

Mark 14:26-31 I Would Never Falls Ch. PM 7/14/2024

In verse 26, the phrase is when they had hymned, which means that they hymned a hymn, which is awkward in English, so we say when they had sung a hymn. What hymn? Whenever groups finally decided to conclude that table-fellowship time, they would recite some of the Hallelujah Psalms, from 115-118.

Imagine the disciples singing with Jesus, just before they walked toward the mount of Olives. For Jesus, who had been anointed with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard in preparation for his burial, now had sung a hymn in preparation for His ordeal that was about to begin.

After Jesus was hymning a hymn, Jesus was preparing for his dying for us.

After Peter was hymning a hymn, Peter was denying his denying of Jesus.

Jesus predicted Peter's denial in order to teach a lesson to Peter, and to our author Mark and others, and so Mark passed on the lesson to us.

This is where we come in. All of us would like to think that we would have succeeded where Peter and the disciples failed. We would like to say, "I would never fall away from Jesus like Peter did." We would hope that we each would show greater humility and even a better controlled tongue than Peter! But if we are Biblical in our view of ourselves, and if we are honest in our view of ourselves, we know that we probably would have said the very same thing and acted the very same way. That is why these events for Peter are recorded in The Bible for us.

Verse 27, Jesus predicted that all of them would become untrue to Him.

Verse 31, all of them protested that this would never happen.

Verse 50, a little later, that very night, they all left Jesus and ran.

Why is it given to us in story form? Because we would not get the same impact if it only came in the form of a pithy statement. Here is one such statement in Proverbs 16:18, "*Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.*"

Whenever we are naïve enough to think "I would never deny my Lord," we need to be reminded of the prediction of Jesus that all would deny Him.

1. Pride: everyone messes up, why do you still think that you are special? (v.26-27)

Their location changed in verse 26 to the Mount of Olives. I sometimes wonder whether visitors and young children understand what we are talking about. When we say Mount of Olives, does any visitor or child imagine a giant pile of olives? Maybe. So, let me be more clear, to avoid that misunderstanding. They went out of Jerusalem to the hill with the orchard of olive trees.

Why the change of location? Remember that they had been in Jerusalem overnight for The Passover, as required, but they were no longer required to remain in the crowded city of Jerusalem. Sunset was the end of one day, and the start of the next day for them.

Verse 27, Jesus saw in this situation what no one else had eyes to see. What did Jesus discern? Jesus detected that certain Scriptures were being fulfilled. That was how Jesus knew that His disciples would abandon Him, when they became overwhelmed with fear of dying. Jesus knew that He Himself was the Shepherd of whom the prophet had written. Jesus knew that the smiting was His own death, such as Isaiah 53:4, “...we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions...” Jesus had absorbed the teaching of the prophets.

Jesus was quoting from the prophet Zechariah, chapter 13:7. It is interesting that the same prophetic book that presented the Messiah as a king riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, in Zechariah 9:9, also presented Him in Zechariah 13 as the rejected shepherd, struck down by the sword of God Himself.

Jesus understood the words of Zechariah to be fulfilled for Jesus Himself as the Shepherd-King who was rejected by His own people. In addition, Jesus was rejected by His Father in heaven for us. It was God the Father who “...put Him to grief...” (Is.53:10), and who “...did not spare His own Son.” (Roman 8:32) Zechariah sees not total destruction of the people, but rather one third of the people being preserved, and then being refined through suffering. By the end, Zechariah wrote, those people will again be recognized as God’s own people. If the disciples knew the Book of Zechariah well enough, they might have recalled the happy ending. That brings us to verse 28, and the second point of this sermon.

2. Grace: Jesus is not done with those who mess up, so are you still trying to earn something or prove something? (v.28)

Verse 28, the disciples should not be too discouraged about someone about to strike the shepherd and the sheep about to scatter, because Jesus already knew what would happen next, and Jesus already told them what would happen next!

- 1) Jesus will be raised up from the dead.
- 2) Jesus will go into Galilee.
- 3) The disciples will join Jesus in Galilee.

What would this mean for the disciples? It would mean that after all of their failures, they will still be able to go home with Jesus!

