

April 6

Scriptures: Read Mark 14

Key Verse: "...‘If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!’ And they all said likewise...then they all forsook Him and fled.”(Mark 14:31 & 50)

Overview

I can identify with the disciples. They were keen, energetic fellows, with more than their fair share of courage - it takes a brave man to parry the ardent questions and objections of friends, relatives, and a wife concerning a three year stint of irresponsible wandering with a zealot from Galilee. I can just hear Peter’s wife asking, “But how do you expect to pay this year’s taxes if you don’t get back to fishing?” Yes, they were strong on resolve, but were also weak on follow-through. Like me, (and you, perhaps), they were never at a loss for good intentions. Take a look at this chapter.

Here the narrative presents the first events leading to the crucifixion of Jesus. We read of Jesus’ dinner with Simon the leper just two days before Passover. It was this meal, which was highlighted by the extravagant act of the unnamed woman, pouring expensive perfume on Jesus’ head. Then, two days later, Jesus has His last Passover meal with His disciples. As they eat the traditional meal, with its unleavened bread and mandatory four cups of wine, Jesus uses these common elements to symbolize forever His broken body and shed blood. Then comes the noble resolve, and ignoble follow-through, of both Peter and the rest of the crew.

You see it in the key verses (31 and 50). Peter was the spokesman, but they all shared in the disgrace. After pledging undying loyalty, they all “forsook Him and fled”. Sounds like something I’d do. Threaten me with the electric chair and I’ll back-pedal quickly, especially in the heat of the moment, when the first reflex is self-justification and self-preservation! Like Peter, I might weep bitterly... after. But for now, “I’m out of here!”

Mind you, the speed of the events left the disciples quite breathless (and spineless)—why, even Jesus’ enemies couldn’t get their act and their stories together (vv. 56, 59). Nevertheless, we have here a tried and true reality in which we all share: the gap between what we say and what we do.

Thank God, even the apostle Paul needed to hear what we need to hear, “My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Take it easy on the sinner. There, but for the grace of God, go I.

Prayer

Lord God, please empower us in our daily living so that the gap between what we say and what we do may close. Thank you for Your forgiveness and your overcoming grace which You give to us when we ask.