

Mark 14:22-42

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Preacher: Rev Hugh Ferrier

[0 : 00] Well could you please sum up with me to the passage we did in Mark's Gospel in chapter 14. Mark's Gospel in chapter 14.

And we're going to be looking at verses 32 to 42 of this chapter. Mark 14 verses 32 to 42, but especially if you look with me at verse 32.

We read in Mark 14 verse 32, then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane.

Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane. The Apostle Paul tells us that a communion, participating in the Lord's Supper, is a time for self-examination.

But it is also time for us to rekindle our love for Christ as we focus more and more on Him and more and more on His finished work.

[1 : 03] And so this evening I want us to focus on the awesome events that take place here in this garden called Gethsemane. And as we stand on this very holy ground, I want us to note four key things about the Lord Jesus Christ in these last hours of His earthly life.

We'll be looking at the consternation. And then we'll be looking at the crisis. Then the concern. And finally, the conquest.

The first thing we have then is the consternation. That's in verses 32 to 34. And we see these verses, the consternation or the agony of Jesus in Gethsemane.

The consternation or the agony of Jesus in Gethsemane. In verse 32 we're told that Jesus went to Gethsemane. Now, Gethsemane was a garden on the slopes of the Mount of Olives that contained an oil pest.

And this place, Gethsemane, the Mount of Olives, was a place that Jesus came to frequently in His earthly life. It was the place where He taught the disciples. It was the place where He communed with His Father in prayer.

[2 : 09] It was the place where He rested at night with the disciples. It was the place where Judas knew He would be found. And so Jesus and the disciples leave the upper room.

They ascend the Mount of Olives. And they arrive in this garden. While Jerusalem below is alive and active with noise and excitement. As the nations celebrate at this Passover time of year. And in verse 33 we see that Jesus takes Peter, James and John further into the garden. He leaves eight of the disciples near the entrance. And then He takes these three men who will become leaders, who will become pillars within the New Testament church.

But you know, He also takes these three men because they're the most volatile and vulnerable of His followers. James and John have just boasted they will drink the cup. Jesus will drink so they may have places of honour in His kingdom.

Peter has just boasted that even if the other disciples fail Jesus and abandon Him, He will not. He will go to prison, even death, with Jesus.

[3 : 14] And so Jesus wants these volatile and vulnerable men to be spiritually prepared for what will happen to Him. So they will not make shipwreck of their faith. And so He takes them further into the garden.

And Luke tells us that He leaves them a stone's throw from Himself. They will see His distress. They will hear His groans. They will listen to His prayers.

They will even gaze on the tears of the Son of God. But they will not enter His redemptive suffering. That is a path that must be taken alone. And so He creates this physical distance between Himself and themselves.

And in verses 33 and 34 we're told Jesus began to be deeply distressed and troubled. You know I think sometimes we're so focused on defending the deity of Christ that we lose sight of His humanity.

And when we lose sight of Christ's humanity we are left with a very passive, a very emotionless, a very tearless, a very fearless, a very inhumane Jesus.

[4 : 24] But this passage and these verses confront us with the emotional life of this very real, very human Jesus. We're told Jesus is deeply distressed and troubled.

The world is literally appalled. And His soul is sorrowful to the point of death. He is now entering an experience that He had never experienced before. And it smashes upon Him with such brute force that He is left reeling and He is left dazed.

And He is so amazed. He is so astonished. He is so anguished that it's almost killing Him. And Luke, you remember Luke, the beloved physician, tells us that the stress, the agony he was under was so great, He sweated great drops of blood.

Now why is He so distressed? Why is He so anguished? Well because He knows He's going to take the penalty for sin. He knows that the guilt of the guilty will be transferred to the guiltless.

He knows He will become the greatest sin bearer there ever was. And He knows that He is going to be answerable to a holy God, His heavenly Father, for that sin.

[5 : 39] And there will be no mediator for Him. There will be no covering for Him. Because He will be the mediator. He will be the covering for His people. He knows that in a few hours He will no longer be crying, Abba, Father.

But screaming, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? He knows that there is a cloud forming in His fellowship with His heavenly Father. And the result of this is an infinite homesickness comes upon Him.

Maybe you've been in a situation. Maybe you've been in an environment that you have found so depressing, so distressing, so troubling, so hard.

And you've just thought to yourself, I want to be home. I want to be away from all of this. Or maybe, dare I say it, you've been in such a position that you've been so depressed, so distressed, so troubled.

