

Mark 14:43-52

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Preacher: None

[0:00] And turn to Mark chapter 14. Mark chapter 14. Page 851. Lord, we pray for God's help. Lord, be with us tonight and speak to us.

! Help us to see Jesus more clearly. We pray this in his name. Amen. What happens on the inside of something can be seen in what happens on the outside of something.

So if you have a poorly tummy on the inside, it starts to show on the outside, doesn't it? Your face can become pale. Your eyes droop. You just don't look right.

So if you saw someone like that, you would think, oh, something's not right inside of them.

Something's going on there. Their tummy probably isn't right. What happens on the outside shows us something happens on the inside.

And tonight, we're seeing some big and important moments in Jesus' life. And on the outside of it, as we sit in the Garden of Gethsemane and watch all of this unfold, on the outside of it, yes, it seems wrong what we're about to see.

[1:27] Something distressing. Something distressing. Unfair. Something isn't right on the outside. and that is because something isn't right on the inside.

There is a deeper spiritual reality of events going on here. There is something spiritually going on here. God is doing something here in the garden, something to do with his plan of redemption. In this garden, God is saving us. So on the outside, we will see Jesus being betrayed and hurt, treated as a criminal, abandoned.

And all of this is happening because these outside events are the symptoms of an inner spiritual saving reality bubbling up and being seen on the outside.

So these events aren't just random or just coincidence of how Jesus got to the cross. No, in God's providence, these events unfold to show us how exactly Jesus saves us.

[2:34] They're outside symptoms of a deeper reality. And so let's see the first outside symptom. And it's this. Jesus was betrayed.

Jesus was betrayed. Still, in the quiet of Gethsemane, Jesus has just been praying in agony to his father.

And then he's been speaking to his disciples. But the quiet of the garden, it's disappearing.

Footsteps and voices approach.

And a familiar face begins to appear to Jesus. Verse 43. And immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve.

And with him a crowd of swords and clubs from the chief priests and scribes and the elders. A crowd appears in this garden, but they're holding swords and clubs.

[3:35] You look closely. This isn't just a normal crowd. This is a mob. It's a mob with, you can imagine, pitchforks and torches.

This is a mob out for blood. And who's leading the crowd? It's Jesus' close friend, Judas. Did you see what Mark calls him?

He calls him one of the twelve. It's like saying, yeah, it's Judas. And don't forget, he's one of the twelve disciples, remember that? One of Jesus' closest friends.

In school, I had a close group of friends. It was the three of us. It was me, Finn, and Will. You could say, we were the three. It was us three.

I was one of the three. And we were best friends. And we still are. Well, this is how Judas is named. Judas, one of the twelve. One of the best friends.

[4:38] Twelve friends who have been there by Jesus' side from thick and thin. And these words really sting because Judas wasn't by his side that

night.

Instead, he was rallying a mob and he was plotting something against his friend. Look at verse 44. Now the betrayer had given them a sign saying, The one I will kiss is the man.

Seize him and lead him away under God. This mob from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders have been after Jesus.

They don't like Jesus. They don't like his teaching, his miracles. He's come on the scene saying that he's the Messiah and they hate it. And so Judas joins with them and helps them.

And he plots with them. He goes to them and says, Hey, guys, I know where Jesus is going to be. I know you want him. I know where he's going to be. He goes to this garden.

[5:43] I can take you there. And there will be a few other guys with him. And you can imagine the mob, the scribes and the priests, like rubbing their hands. Perfect.

Perfect. But just a question, Judas. How do we know which one is Jesus? We really just want Jesus. We need the right guy. And Judas says, Don't worry.

I'll show you. The one I will kiss is the man. Seize him and lead him away under God. And that's exactly what happened.

Verse 45. And when he came, he went up to him at once and said, Rabbi. And he kissed him. And they laid hands on him and seized him.

Can you imagine the heartbreak Jesus must have felt? That's his friend. When you see one of your close friends, I'm sure you all have a close friend you can think of, what feeling do you get inside of you when you see them?

[6:47] Getting off the bus, getting off the train, and knocking on the door. When you see them, there's a warmth inside of you, isn't there? There's kind of a trust. You kind of feel like, I'm in good company with you.

