The Good News told by Mark

A Bible teaching commentary
on the Gospel of Mark
in easy-to-read English

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The trial of Jesus before Pilate

Mark Unit 11 of 12

Chapters 14:22-15:20

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Unit 11: Chapters 14:22 to 15:20.

Remember Me

While they were eating, Jesus took the bread. He gave thanks and broke it. He gave it to His disciples and said, "This is My body given for you," He said. "Do this to remember Me".

Then He took the cup saying, "This cup is the New Covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you". He gave thanks and handed it to them. All of them drank from it.

When Judas had eaten some of the meal with them, he went out.

Jesus again told the disciples about His crucifixion, as well as His resurrection and ascension. Soon they would see His enemies put Him to death.

From this day on they would remember the Passover supper as the Lord's Last Supper. They would remember the meaning of the bread and the wine, also the lamb. They would remember their Messiah whose blood saved them from sin and eternal death. In this way, Jesus asked all His followers to remember His death when they shared bread and poured out wine together. Through it, God revealed the 'mystery of Christ': our sins are forgiven because Jesus suffered and took the punishment we deserve.

When we remember the Last Supper and the sacrifice of Jesus for us, we must also remember He is alive and His Spirit is at work with us today.

Jesus Warns the Disciples that They Will Fail Him

Then Jesus warned the disciples that they would betray or deny Him before His resurrection:

- They would all run away;
- Jesus would die as it says in the Old Testament;
- Peter would say three times that he did not even know Jesus.

- He would then come alive and meet them again in Galilee to explain everything.

The disciples could not fully understand these things until after they happened. Peter said to Jesus, "I may have to die with you but I will never say I do not know You".

John, the disciple of Jesus, wrote down for us many of the things Jesus said at this time. Read them for yourself in John 14:1 to 17:25.

Jesus Prays and Suffers in the Garden

Then Jesus led the disciples out across the river and into a garden on the Mount of Olives. Jesus often went to this garden to pray and He went there this last time to pray with great sadness.

"Sit here while I pray" He said. He went further on, to be alone with His Father and knelt down and prayed. He asked Peter, James and John to stay near Him. He was so sad He felt as if He was dying.

"Abba, Father," He said. "Everything is possible for You. Take this suffering from Me. But let what You want be done, not what I want". So Jesus obediently suffered and died for the sins of the world. He yielded to the will of His Father and died so that our sins could be forgiven.

If you have not asked Jesus to come into your heart as your personal Saviour, receive Jesus NOW so that His sacrifice will allow you to go to Heaven with your sins forgiven. His death and sacrifice of His blood have paid for your sins. And the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross has paid for the sins of all believers since that time. We will meet them in Heaven if we, too, believe that Jesus is the Son of God and our Saviour. Meanwhile, we faithfully serve others in our calling from God. We do this with joy and with suffering, knowing that the return of Jesus on Earth may happen soon.

Ask God to forgive your sins, because His Son Jesus died in your place. Do not forget that He took the punishment for sin that we all deserve.

While Jesus prayed, the disciples fell asleep. Jesus came back to them and said, "Watch and pray. Then you will not fall into sin when you are tempted. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak".

Jesus went away again and prayed. Again, they fell asleep. The third time this happened He said, "Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is going to be handed over to sinners". Jesus saw torches in the distance and knew that the soldiers were coming to arrest Him.

The disciples failed to watch and pray at a time when Jesus specially needed them. They did not understand what was going to happen. They were tired and worried. This is a warning to obey Jesus when he says we must watch and pray. This is why He warned his disciples about the 'end times'. "Always keep watching".

The Arrest of Jesus

Just then, Judas arrived. He came with the Temple guards and chief priests. They carried swords and clubs. "The one I kiss is the man: arrest him," Judas told them.

Jesus said, "Do you have to come out with swords and clubs to capture Me? Every day I taught in the Temple courts and you did not arrest Me. But the Scriptures must come true", Jesus said.

Jesus is betrayed by Judas and arrested

The soldiers then arrested Jesus, but He faced them calmly. Jesus made it clear

that He did not want a fight. He did not run away but all the disciples ran away.

Jesus was taken to the High Priest to begin His trial.

The First Trial of Jesus by the Jewish Leaders

First, they took Jesus to Annas, the ex-High priest. His son was the ruling High Priest over the highest Jewish court.