You've just thought to yourself, I want to be in heaven. Because I can't take this anymore. Well, that is Jesus. He just wants to be home.

[6 : 48] He just wants to be with His Father. Wants to be in the bosom of His Father's approval. Wants to be savouring the worship of the angels once again. The reality of being the saviour of the world.

And all its implications suddenly weighs very heavily upon Him. You see, He'd known from the moment of His birth that He would die this way. The cross is no afterthought in the mind of God, in the plans of God.

It was always at the centre. The cross is not the appendix to the life of Christ. It is the apex. It is the high point of the life of Christ.

But at first, it had been decades down the line. And then it was years down the line. And then it was months down the line. And then it was weeks down the line.

And then it was days down the line. But now, it is only hours down the line. And it is weighing so heavily on Jesus, that He barely has the strength to go on, and face tomorrow, and face that cross, and face His Father's condemnation.

[7 : 55] He is distressed. He is troubled. In Gethsemane, we are confronted with a crushed, fearful, depressed Jesus.

And isn't it an encouragement for us tonight, friends, that as we survey the emotional life of this Jesus, we're reminded that He knows what it's like to be depressed.

He knows what it's like to be crushed. He knows what it's like to be fearful. He knows what it's like to be wondering if you can even face tomorrow.

And He knows what it's like because He's been there. As Christians, we deal with a sympathetic high priest who turns to us and says, I know what you're going through.

And I know what you're going through because I've been there. And I felt the way you're feeling. The consternation. But this brings us second to the crisis.

[8 : 55] The crisis, verses 35 and 36. And we see in these verses the crisis in the life of Jesus as He wrestles with accepting the cup.

The crisis in the life of Jesus as He wrestles with accepting the cup. In verse 35, Jesus falls and He prays that the hour would pass. Now, no self-respecting Jew fell in prayer.

The only time we see people falling in prayer is that Christ has moments in their life or the life of the nation. And so in Genesis 17, Abraham falls in prayer when he wonders, will God's covenant promises be realized?

In Leviticus 9, the Hebrews fall when they realize how holy the living and true God is. In Numbers 14, Moses and Aaron fall when confronted with the holiness and the majesty of God.

Those were times when the desperation of the situation led these men to fall to the ground and almost convulse in fear and agony in the presence of God.

[9 : 58] And now Jesus falls in agony and fear. And prays that the hour chosen from all eternity for Him to die might pass Him by.

Jesus prays that the cup would be taken. You see, friends, if we want to understand what Jesus did for us, if we want to understand what it caused Jesus to save us, we need to understand the depths of this prayer concerning the cup.

Jesus prays, calling God Abba. It is a very intimate expression for God. It's sung translated as Daddy, or Oh Dear Heavenly Father.

The sentiment is the same. There is this close bond, this close connection, this close love between Jesus and His Father. And He says, Father, all things are possible for you.

You can do everything. You are the all-knowing God. You are the all-powerful God. You are the all-present God. You are the sovereign God. And just as an aside, isn't that the confidence we have as we approach God in prayer?

[11 : 10] We come before our Heavenly Father saying all things are possible for you. And if that is not your attitude in prayer, why bother praying? We come before our God saying, all things are possible for you.

But Jesus goes on and He says, Father, all things are possible for you. Take this cup away from me. Now the cup in the Old Testament was symbolic of God's judgment, God's condemnation, God's hatred, God's wrath against sin.

Isaiah 51 speaks about the cup that causes men to stagger. Jeremiah 25 speaks about the cup that makes people a ruin, an object of horror and scorn and cursing.

This is the cup filled and brimming with the covenant curses, the penalty of death that awaited any who hadn't lived lives of covenant commitment to the living and true God.

Jesus knows that for me to be forgiven by God, for you to be forgiven by God, He must take the punishment our sin deserves. He must direct that cup down to its last legs in my place and in your place.

[12 : 25] And He says, Father, remove this cup from me. Take it away from me. And that, friends, is what Jesus wants. He doesn't want to experience His Father's judgment.

He doesn't want to experience His Father's condemnation. He doesn't want to experience His Father's hatred. He doesn't want to experience His Father's wrath as He becomes our sin bearer. Every fiber of His being is now recoiling and shrinking back from taking this cup. He's saying, Father, I don't know if my body can cope with this. And Father, I don't know if my mind can cope with this.

But above all, Father, I don't know if my soul can cope with this. And so if there be any way by which people may be forgiven, then please let this cup pass.

I don't want to drink it. I want your will to be different. I want your providence for me to be different. You know, this is really the crisis moment in salvation history.