I'm safe with you. Things are okay when I'm with you. But when Jesus sees Judas coming, he should have had that feeling. But it just gets twisted and shattered.

That feeling of warmth gets turned into a stabbing pain in his back. I thought you were my friend, Judas. If any of you have been betrayed, you might know how that feels.

You might think, it hurts for me to even look at you. Well, this hurts. It really hurts. And yes, Jesus knew this was going to happen.

He said in verse 18 of this chapter, one of you will betray you. He knows it's Judas. But it's one thing to know your loved one will betray you, and it's another to actually experience it as they stare at you, doing it right in front of you, and kissing you on the cheek.

[8:02] Judas has turned a loving greeting to an act of treachery. And as you look at this scene unfold, you just want to cry out, what are you doing, Judas?

Look how Jesus has loved you. Look how wonderful Jesus is. How could you do that, Judas? What are you doing? This is so ugly, isn't it?

And this scene, it's a real warning for us. If we walk away from Christ, this is what we're doing.

We're stabbing Christ in the back and siding with the enemy.

And it's really ugly. And so, if you're thinking about doing the same, if you're here thinking about walking away from the faith, this is your warning.

Don't do it. Don't do it. It's not a better option. Look at the friend you have in Jesus. Look how good he's been to you.

[9:07] Don't do it. Did you see what Mark calls Judas in verse 44? He stops calling him Judas and he's called the betrayer.

The betrayer. Judas is defined by his sin here. When you walk away forever, you are defined by your sin forever. Judas, we know, had never repented, never sought forgiveness.

We know that he just killed himself. And so, he is forever written on these pages in front of us and labeled in God's eyes the betrayer.

Judas is forever the betrayer. On the last day, Judas' sins will not be covered by Judas. God will look on him and see the betrayer.

And Judas will be judged accordingly. And that's because he never repented. And that will be the case for anyone who doesn't repent. They will be forever defined by their sin.

[10:17] But, we need to know that Judas, he could have repented. If Judas came to Christ after this and sought forgiveness, do you know what would happen?

Christ would have forgiven him. Even with this sin. This is quite possibly one of the worst sins ever recorded. Betraying the Son of God. And Jesus would have forgiven him.

And that goes for you too. You can come to Christ and he will forgive even the most heinous, despicable sins.

It doesn't matter what you've done. Christ can forgive it. And when you come to Christ, he completely redefines who you are. He takes your sin so you're no longer the betrayer or the adulterer or the murderer or the liar, he takes that label away from you, throws it away and then he calls you friend.

But Judas didn't do that. He betrayed Jesus, stung him in the back and then never returned. Jesus was left there forsaken and crushed by his friend.

[11:36] the pain and agony that Jesus felt on the cross. It wasn't just exclusive to the cross. His suffering didn't just happen when he was nailed to the cross.

He reached his climax on the cross but he suffered before that too and it's happening right here with Judas. This moment of betrayal, it's an outside symptom and a picture of what's going on in the deeper spiritual reality.

on the cross Jesus felt the pain of being forsaken. All warmth and comfort in him was turned to pain and agony and it was so severe on the cross that it's appearing in the events of his life now.

It's like a stomach bug that's so bad that you can see it in your face and in your skin. This pain he's feeling now, it's an outside picture of the inner spiritual reality that he will feel on the cross.

Jesus being stabbed in the back here is a foretaste of him being stabbed in his hands and his feet. Him being forsaken by his friend here is a picture of him being forsaken on the cross.

[12:54] But it doesn't stop there because he wasn't just betrayed but he was also treated as a criminal. That's my second point. Jesus was treated as a criminal.

Jesus was treated as a criminal. After this Jesus faces up to this mob and he speaks up which is pretty striking.

He actually faces up to them. Imagine a bunch of football hooligans and what's the scary club? Millwall. Imagine a bunch of Millwall football hooligans coming up to you with knuckle dusters and bats and they're stalking straight at you and imagine you just said hey, what do you think you're doing?

What do you think you're trying to do with me here? Can you imagine that scene? Well that's what's going on with Jesus here. Look at verse 48. And Jesus said to them have you come out as against a robber with swords and clubs to capture me?

