

Mark 14:32-42

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Preacher: None

[0 : 00] You grab your Bibles and turn back to Mark 14. Mark 14, starting at verse 32, that's on page 851.

Let me pray for God's help. Heavenly Father, help us tonight to hear your word and not just take it as words in our ears, but would you drive them into our heart and would we know and love Christ better. In his name we pray. Amen.

There are moments in life where you can feel sick to your stomach. Those moments are usually before a big event, as the moment approaches, like the moment before a big final exam, as the clock approaches the start time, or before walking on stage for that big performance and the audience are ready and the lights are on.

And it's just before that happens that you begin to feel the nerves, the sickness, that your knees get a bit weak. You feel that this is the big moment. It's coming. And now I just need to go through with this.

But for all of us here, that big moment has never been our death. On July 1st, 1916, at 7.29am, British and French troops were in their trenches at the Battle of the Somme.

[1 : 49] And they were waiting for a Somme. And they were waiting for a Somme. And at the sound of a whistle, they were to climb up their ladders, out of their trench, and walk head on toward the German front line.

And that meant heading onto an onslaught of German bullets. In those moments, those troops were waiting for their death. And in those eerily quiet moments, before that whistle was blown, can you imagine the sickness that they felt in their stomach?

The distress that they felt in their stomach? The distress that they felt in their stomach?

Basically any of those discomfort? Basically any of those discomfort? Basically any of those discomforts were in their stomach? Basically any of those discomforts were in their stomachs were in their stomachs were in their stomachs. Basically any of those discomforts were in their stomachs were in their stomachs were in their stomachs. And there's not just sickness in his stomach, there is terror within him.

And this is my first point. Jesus faced terror before the cross. Jesus faced terror before the cross. Look at verse 32 of me.

[3 : 21] And they went, asked the disciples of Jesus, they went to a place to get 70. And he said to his disciples, sit here while I pray. Jesus has gone to this garden to pray.

Something is weighing on him. He needs to go to his heavenly father and pray. And he even asked for help from his friends.

Look at verse 33. And he took with him Peter and James and John. And what is weighing on him? Why do you need to pray? Verse 33.

He began to be greatly distressed and troubled. There's something seriously wrong. Internally, Jesus is deeply unsettled.

He's anxious. He's scared. His emotions are overwhelming him. But more than that, the issue goes even deeper inside of him.

[4 : 20] He says to Peter, James and John in verse 34, My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch. There is sorrow down to the depths of his soul.

And it's not just a little sorrow. It is sorrow to the point of death. A sorrow and distress that's so heavy and so crushing, it's almost killing him.

He's burdened with grief. He's tormented. He's disturbed to the very depths of his being. Those of you who might suffer with anxiety or panic attacks, can I just say that Jesus knows how you feel.

And even worse, actually. Anxiety can feel like a dark cloud over you, can't it? Like the colour has gone from the world. And like your body physically just won't settle.

Well, Jesus knows how you feel because he is going through something much worse here. And so, he leaves the three disciples behind and heads further into the garden.

[5 : 32] Verse 35. And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed. Now, this is no normal praying position he's in here.

A normal position might be standing or kneeling and perhaps have his arms up and eyes lifted to heaven. But Jesus doesn't do that here. What does he do?

He fell to the ground. Jesus collapses to the dirt. He falls before the Father, coming to him in dire need. This prayer is a desperate cry to God.

And he prays to the Father, asking him in verse 35, that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. Now, this hour he's speaking of here, this is the hour of his death.

Jesus has already foretold three times in Mark's Gospel up to this point, that he's going to be handed over to the authorities of Jerusalem, and he's going to suffer, and he's going to die.

[6 : 41] And this has been his mission. This has been his task from the beginning. This is why he was sent. This is what his whole life and ministry has been building up to.

And now he knows the hour is almost here. He lies in the trench of Gethsemane, waiting for the whistle to blow.

He knows the time has come for him to die. And this is why his soul is so sorrowful. He's staring death square in the face.

He's on death row, staring down his execution. And it fills him with dread. The shadow of the cross is looming over him and crushing him with trouble and distress and sorrow.

But, it's not just death he's staring at. There's something more troubling going on here.

[7 : 45] Look at what he prays in verse 36. In verse 36. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me.

Yet not what I will, not what you will. It's not just death that awaits him. But it's a cup. Now this cup is a very important and a very terrifying cup.

And you can read about this cup in Isaiah 51. And this is the cup of God's wrath. This cup represents God's punishment on sin.

And in this cup, there isn't water. There isn't even acid or poison. In this cup is the blistering fury of God's wrath on sin.

This cup hangs over all our heads. Every sinner has to have their sins accounted for. Every sin needs to be punished.

