BETRAYAL TO BLESSING

CORE PASSAGE: MARK 14:17-26

CONTEXT

Jesus "triumphantly" entered Jerusalem, humbly riding on a donkey. Over the next week, He cleansed the temple of thieves, denounced the Jewish authorities, and taught about the future destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. Near the end of the week, in the upper room, before Jesus celebrated and transformed the Passover meal, He had a startling message for His disciples: one of them would betray Him. This betrayal was not a surprise to Jesus. He knew it all along, and as He neared the day of His death, it was time for the traitor to do what he had been appointed to do.

KEY CONCEPT

Jesus endured betrayal, remaining faithful to the mission of establishing a new covenant.

As you examine Mark 14:17-26:

- Recognize that at the last supper, Jesus knew He would be betrayed by one of His disciples.
- Rejoice that even knowing Judas's coming betrayal, Jesus remained focused on sacrificing His life for the salvation of all.

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TIMELINE

- Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead (John 11:1-44)
- Jesus's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-11)
- Jesus Foretells the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple (Mark 13:1-37)
- **SESSION STUDY: Jesus Institutes the Lord's Supper (Mark 14:12-26)**
- Jesus Is Betrayed and Tried (Mark 14:27–15:15)
- Jesus Is Crucified and Buried (Mark 15:16-47)

Daily Readings

- ☐ **Day 1:** Mark 14:1-26
- ☐ **Day 2:** Matthew 26:1-30
- ☐ **Day 3:** Luke 22:1-30
- ☐ **Day 4:** John 13:1–14:31
- ☐ **Day 5:** John 15:1–17:26
- ☐ **Day 6:** Psalm 55

Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

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PERSONAL PREPARATION

MARK 14:17-21

JESUS ENDURED THE SUFFERING OF BETRAYAL.

Underline the hints Jesus gave for the identity of His betrayer.

17 When evening came, he arrived with the Twelve. **18** While they were reclining and eating, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me." **19** They began to be distressed and to say to him one by one, "Surely not I?" **20** He said to them, "It is one of the Twelve—the one who is dipping bread in the bowl with me. **21** For the Son of Man will go just as it is written about him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for him if he had not been born."

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Jesus suffered more than just the cross. He suffered humiliation and betrayal. Yet He endured because of His love and commitment to His mission to bring salvation and establish a new covenant with God's people.

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Key Concept: Jesus endured betrayal, remaining faithful to the mission of establishing a new covenant.

In this moment, Jesus and the Twelve were observing the Passover feast as commanded in the law of Moses. What should have been a joyous remembrance of God's deliverance, however, suddenly became somber as Jesus declared that one of them would betray Him. Imagine the shock in the room. Sure, Jesus had enemies, but did He have one in this room? It was only reasonable for them to be distressed and to ask for clarification.

Mark said each of the Twelve—one by one—asked Jesus, "Surely not I?" Why one by one? Perhaps they all had some self-doubt. They loved Jesus, but they had seen how people reacted to Him. Perhaps they knew their own weak and sinful hearts. Each thought, "Will I be the one to betray Him?" Even if unintentional, they each worried they might be the cause of Jesus's downfall, except surely the one who had already made the arrangements with the chief priests (vv. 10-11).

What are some ways you might have the potential to betray Jesus?

To the disciples' self-searching query, Jesus gave a non-answer: "It is one of the Twelve" (v. 20). One eating with them now in that intimate setting would be the one to betray their Lord. Why didn't Jesus tell the other disciples it was Judas? We can't be sure, but Jesus said later in His prayer: "I guarded them and not one of them is lost, except the son of destruction, so that the Scripture may be fulfilled" (John 17:12). If the rest of the disciples knew, would Judas have made it out of that room? But the Scripture had to be fulfilled, and the path was already laid out. Jesus would go "just as it is written about him" (Mark 14:21), possibly a reference to Psalm 41:9, where David said, "Even my friend in whom I trusted, one who ate my bread, has raised his heel against me."