Jesus looks at this crowd and says why have you come out by this? This is how you treat a criminal. This is what you do when you're on the hunt for a fugitive on the run.

[14:12] And on top of that Jesus says in verse 49 day after day I was with you in the temple teaching and you did not see to me. He says I was in public the whole time.

I've been open to you and you've had your opportunity this whole time. I was even just teaching in the temple. You've all come from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

You and your bosses have all seen me yet you come to me and get me like a mob for a criminal. Now we can ask here why didn't they get him before?

They did see him why didn't they get him before? Why are they coming out like this? Well we hear a lot in the gospels that the Jewish authorities hated Jesus but the people the crowds they loved Jesus.

He drew crowds to himself and showed compassion on them that they followed him and they couldn't wait to hear his teaching. And so even though the Jewish authorities hated Jesus they were also scared of the people.

[15:25] They knew that if they arrested Jesus in public while he's teaching while he's standing up they knew that there'd be an uproar if that happened. They knew the people would be crying what are you doing?

Get your hands on him. Have you not seen his miracles? Have you not heard him teach with authority? Get your hands off him. He hasn't done anything.
What are you doing? And so the authorities this mob they couldn't do it in public. They had to do it under the cloak of darkness. There's another reason.
Because by coming to Jesus with swords and clubs like they are now Jesus is right in what he says. it makes him out to look like a criminal.

He says have you come out as against a robber with swords and clubs to capture me? This doesn't make Jesus look good does it? This is a crafty way of making Jesus look bad.

[16:28] I love watching police TV shows like Road Wars. Have you seen Road Wars? That's one of my favourites. I love especially the scenes where they do police raids in someone's house.

Like drug dealers' house. or whoever. And they'll burst into the house with batons and shields and sometimes guns, if it's a good episode. And you always see in those police raids, you always see glimpses of the neighbours coming out of their houses and standing outside watching. And you know that they're all thinking they've definitely been up to no good. That must have been drugs or something really bad. You know, just the police raid makes that person look guilty already, doesn't it?

Well, this crowd is like that police raid. It doesn't matter what Jesus has done. It doesn't matter that Jesus is sinless and he's entirely innocent. This mob just makes him look bad.

It makes people think, oh well, he must have done something bad. They knew they had nothing to hold against him and so they had to misrepresent him.

[17:40] They had to lie about him. But interestingly, Jesus doesn't protest. He doesn't try to stop them. One of his disciples tries to stop him in verse 47.

He swipes at them with a sword. But Jesus doesn't try any of that. He doesn't let that sword swing play out. Jesus simply says at the end of verse 49, but let the scriptures be fulfilled.

He says, you want to label me as a robber and treat me as a criminal. Fine. Let the scriptures be fulfilled. And what are the scriptures being fulfilled here?

Well, Luke's gospel gives us an answer. It's Isaiah 53, which is a passage all about a suffering servant who saves us from our sins. It says this, and he was numbered with the transgressors. He was numbered with the transgressors. Scripture says that the saviour of sinners must be numbered with the transgressors. This is Jesus becoming the suffering servant of Isaiah 53.

[18:55] So just let me read out that verse. he poured out his son to death and was numbered with the transgressors, yet he bore the sin of many. This scene is Jesus fulfilling that prophecy.

This is Jesus being treated as a criminal and a sinner instead of the real sinners and criminals. This is Jesus bearing the sin of many.

This is an outward symptom of the deeper spiritual reality. Christ being treated as a robber and a criminal, it shows how he was treated on the cross under God's wrath.

He was cursed and punished as a criminal. The sinless Lord of Glory, the spotless Lamb, the perfect King of Kings, that man hung on a cross as a robber.

How awful. And he stands in front of this mob and says, okay, treat me like that. Handcuff me and lead me away.

[20:07] I must fulfill the scriptures. And why did he just take it? Why did he just take the handcuffs? Well, he took them so that we would never have to work them.

in this scene, we should be crying out, hold on, I'm the criminal. I'm the robber. What's going on here? And Jesus says, yes, you were, but not anymore.

Jesus was numbered with the transgressors so that on judgment day, when God looks at those people defined by their sin, people like Judas, the transgressors, the unrepentant sinners, when he looks at them to put judgment on them, he did this so that you won't be there, so that you won't be a part of those transgressors.