[8 : 51] Every sinner has God's wrath resting on them, ready to fall. Everyone has this cup waiting for them. And you can't ignore it.

You can't pour it down the sink. You can't avoid it. No, this cup needs to be drunk. And so here in the garden, Jesus isn't just facing death.

He's facing wrath. On the cross, Jesus not only faced physical pain and agony and a brutal death, which he most certainly did.

But he also faced spiritual torment. And he experienced the very wrath of God itself. Jesus drank this cup.

But it wasn't his cup. Sinners have this cup. But Jesus committed no sin. There was no cup for Jesus. This cup wasn't his.

[9 : 54] Christian, it was mine. And it was yours. Jesus drank the cup of wrath for our sins.

Jesus was in that garden facing down the sin and wrath deserved for us. He knew he was about to answer for every sin that we committed.

Every lustful thought, every nasty word, every lie, every burst of anger, every sin of ours that deserves an eternity in hell. All the sin that we did.

Jesus was staring it square in the face. And he knew that he would be punished for it. The cup was hanging over him. And so, how bad is our sin?

How bad is this wrath? Well, Jesus looks at it and is in utter distress. He is physically and emotionally disturbed.

[10 : 58] He is sorrowful in the depths of his soul to the point of death. Brothers and sisters, Jesus looked at the wrath stored up for me and for you.

And it filled him with dread. We don't know how many Christians there will be in the new creation. It's impossible to even guess.

But let's say there's 10 billion. Now that could be way off. We don't really know. We can't even really guess at these things. But let's say 10 billion people in the new creation.

That means on the cross, Jesus took the sin of 10 billion people. 10 billion judgments. 10 billion eternities in hell.

The wrath stored up for your sin alone. That's terrifying enough. But can you imagine the sin of an entire people? And so, is it any wonder Jesus falls to the ground in sorrow and distress?

[12:05] We can't even begin to imagine that feeling. And so Jesus prays to the Father. Asking if it is possible that this hour might pass from him.

He prays, Lord, this is such a terrifying and agonising task. If it is possible, please let there be another way. Now at this point, you might ask, well, is Jesus chickening out there?

Is this Jesus not wanting to do what God has planned for him? Well, no. I want you to hear it here. In all this, Jesus willingly faced this terror.

And this is my second point today. Jesus willingly faced terror. Jesus willingly faced terror. There are two times in this passage where Mark tells us that Jesus prayed and asked his father that his death might not happen.

So look at verse 35. He fell on the ground and prayed. If it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And then again in verse 36, we hear his own words.

[13:14] Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will. We must think here that Jesus is asking, Lord, stop the plan of redemption.

This is too scary. I'm backing out here. No. We're witnessing here the true humanity of Christ. It is human to fear death.

It is human to be distressed at the idea of God's wrath and so we're not seeing any sin here we're not seeing any unwillingness we're seeing here that the frailty of Jesus fearing death and the natural impulse to avoid it so think of it like this imagine if I put a stove in front of you and I turn the stove on and blast it up to full max and so the flames are roaring and the iron griddle is getting glowing hot and I said put your hand on top of that and hold it there what are you going to do you're going to back away aren't you you're going to want to avoid that that's your human instinct to avoid pain and death it's not a sin to want to put away you're not disobeying me doing that there's no fault in you for doing that well neither with Jesus in the garden

Jesus is feeling the blistering heat of God's wrath and in his human instinct and frailty he's trembling and he's naturally wanting to pull away and so he comes to God and says Father if there's another way to do this if that is possible Father I pray for that he comes with the burden and the dread of the cross to his Father to see if there's another way but not to twist God's arm to change the Father's will but actually quite the opposite to that he prays to align his own human world with the Father's will because look what he says next at the end of verse 36 yet not what I will but what you will Jesus is saying here though my flesh fears death and the task ahead of me is terrifying yet I know your plan is for me to do this and so I will do as you tell me Father yet not what I will but what you will now these words are some of the most important words ever uttered on this planet these are the words of Jesus perfectly obeying his Father the fate of the world depends on Jesus' obedience to the Father's will and so the fate of the world hangs on these words and this obedience if Jesus walks away now he disobeys the Father and there's no cross there's no salvation and all humanity is left to drink this cup the fate of the world is in the balance here and so it's no coincidence where all this takes place it's no coincidence that all this takes place in a garden because can you think of another garden where the fate of the world was decided it was Adam in the garden of Eden Adam's disobedience to his heavenly father when he took the forbidden fruits that disobedience plunged humanity into sin and misery Adam said not what you were God but what I were but what happens here in Gethsemane Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane says not what I were but what you were Father in this moment Jesus is undoing what Adam has done by saying yes to the Father he's taking his people out of sin and misery and so no one else could have done this no one else could have said these words this is such a huge burden such a dreadful task such perfect obedience is required for this only Jesus Christ could have done this and his disciples prove that point do you remember what Jesus commanded

