (see Prov. 16:18; 20:6; 1 Cor. 10:12) Just be faithful. Just obey the Lord. Just walk with Him a day at a time (Lk. 9:23).

Like I said: Peter is the one with the biggest mouth, so he's the one that was the "Exhibit A" for all of this. And notice that Jesus, essentially, said: "Okay, Peter, you guys: Look at your watches." They didn't really have watches, but Jesus gave them a time referenced. In that culture, nighttime was divided into four segments, or, four watches: 6 to 9 p.m., roughly, was "Evening"; 9 p.m. to 12 a.m. was generally called "Midnight"; 12 to 3 a.m. was "Rooster Crowing"—You know, it's a myth that the rooster next door crows just when you want to get up; they start *way too early*, right?—and then, 3 through 6 a.m. was "Morning" (see Mk. 13:34) So Jesus was, in essence, saying to Peter—and bear in mind, this was probably *approaching* midnight when they went to that garden—He's telling Peter: "Look at your watch! Before about 3:00 a.m., you're going to deny Me three times." That's exactly what happened; we'll see it more when we continue through Mark.

Do you know what Peter was doing? He was looking in the eye of God and saying: "You're wrong. Nope! I'm not going to mess up!" Big mistake to talk like that, and Peter was such a leader, and they were all so zealous, they all jumped onto the bandwagon. And interesting—Jesus didn't say anything like, "Get behind Me, Satan!" He didn't argue with them. He just let it play out, exactly as it needed to for them to learn what they needed to learn.

So, in this dismal night for the disciples, it starts with: "We Will Die With You! Oh, but, first—We Need A Nap." Jesus comes to the garden; it's called Gethsemane, which means "winepress"—there was a winepress or oil press there. It was a garden probably owned by a follower of Jesus who always let Him have access to it. Like I said, it's John 18:2 that tells us that "Judas...knew the place, for Jesus had often met there with His disciples."

So Jesus comes to the garden. He leaves eight of the eleven that are with Him at the entrance. He takes Peter, James, and John with Him further into the garden to a more secluded place to pray. Pick it up with me at Verse 32—"They came to a place named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, 'Sit here until I have prayed.' And He took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be very distressed and troubled. And He said to them, 'My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and keep watch.' And He went a little beyond them, and fell to the ground and began to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by. And He was saying, 'Abba!'—the Aramaic for "Dad"—"Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will.' "

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Jesus knew this was coming; He had known all along that this was coming. The week had been building up to it, but *this* is the point at which the suffering of Jesus Christ on your behalf began to reach its crescendo, as it did from here on. Now, as a man—Jesus was the God-Man: fully human, fully divine (Jn. 1:1, 14; cf. Col. 2:9; Heb. 2:14)—as a man, He knew the pain that He was about to endure; He knew what crucifixion was: *unthinkably* excruciating. As God, He knew the Plan of Redemption and the necessity to go through with that plan (Lk. 9:51; 24:26). And in this majestic—and we'll have to admit, inscrutable—display that He was the God-Man, Jesus poured out His heart to the Father. What was He praying? "If there's *any other way* to do this, let Me find it!"

Now, it wasn't *just* crucifixion! Remember: when He was on the Cross, He cried out: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Mk. 14:34). That was the moment at which He was bearing *all that sin* (see Is. 53:4-6, 10-11). He's saying: "I can't *fathom* that!" He was perfectly obedient to the plan. He *knew* there was no other way (see Heb. 2:17; cf. Jn. 13:8b). But nevertheless, it was *indescribable* agony for Him to go through it.

It's at this point—when Jesus dropped off the eight at the front gate and took the other three with Him and went further and prayed—that's where Dr. Luke records that Jesus prayed fervently, to the point of sweating. Have you ever prayed that fervently? I admit, I don't think I have, unless it was really hot. He was praying to the point of sweating, and there was blood mixed with the sweat—probably the result of blood vessels bursting by the agony of His soul (Lk. 22:44), faced with taking on the sins of the world and giving His life for them (1 Pet. 3:18).

Well, meantime, what was going on with the big, brave disciples, who would *never* deny Him? Read on: Verses 37 and 38—"And He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, 'Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.' " It's easy to say: "Even if I have to die with You, I will *never* deny You!" So the big, brave disciples, right after saying, "We'll never deny You; we'll go with You to death!"—they couldn't manage to muster up the energy and the self-discipline to obey something my dogs have always done: "Sit! Stay!" They couldn't handle that. That's not a good indication of their ability to live up to their loyalty claims. And, given three tries to get it right—Strike 1, Strike 2, Strike 3..."Jesus, we really need a nap!"

Never let your guard down, my friend. In your spirit, you may be desiring the right things—good for you. But your frail and fallen human nature is *so weak* (see Gal. 5:17). "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Call on God every day (Ps. 119:35-37, 88, 173), and *stay alert* (Prov. 4:23, 26; Eph. 5:15)—or you'll fall even faster than the disciples did that night.

