

The Supper of the King – Mark 14:10-31

We are reaching the key part of Mark's Gospel, approaching the Crucifixion. This is building up to what the whole Bible has been leading to. This passage is a record of some of the final moments of Jesus before His death, containing some remarkable teaching and wise words. Unlike many of us, Jesus knew how and when He would die. This wasn't a 'hunch' that something bad was about to happen, this was his mission, and so every word He spoke was considered and intended to help us understand this mission; to bring us back into relationship with God.

This is Jesus' Last Supper. He knew this was His Last Supper and He chose who He would eat with. He knew the final moments and He is joined by His twelve disciples. The men He had walked with for the past three years; teaching multitudes, casting out demons, healing the sick, raising the dead and performing the miraculous. These are the guys He is eating His final meal with. Included in this group is Judas who would betray Him. Included is Peter who would deny Him. In fact, Jesus tells them all that they would all reject Him.

1) A Meal with Friends

Judas has a reputation for being among the most evil and hated men in history. His name sits side by side with the likes of Hitler, Stalin and Pol Pot. And yet, here he is one of the chosen few reclining at the table with Jesus. Judas has existed in the company of Jesus and his disciples for 3 years. Eating with him, doing ministry with him, walking with him, learning from him. He was 'one of the 12' one of the chosen disciples of Jesus.

When Jesus warns that one of them would betray Him, none of the disciples turn and look at Judas. None of them point the finger at him. They all, on this occasion, look to Jesus and ask 'Is it I?' Judas on the surface appeared to the disciples to be no worse than them. He did all the right things – not the 'obviously evil man' he is often portrayed to be. Each of the disciples discerned in their own heart the temptation to betray Jesus, questioning 'Is it I?' If there is any doubt over who Jesus really is, it would be better to hand him over to the authorities, to be in their favour, rather than risk their own lives.

Q. Judas was trusted as one of the twelve. How does the betrayal of a friend affect you?

Q. What temptations to betray and deny Jesus do we face today? How might we be challenged to reject Jesus?

2) Judas Gave Up on Jesus

Read John 12:4-6

Judas was a lover of money, but the greater issue was his Heart towards Jesus. He was not following Him out of love, nor because he recognised the Messiah. Judas wanted Jesus' stuff and what He could provide – not Jesus Himself. Tim Keller summarises like this: "*Judas' sin was selling Jesus. Put it another way. Judas is the person who follows Jesus when it profits but sells him off when it costs.*" Judas gave up when things seemed tough. When things weren't going the way he expected, he betrayed Jesus with a kiss. He was sold the lie that money would make him happy.

Mark's Gospel has demonstrated who Jesus is, and faith believes in that when everything else around seems to be loss. Christian joy is something to fight for! The joy that comes from overcoming temptation is profound; the joy that comes from forgiveness, the joy that comes from being generous - it's so sweet, because it comes from God.

Q. What momentary pleasures are we lured by? What lies and temptations do we face to turn from Jesus?

Q. Christian joy is something to fight for! – What do you need to endure for joy? What do you need to resist for joy? What do you need to fight for joy?

3) The Institution of The Supper

Judas has been identified as the betrayer. Peter is about to be confronted as another betrayer. Jesus knows they all will desert Him. It is at this point Jesus takes Communion – a symbol of what Jesus was going to do for them; a sign of His love for them. My body, broken, for you! My blood, shed for you! These are the guys who are about to run from him, deny him, be ashamed of him. Then they sing a hymn – Psalm 118 following Passover tradition.

Read Psalm 118

Surrounded by His 'friends' who would all betray Him, Jesus sings about steadfast love. A hymn literally all about Jesus, the 'gate of the Lord', the 'stone that the builders rejected'. Walking with The Cornerstone and they would be the ones to reject Him. They didn't understand how necessary all of this was – how desperate they were for a saviour.

The disciples were too weak. But they were all killed cruelly for telling people about Jesus (all of them except John, who died in his old age, but he was dunked into a vat of boiling oil for telling people about Jesus)! What happened to them? What was it that transformed them from traitors to heroes? They encountered the resurrected Jesus!

Q. Knowing the betrayal surrounding the Supper, how do the words of Psalm 118 comfort us when we feel weak?

Q. How does the Resurrected Jesus provide hope during our fight for Christian joy?