The court of priests, elders and teachers met to judge Jesus, but did not do it in a fair way:

- The trial was held at night, which was against the Jewish law.
- The prisoner should not be abused, but they spat on Jesus and hit Him.
- If the person's crime was bad enough for him to die, the judges were not allowed to decide until the following day.
- The whole Sanhedrin, with the teachers and the elders, looked for a way to wrongly accuse Jesus 'so that they could put Him to death'.
- Many people told lies against Him, but no one could find any wrong in Him. Jesus was without sin.
- False witnesses were brought in to speak against Jesus.

Their stories about Jesus did not agree, so the High Priest asked Jesus, "Are you not going to answer?" Jesus did not answer their lies.

When the High Priest asked Him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One... and coming on the clouds of Heaven".

The High Priest became angry. "Why do we need any more witnesses?" he asked. He refused to allow anyone else to speak about Jesus. It was a meeting of religious leaders, and none of them believed that Jesus was the Son of God. The High Priest asked "What do you think?". The Jewish leaders said that He was guilty and that He had to die.

Then some began to spit on Jesus. They put a cloth over His eyes and hit Him with their fists. They said, "Prophesy to us, Christ. Who hit You?" Then the guards took Him and beat Him.

We see how brave Jesus was. He knew why He had come into the world. "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve others. He came to give His life as the price for setting many people free".

The Testing of Peter

Two stories ran side by side: (1) the trial of Jesus and (2) the testing of Peter and how he denied Jesus.

Peter was afraid and followed Jesus at a distance. When the soldiers took Jesus into the courtyard of the High Priest's house, Peter followed them. A servant girl came up to him and said, "You also were with Jesus."

Peter denied it. "I do not know what you are talking about" he said, and stood near the entrance door. The girl saw him there and said to those standing around, "This fellow is one of them." Peter denied it again.

Then others spoke to him. "You are from Galilee." Peter called down curses upon himself and swore an oath and said to them "I do not know this man!"

Then Peter heard a cock crow. He remembered Jesus had said, "Before the cock crows twice, you will say three times that you do not know me". He wept bitterly.

So, Judas betrayed Jesus, Peter denied Jesus and the other disciples ran away. All 12 disciples let Jesus down. Judas killed himself but the others were sorry and came back to Jesus. Jesus forgave Peter and the other ten disciples and used them to build His Church around the world. We read about this in the book of Acts.

Mark Chapter 15

The Second Trial of Jesus by the Roman Governor

The trial of Jesus went on all night. This was against the Jewish law. They tied Jesus up and led Him away to Pilate, the Roman governor of the region of Judea. It was very early in the morning. Only Pilate could give permission for someone to be crucified and put to death on a cross.

The religious leaders told Pilate the complaints they had against Jesus. They said that:

- He told lies to the people.
- He told them not to pay taxes to the Romans.
- He called Himself a king.
- He said He was the Messiah, God's anointed One.

They spoke words of hate, but Jesus did not hate His enemies nor answer back.

Pilate wanted to know if Jesus had said that He was a king. "Are you the king of the Jews?" he asked Jesus. "Yes, it is just as you say," Jesus replied. Jesus made it clear to Pilate that He was not an ordinary earthly king.

The chief priests did not believe the truth about Him. Jesus said to Pilate, "The reason I came into the world was to teach and show the truth". Denying God's truth leads to rejecting God's Son. A nation that no longer teaches the truth to its people is easily destroyed from within.

Pilate could see that Jesus had not done anything wrong. He was amazed that Jesus was so calm.

It was a custom to let a prisoner go free at the Passover feast. Pilate could find no fault in Jesus so he wanted to let Him go. He asked the people to decide whom he should let go: a murderer, or Jesus, the innocent carpenter from Nazareth.

The chief priests stirred up the crowd. They became excited and shouted to Pilate they wanted him to let the murderer go and to crucify Jesus. Pilate asked again, "Why? What wrong has He done?"

Pilate Washes his Hands in Public

The crowd shouted even louder. Pilate feared that the people would make trouble, so he took a bowl of water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am not guilty of this man's death," he said. They answered Pilate, "Let His blood be on us and on our children".

The noisy crowd was willing to take the blame for the death of Jesus, so Pilate let the murderer, go free.

Then he ordered the Roman soldiers to beat Jesus.

The soldiers took Jesus away. They took off His clothes and set a purple robe on Him, to dress Him like a king. After doing this, they made a crown of thorns and set it on His head. They made fun of Him and spat on Him, and hit Him on the head with a stick again and again. They pretended to worship Him.

Then the soldiers removed the robe and led Jesus away to nail Him to a cross.

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