Even though it was foretold, Judas was still responsible. Divine sovereignty and human responsibility coexist. God is in control of everything, and we are morally responsible for our actions. Judas's betrayal was not excused because it was a fulfillment of prophecy. His sin was his own, as was his judgment. It would have been better, in fact, if he were never born at all, for his eternity apart from Jesus will be far worse than never existing. Such a sobering reality highlights the seriousness of sin.

How does Judas's fulfillment of prophecy challenge your understanding of the nature and authority of Scripture?

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PERSONAL PREPARATION

MARK 14:22-26

JESUS ENDURED TO THE CROSS BECAUSE OF HIS FAITHFULNESS TO THE NEW COVENANT.

Highlight the elements of the Lord's Supper and what they represent.

22 As they were eating, he took bread, blessed and broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is my body." **23** Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it. **24** He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. **25** Truly I tell you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." **26** After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

"There is a reality in the celebration of the Lord's Supper beyond a memorial. Yes, Jesus in His humanity is in heaven, but in His deity, He is not restricted by time and space. So, we can have full assurance when we come to the Lord's Table that we come into His real presence. He is there."[1]

–R. C. Sproul (1939–2017)

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Key Concept: Jesus endured betrayal, remaining faithful to the mission of establishing a new covenant.

In 1 Corinthians 11:28, the apostle Paul said we ought to examine ourselves before partaking in communion, or the Lord's Supper. That is the model Jesus gave us in this passage. Jesus announced His coming betrayal, and each disciple asked Jesus if he were the one who would betray Him. Then Jesus took the bread and wine and served the first communion meal.

What weaknesses and sins are revealed through your own self-examination right now?

Such examination humbles us to receive the gift of Christ's body and blood offering. The disciples that evening were not aware of the deep meaning behind Jesus's words, but soon they would see. The offering Jesus made in the Lord's Supper symbolized the offering He made on the cross. The bread represented His body, the wine His blood. The broken body and shed blood of Christ for the forgiveness of sins—a beautiful reality!

Like Judas's betrayal, Jesus's death on the cross would be a fulfillment of Scripture. Through it, Jesus, our Prophet, Priest, and King, would institute the new covenant as prophesied in Jeremiah 31:31-34. Christ would sacrifice Himself as the final offering for the forgiveness of sins to fulfill the old covenant and initiate the new covenant (Hebrews 8:13). In the Lord's Supper, this is exactly what we celebrate. Jesus took, He blessed, He broke, He gave, He offered Himself—body and blood—to save His disciples and us.

The brevity of the passage must not be taken to mean this is an unimportant event. Here Jesus began something new, meaningful, and long-lasting. We still celebrate the Lord's Supper today. It is one of the ordinances enjoyed by churches around the world and throughout the centuries. This is one reminder of the dying and resurrecting love of Christ. It is a gift from our Savior to taste and see that He is good (Psalm 34:8).

How should Jesus's sacrifice of His own body and blood shape the way we come to the Lord's Supper?

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

THE LORD'S SUPPER: The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

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GROUP EXPERIENCE

LAST SUPPER, LAST WORDS

Read Mark 14:17-26. From the passage, write down phrases that reveal Jesus's suffering or His faithfulness.

JESUS'S SUFFERING	JESUS'S FAITHFULNESS

As you look at Jesus's words of suffering and faithfulness, how does this shape your understanding of the cross and your salvation?

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Key Concept: Jesus endured betrayal, remaining faithful to the mission of establishing a new covenant.

HEAD

Why was it important for Jesus to institute the Lord's Supper as a remembrance of both His death and the new covenant?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Read Psalm 55. Feel the emotion of it and consider that the God of the universe took on flesh to experience such pain Himself for our sake. Meditate on the wonder of the gospel, thanking Jesus that His grace is greater than our sin.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES

HEART

How does Jesus's sacrifice for your sins encourage you to repent and come to Him for grace and forgiveness?