[13 : 31] It's a crisis moment in the life of Christ. The salvation of the world now seems to hang in the balance, as it were. As the Son of God wrestles now with accepting this cup and drinking this cup and He's crying out, is there any other way?

Is there any other way? And there is no answer. Because there is no other way. Jesus now knows that His Father's will is that He drank this cup and He must submit to His Father's will.

And tonight, friends, we are reminded that there is salvation and there is forgiveness in no other place, in no other person, in no other name, but Jesus Christ.

When Jesus cries out, Abba, if there be any other way, let this cup pass from me. There is no heavenly voice saying, well, if these people are good, if these people are kind, if these people go to church, if these people belong to the Free Church of Scotland, if these people pay their free will offering, if these people go to the Sunday school, they will enter fullness of life.

Friends, there is no such pharisaic, post-modern nonsense coming from heaven because, friends, there is no other way. Jesus alone is the way to God.

[14:55] And the confidence of the Christian as we go to the Lord's table is not what we have done for God. The confidence of the Christian as we go to the Lord's table is what God has done for us in Christ.

In our place, he drank the cup. In our place, he stood condemned. And in our place, he cried, it is finished.

You know, friends, we don't come to the Lord's table boasting in our achievements because if you're like me, you probably have none. We come to the Lord's table vesting on the accomplishment of the Son of God.

That's the crisis. Jesus. This brings us third to the concern. The concern, verses 37 to 40. And we see here that concern that an anguish Jesus has for his faltering, flawed, failing followers.

The concern that an anguish Jesus has for his faltering, falling, flawed followers. In verses 33 to 36, Jesus is in agony.

[16:09] Physical agony. Mental agony. Spiritual agony. He is indeed the man of sorrows as Isaiah predicted with such pain etched on his face that you and I would say, is this a man at all?

And all he can do in the midst of his agony is pray to his father. He's got nowhere else to go. No one else to turn to but his father. But he keeps breaking off his prayer and returning to the disciples.

Verse 37. Verse 40. Verse 41. Now the disciples have failed. They're meant to be keeping watch as we see in verse 34.

But in verse 40 we're told their eyes were heavy and they slept. And even Peter slept. Even this bold, brash, brave Peter who's going to stand by Jesus through thick and through thin.

he is falling asleep and Jesus comes to him saying, Simon, could you not keep watch for one hour? Is this all your commitment to me amounts to?

[17:12] Is this all your love for me amounts to? What's going on with you, Simon? But you know, Jesus doesn't keep returning to his disciples to point out their failure. But like a shepherd tending his sheep, he's seeking their spiritual well-being.

He's concerned about them. You see, he calls them in verse 38 to literally keep watching and keep praying. And he calls them to keep watching and keep praying because he knows their weaknesses.

He knows in verse 38 that they're about to face a very great temptation. Now, any time the Bible speaks about a great temptation, it speaks about being untrue to God, being unfaithful to God. Now, Jesus doesn't say pray that you will avoid this temptation. He says, pray that you will not enter. Pray you will not fall into. Pray that you will not succumb to this temptation because, friends, and I want to just encourage you, especially if you're not a Christian tonight, I want to encourage you by saying every Christian is tempted.

Every Christian is tempted. The devil knows my weakest spots. He knows your weakest spots. He knows how to get in at us. But there is a world of difference between being tempted and falling into temptation.

[18:34] And Jesus says to his followers, my dear friends, I know you're eager to stand by me. I know you're eager to remain faithful. But I also know how weak your human frame is.

And so watch and pray. Fortify yourselves by depending on God. Fortify yourselves by leaning on God. Fortify yourselves by waiting on God.

And three times Jesus breaks off his own prayers to go to his disciples to encourage them in this way. In his deepest agony, Jesus is concerned for his failing, flawed, faltering disciples.

And isn't it wonderful tonight to be reminded that in the middle of the greatest agony and anguish of his entire existence, Jesus was concerned about his failing, faltering, flawed men.

That's the kind of high priest we need. A sympathetic, compassionate, faithful, concerned high priest. A high priest who when in the middle of a cosmic struggle of epic proportions incomprehensible to you and I breaks his prayer off and goes to his disciples to encourage them because he's concerned about them.

[19:57] I wonder friends, do you ever wonder whether in the busyness of the world or in the busyness of Jesus' activities in heaven that Jesus just might forget you?

That Jesus just might be too preoccupied to deal with you? Do you ever think to yourself, what can Jesus see in a little man or a little woman in stornoway or scalpy or tarvert?