You know how the rest of it plays out: Verse 39—"Again He went away and prayed, saying the same words"—See, even Jesus prayed over and over about the same thing—"And again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him. And 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. Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!"

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Now, as we prepare to put our little bookmark in here and come back to this next time we visit Mark—Remember: at the table, Jesus said, "One of you will betray Me" (Mk. 14:18). They were *all* saying, "Is it I?" And the best explanation I can come up with is that they thought, perhaps they had done something inadvertent, or that they *might* do something inadvertent, to lead them to be the betrayer. But as Jesus called those eleven to go with Him to His arrest, a *horrible* truth landed upon those eleven—the betrayer is *Judas!* Imagine their confusion! Imagine their frustration! Imagine their grief! Imagine their *anger* when they realized that one of their most trusted friends for over three years hadn't just *slipped up*—he had gone out and *sold* the Son of Man into His arrest! (see Ps. 55:12-14)

The question to ask *yourself* here is pretty obvious: Are you sleeping? You know, we pastors sometimes see people that we wish we were preaching to on this passage. Sometimes I *wish* I could call them by name and say: "Are you sleeping? Are you *missing* it?" Jesus Christ has something for you. If you are His child, He has something for you to be doing (see Mk. 13:37; Lk. 9:13; 1 Cor. 12:7; 15:58; Gal. 5:13; 1 Pet. 4:10). Are you *doing* it? Or, is it: "Ah, Jesus...I know I said I'd follow You to death, but—I *need a nap!*"

You may not be headed for a spectacular, profanity-laced public display of denying that you ever knew Jesus—but you could be asleep, spiritually speaking...Maybe just a little bit lazy, a little undisciplined. Maybe you're falling a little short of loving your wife "just as Christ also loved the church" (Eph. 5:25), nourishing her and cherishing her and granting her "honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life" (1 Pet. 3:7). Maybe you're not treating your husband and your kids in such a manner that people could say: "Now, *that woman*—there's something special about her! She loves that Lord of hers!"

Maybe it's just a little too easy for us to not respond to needs that God brings to us; they're actually *opportunities* for us to serve Him. Turn down a few dozen of those, and it's easy to get kind of calloused—in essence, to fall asleep.

Maybe we're just not very diligent about our own praying. I've never known anybody who has ever done any study on prayer from any passage in the Bible, and said: "Oh, yeah—I've got that one nailed!" (see 1 Thess. 4:1b)

Are you sleeping? Maybe it's *not* sleep. Maybe it's *worse*. Maybe this is the day for you to be awakened from your spiritual slumber and realize: you haven't been trusting Christ. It's possible to go along for the ride. It's possible to enjoy the fellowship. It's possible to blend in. It's possible to choose to hang out with people who don't get into trouble and don't lead you into worse and worse problems all the time—and *still* fall short of saying: "God, have mercy on me, the sinner!" Are you leaning on Him, and on Him alone? (Is. 43:11; Jn. 14:6; Acts 4:12)

Hey, even if you're a disciple—there *are* those dismal nights (Jas. 3:2). There *are* those times when, yeah, if you were with them, you'd be scattered. But you can stand in the Lord (Phil. 4:1). He *did* bring them back together; He did restore them—*especially* Peter, and we'll see about that, as well (Prov. 24:16).

Sermon Title: Dismal Night For Disciples
Scripture Text: Mark 14:26-42

Speaker: Jim Harris
Date: 12-15-19

But let's reach out to this Lord as we close, shall we?

Father, how we thank You again for Your great faithfulness; and as You put in one of the letters to Timothy: You are faithful, even when we are faithless. How we thank You for meeting us at our point of need. We can cry out to You like the man we met earlier in the Gospel of Mark: "I do believe; help my unbelief!" So, soften our hearts, we pray, that we may be responsive to those opportunities that You bring to us, wrapped in the clothing of needs of others. We pray that we will be found faithful as we navigate the difficulties of life and the hard decisions that have to be made sometimes. May we do it without worry. May we do it without doubt. May we do it with joy and with faithfulness, all by Your grace. We thank You for Your faithfulness to us, even when it is "the body of this death" that is crumpling underneath us, that causes such difficulty.

We pray for our brother and coworker Phil Behm now, while he is battling pneumonia. We pray that You would grant him relief from this, and the ability to be back to those things that he so loves to do.

In response to Your Word, we also pray for, as it were, "kings and all who are in authority." We pray for our President, for our Congress, and for the grievous things that are going on among them. May You cause a wave of humility to wash over those who have responsibility to lead us. May there be changed hearts. May there be many who are drawn to the Savior. And as we pray for them, we know that You have told us to pray that we might be able to live a "peaceful and quiet life." And that's all because You desire people to be saved. So help us to be good stewards of the freedom that we have, and the opportunities before us to share the gospel. Have Your way with us to that end, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.