[18:02] Peter James and John to do while they prayed verse 34 remain here and watch their task is simple stay here and stay awake it's kind of your task at the moment this evening so he's feeling

sleepy stay here stay awake but look what happens next in verse 37 Jesus comes back over to them verse 37 and he came and found them sleeping and he said to Peter Simon are you asleep could you not watch one hour watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak as Jesus faces his burden task they have one simple task stay awake and they couldn't even do that why?

well Jesus says that the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak Jesus is saying to me your tiredness is pulling you away from the simple task of stay awake and pray your spirit is willing but it's not willing enough and he comes back again in verse 40 and what are they doing? sleeping and he comes back a third time in verse 41 what are they doing? sleeping the disciples are being contrasted here with Jesus to show that no one else could have done what Jesus did they couldn't even stay awake so they definitely crumb under the pressure Jesus was facing and so would we so would any one of us and what's even worse these aren't any old disciples James and John said back in chapter 10 Jesus we can drink the cup that you're about to drink and Peter in verse 30 of this chapter said I will die with you for now look at the mystery they can't even stay awake for Jesus even the most unwilling could not do what Jesus did Jesus stands alone in the garden as the only one who will save the world so did you notice where Jesus is in relation to the disciples in verse 35 it says

Jesus went a little farther than the disciples in Luke's gospel it says he went a stone's thrown away this little distance this a little farther is the distance between the world and its saviour between the weak and the one perfectly obedient man who willingly faced this terror now look at what Jesus says when he returns for the last time in verse 41 are you still sleeping and taking your rest it is enough the hour has come the son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners rise let us be going see my betrayer is at hand the hour he's been dreaded is now here and he simply says rise let us be going he willingly heads straight towards he knows Judas is just ahead he knows the wheels are in motion he knows his fate is sealed and he walks straight to the cross straight into the heat straight toward that club all the while saying yet not what

I will but what you will he had his father on his mind that night but not just his father Christian he had you on his mind in this agony because Jesus willingly faced terror so that you will never have to that's my third point tonight Jesus willingly faced terror so you will never have to have you ever wondered how martyrs Christian martyrs could so willingly and fearlessly face death have you ever wondered or seen godly Christians so peacefully and dreamfully lay on their deathbed as they stare down death maybe you know someone like that or knew someone like that why don't those Christians have dread or trouble or sorrow inside of them because in death they aren't facing the wrath of god there's nothing left for them to drink in the cup that they aren't sorrowful because Jesus was sorrowful for them it's because of this very moment in the garden and Christian that goes for you too as you face death however that may be that might be old age maybe illness or maybe even like a martyr for your faith whatever it may be you can be very sure that you have nothing to fear in death you don't ever need to feel sorrowful or distressed or feel scared about what's coming after death your fate is certain there is no wrath to face for you there is no anger

[23 : 33] Christian there is nothing left in that cup for you to drink Jesus has drunk it all and so let me be clear here your sins are completely and utterly dealt with and death for you is not entering into a dark and scary place no it is the complete opposite death for you is like coming home you will be with Jesus and it will be amazing Jesus faced this distress for you he was terrified as he approached death so that you will never have to be but if you're not a Christian here today can I just speak to you for a moment maybe you're here today and you do fear death and it troubles you or maybe you're not a Christian here today and you just haven't really thought about it well whether you fear death a lot or you haven't really thought about it the truth is that death is a lot worse than you think because for those who aren't following

Christ death isn't just an unknown death isn't nothingness death is terrifying death is when you die you will face God's wrath this cup that Jesus was so sorrowful and so distressed to drink you will have to drink it and it will be a horrible unimaginable experience and if I can be straight with you here it will be hell for eternity someone has to drink this cup someone has to take this punishment so I ask you today will it be you or will it be Jesus because if you turn from your sin and you trust in Jesus and follow him if you come to Jesus and say Jesus I don't want this wrath please save me from it rest assured he will save you he will save all who come to him and if you do if you do come to him you will find your cup is already empty

Jesus has already drunk on the cross and death will be transformed for you death will not be a mystery it won't be anything to fear in fact it will be entering joy it will be like coming home this is why Jesus willingly faced terror in this garden he did it so his people will never have to fear death so Christian you have nothing to fear on this night in this garden Jesus said there is sorrow in my soul and he said that so that we can say yes and now it is well my soul praise Jesus let me pray Lord we thank you for Jesus Christ we thank you for this night in the garden we thank you for what he went through so that we would never have to and we pray that we would continue trusting in his death and that we would be assured that our sins are dealt with and that death has been transformed for us

Lord help us to fix our eyes on Jesus in his name we pray Amen