HANDS

What would you say to a fellow believer who thinks they need to skip the Lord's Supper until they are "worthy"?

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GROUP ARTICLE

FOUR WAYS TO DEAL WITH ELEPHANTS IN THE ROOM

By Darren Wiedman

It's that thing in your small group that nobody wants to talk about but everyone knows is there. The odd behavior. The unique personality. Or more than likely, the touchy subject. According to social media, the earth is flat or round, vaccines help or harm, and the media is lying or telling the truth. This is a difficult time to be alive if you like definitive answers. And it can make for some tense exchanges and hurt feelings, even in churches and small groups, where you'd think everyone would be on the same page.

But even in biblical times, there was conflict. The apostles argued about which of them was the greatest? Mary and Martha disagreed about how to serve guests. And Pilate asked the ultimate question (although rhetorically), "What is truth?"

Today's small groups continue the tradition. When we can't see eye to eye, it may be time to have a heart to heart. Here are four ways to overcome the dreaded elephant in the room.

1) IGNORE IT

Is your elephant the small porcelain type that rests on a corner shelf or a large smelly one that sits in the circle? If it's the former, you may be able to divert attention away from it by emphasizing the other positive aspects of group life: discussions about the Bible, fellowship, laughter, and food.

2) CONFRONT IT

Often the elephant comes in with one particular person. You don't want to appear to take a side against someone in front of everyone, so a private discussion will be best. Keep in mind that it's difficult to convince anyone that their thinking is incorrect or goes against all factual evidence. So don't bother trying to persuade someone they're wrong; rather, remind them about the purpose of the group: to focus on Christ and biblical learning. In other words, leave your elephant at home, or take it to a different circus.

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3) EMBRACE IT

If your group has an elephant that can't be ignored, maybe it's time to bring it out into the middle of the group and take a good look. This would require permission beforehand if it's one particular person's elephant. But if it's a group issue like politics (elephants and donkeys), perhaps you can all come to an agreement that both of them need to stay outside. Or maybe, if you're brave, you can devote an entire group session to discussing each side of the various issues from a biblical perspective. (I can think of very few scenarios where that would end well, but maybe your group is spiritually mature enough to take that on.) But for many other issues—someone's obnoxious laugh, the woman who cries about everything, the overly expressive worshiper—acknowledging the elephant in front of everyone can greatly reduce its size and impact.

4) PRAY ABOUT IT

This really should be the first thing you do. Every elephant is different. And only God knows the best way to deal with them. In reality, the elephant in the room is less of a challenge than the humans in the circle. The whole point of small groups is discipleship. And sometimes God will use an elephant to train a person. After all, Jesus helped the apostles understand the unexpected requirements for anyone wanting to be the greatest; He helped Martha get a better perspective on priorities; and He proved that He, in fact, is the truth, even if Pilate never understood.

Continually encourage your group to fix their gaze on the gigantic love of Jesus. Everything else is small by comparison.

And maybe that's the ultimate solution to the elephant in your room. Continually encourage your group to fix their gaze on the gigantic love of Jesus. Everything else is small by comparison.

Darren Wiedman is a copywriter for Lifeway's Adults Ministry team who relies heavily on God's grace and Jesus's atoning work on the cross.

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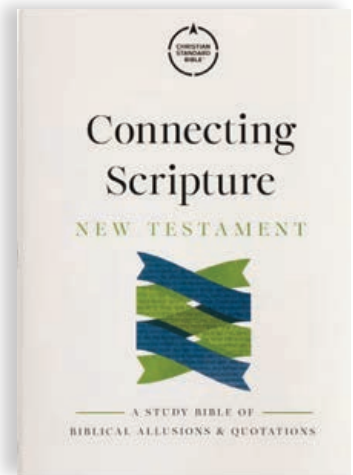

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