Does Jesus care about me? Is he concerned about me? Do I matter to him? Well this passage is the remedy for any such thinking.

Because this passage is the reminder that our names are graven on the palms of Jesus. This passage is the reminder that Jesus lives to make intercession for us.

This passage is the reminder that we are near and dear to the heart of the Son of God. Jesus has a deep concern, a deep interest in his most failed, flawed, faltering disciples.

[21 : 02] Have you failed this evening? Do you feel flawed this evening? Do you think my life is such a mess? Maybe Jesus would just want to wash his hands of me.

Remember the words we've sung already in Psalm 103, such pity as a father has unto his children dear. The Son of God is concerned about you.

Whether you are a Christian today or not, Jesus is concerned about you. He has a concern. He has a concern.

But this brings us finally to the conquest. The conquest verses 41 and 42. And we see here that Jesus goes to the cross in obedience to his father's will.

Jesus goes to the cross in obedience to his father's will. In verse 41, Jesus makes a third tip to the disciples and he tells him that the hour has come for him to be betrayed.

[22 : 06] In this hour he is going to become the sin bearer. In this hour he is going to drink the cup of wrath. In this hour he is going to be handed over to sinners. He is going to face the unrivaled judgment of his father who hates sin and he is going to face the unrivaled sin of men who hate God.

Do you ever think of the cross that way? That at the cross you see the unbridled judgment of God who hates sin but you also see the unbridled sin of men who hate God.

They meet, they smash together in the person and work of Jesus. Jesus knows he is going to be betrayed by one he shared bread with.

He knows he is going to be accused by a blasphemous court. He knows he is going to be beaten, his beard pulled out, his face punched and spat on, knows he is going to be mocked by a puppet king, condemned by a biased judge, knows he is going to be rejected by an apostate nation, tortured by a foreign army, and he knows he is going to have him suspended, naked, nailed to a cross outside the walls of Jerusalem amidst the jeers of onlookers.

And friends, he knows all this. He knows it all. And he says in verse 42, rise, let us be going.

[23 : 36] He is not fleeing. He is not running away. He is not seeking a backdoor exit. He is riding off, yes, but not into the sunset, but into the darkness, where he will conquer sin, conquer death, conquer the devil through his redemptive suffering.

suffering. This is not the weak, effeminate Jesus of so much Christian art. This is the Jesus who strives out to meet his enemies head on, as the Son of Man, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world.

This is the Jesus who is sovereign over sin, sovereign over Satan, sovereign over sickness, sovereign over storms, sovereign over death, and he has come to defeat them all.

And there is rejoicing in heaven as he gets up. Because the angels have been watching and waiting with bated breath. You see, they have seen so many deliverers raised up in the Old Testament who all failed.

Adam failed, Noah failed, Abraham failed, Judah failed, Moses failed, the judges failed, Saul failed, David failed, Solomon, they all failed.

[24 : 53] And now the angels see this anointed one, this representative of humanity, this second Adam, standing in a garden, being tempted to disobey the will and word of God, and he takes a cup in his hand, and he is no longer trembling, and he stands with blood like sweat, coursing down his exhausted face, soaking into his clothes.

He is bloodied, but he is unbound, he is bruised, but he is not broken, and he gives the triumphant order that only a victorious captain, assured of his victory, could give.

Rise, let us be going. And the angels burst into song, who is this exalted king? What glorious king is this?

The Lord almighty, he is king, and strong in battle is, as this king bows, not in submission to his will, but in submission to the will of his father.

Jesus goes to the cross in obedience to his father's will. Now this evening, friends, at this communion season, we are reminded of Jesus' victory.

[26 : 09] Communion is a very solemn time. as we remember the body of the Son of God broken for us, and the blood of the Son of God shed for us.

But I think we have to be careful not to make it too solemn, because it's a time of joy. It's a time of thanksgiving. It's a time when we publicly and corporately celebrate Jesus' victory over sin, death, and the devil.

And we're encouraged in these verses of Mark 14, to embrace this Jesus tonight, and leave this building, and go to the Lord's table rejoicing that Jesus drank the cup for us.

He won the victory for us. He died the death for us. We don't come to the Lord's table on Sunday celebrating our victories, because probably most of us are reminded of our failures at a time of communion.

But we do come celebrating the one who looked dead in the face, took the cup in his hand, and said with full assurance of his impending victory, rise, let us be going, see my good hair is at hand.

[27 : 31] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.