You won't be numbered with the transgressors because Jesus was right here. On the cross, God declared on Jesus in his wrath, criminal, so that he could say to us today, innocent.

Jesus was truly numbered with the transgressors. He was treated as a criminal. But there's a final thing to see about this fateful evening, and it's this, Jesus was abandoned.

[21:35] Jesus was abandoned. So first, he was betrayed by his friend, then his name was smeared and was labeled as a criminal, and to top it all off, look at verse 50.

And they all left him and fled. They all left him and fled. Can you believe that? All of his friends, his disciples, they just abandoned him.

The first whiff of danger, they just packed up and turned their backs on Jesus. He was arrested, barred, and led away to the cross, all alone.

He was all alone. No comfort, no support, no love. Instead, a taste of betrayal and abandonment in his mouth. And then after that, we hear a bit of an unusual account of one of his followers running away.

Did you notice that in verse 51? And a young man followed him with nothing but a linen cloth about his body, and they seized him, but he left the linen cloth and ran away naked.

[22:43] And it sounds a bit funny, this ending, doesn't it? It's a bit of a weird add-on. Some people over the centuries have thought that this young man here is Mark, the writer of this gospel.

But we don't know that, we can't really say that, it's just a guess, and so I don't put too much confidence in that. But I think the point of this character here is to show how shameful it was to abandon Jesus.

It says they all left him, and then we zoom in on this one person, a young man who followed Jesus. And he was one of his followers who walked miles with him, it says he followed him.

But as soon as the authorities tried to seize this man, perhaps they kind of grabbed his clothing to arrest him to, this young man pulled away lightly, and his clothing came off with them, and then he became naked and ran away.

I think we're told this because it's a shameful thing to abandon Jesus. He was abandoning Jesus naked and exposed and shameful.

[23:55] His nakedness here is showing a shame in the action. All while Jesus remains bound and made out to be a criminal. Yet Jesus, he remains there dignified and heroic, doesn't he?

As this man shamefully runs away from him. This unusual moment, this unusual ending, is highlighting that sinners shamefully fled from the cross while Jesus heads straight to it, all on his own.

only he can do it, and he did it alone. It was not an easy road to the cross for Jesus. We have thought about that.

He was betrayed, despised, mobbed, misrepresented, abandoned. He wasn't cheered on his way to Calvary. He didn't have friends to comfort him on the way there.

He wasn't surrounded by people to support him and encourage him and say, keep on going, come on, you can do it. The road was horrible for Jesus. There's a question to ask.

[25:09] Why did it have to be so horrible? Could not Jesus have come and died quickly? To put it bluntly, could Jesus not have come, got shot, died, and boom, done?

Why did he have to go through such anguish before the cross? this suffering is not just coincidental, this suffering is important and necessary because Jesus had to be plunged into sin and anguish, into the very depths of it, so that he could save us from the depths of sin and anguish.

He had to plumb the depths of our sin to save us from it. He had to become the lowest of the low and experience the worst of the worst to save the lowest of the low and the worst of the worst.

A few years ago, I was helping someone clear out their pond. Don't ask me how I got ripped into that, but we were clearing their pond and we had to clear out all the bottom filled with dirt and geese poo and bacteria and it absolutely stank.

We had to clear it all out to cleanse the pool. And to clear it out, I had to plunge my hand to the very bottom of the pond and hit the top and drag everything up and then clear it out.

[26:41] I had to plunge my hand all the way down into that, so I couldn't just briefly skim the surface and be like, okay, done, it's clean now. The muck would still be there, wouldn't it?

No, I had to get to the lowest point and clear out everything from there. Well, that is what Jesus is doing here. He's plunging down into the very depths of sin and misery and suffering to the lowest of lows.

His betrayal is him being thrown into the mud. His arrest is him being driven further down to the bottom. His abandonment is him being plunged into new lows.

all so that he can drag us out of the depths and bring us into fresh air and raise us to new life. This wasn't easy for Jesus.

The road to the cross was not easy, it was horrible. But brothers and sisters, he did it for you. He was forsaken so we would be loved.

[27:44] He was called a criminal so that we could go free. He was abandoned so that he would never leave us. Let me pray. He was