Listen for a pattern as I mention a few teaching points of Jesus now. In Mark 8:31, Jesus said he would be killed, but then rise again. In Mark 9:31, Jesus said he would be killed, but then rise. In Mark 10:33-34, Jesus said he would be killed, but then rise again. In the Passover meal, there was the cup of death, symbolizing the death of Jesus, but then Jesus said there would be a future cup of wine in the Kingdom of God from which the resurrected Lord Jesus would drink new with them.

So, while all of the disciples will do what they thought that they would never do – deny Jesus, there was already hope beyond that disaster! Jesus had made

mention of His coming resurrection sufficiently enough already, so it did not need further explanation here. Rather, it was a known fact to them all that Jesus would rise again. The new thing that was now included by Jesus here in verse 28, the new thing which should get our attention and focus, was the fact that the disciples were included as being together with Jesus after Jesus would rise again! Listen to it again in verse 28, *“After I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.”* Tied together with the statement that the disciples would all fall away, was also the statement that after the disciples would fall away from walking with Jesus, they would be restored to being with Jesus. After verse 27, they needed to hear verse 28. After the prediction that they would be disloyal, they needed to hear that there was still a future for them walking with Jesus again! Their stumbling was not the end of their walk with Jesus! The scattering of the flock was not the end of the flock. This takes on even more encouragement when we present its intended contrast to the fate of Judas, in verse 21, *“...woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.”*

What we have in verses 27 and 28 is a satisfying equivalence. The loss of the shepherd had a bad impact on the sheep, yet the recovery of the shepherd had a good impact on the sheep. An equivalence that is good, appropriate and satisfying. Let me say it again another way: the striking of the shepherd results in the scattering of the flock, but the resurrection of the shepherd results in the re-gathering of the flock.

In the Book of Mark, the specific mention of the name Galilee here was significant. The area known as Galilee was the home territory of Jesus and of His disciples. Galilee was the location in which all of the stirring events and hopes of the earlier ministry of Jesus had taken place. Galilee was the natural place to mention when mentioning hope and resurrection and restoration after falling away, and gathering after having been scattered. Jerusalem was the place of the rejection of Jesus and the death of Jesus. Jerusalem was the place of the disgraceful failure of the disciples. In the first half of the Book of Mark, the name Jerusalem was written twice, both times as the source of the official opposition to Jesus that would lead to His death. In the second half of the Book of Mark, the name Galilee was written twice, both times as the place where hope is to be restored after the disaster in Jerusalem. In this sermon conclusion, I'll read out loud the 2nd time that the word Galilee appears. Suffice it to say that Galilee is the place that hope is restored after the disastrous denials of the disciples, about to happen in Jerusalem.

3. A humbling lesson: have you yet learned the difference between being emphatic and being cautious? Are you still denying your denying? (v.29-31)

Before we study Peter's reply in verse 29, let me remind you how much Peter had already grown. Remember in Mark 8:31, Jesus said that He would be killed and rise? What did Peter say? Peter began to rebuke Jesus! Why? Because

Peter could not stand the idea of Jesus being killed. Well, now in chapter 14, verse 29, Peter has accepted that Jesus will suffer, and that others might fall away, but Peter cannot accept the fact that Peter would fall away. So, in characteristic fashion for Peter, he gave a response in verse 29.

Now we come to verse 29, and this prediction of disloyalty right after the Lord's Supper and singing a hymn was all too much for Peter. Peter objected and protested that even if all of the others deserted Jesus, that Peter proclaimed that he himself would not ever desert Jesus. When we examine this, we find that basically, Peter called Jesus a liar, because Jesus had just said that ALL of them would fall away, which would include Peter. Jesus had said "you will all fall away," and Peter in essence responded, "No, I won't fall away!"

There seems to be a connection here with the words of Jesus over in John 21:15, when *Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?'* It was prideful for Peter to believe that he loved Jesus more than all of the other disciples. It was prideful for Peter to believe that even in a situation in which all of the other disciples would fail and fall away and scatter, that Peter would be different, Peter would be better, Peter be loyal, Peter would remain immune to failure, and Peter would resist falling away. Peter alone! The Bible has a word for that. It is called pride.

The next reply of Jesus must have stunned Peter because of its detail and precision. These words of Jesus came from our Savior's heart of compassion and kindness, and yet these words they contained a needed rebuke for Peter. Jesus backed up His prediction. Listen to verse 30, "*And Jesus said to him [Peter], 'Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.'*"

What Jesus had now further predicted for Peter was worse than the stumbling that all of them would do, and that general stumbling Peter had already very strongly repudiated. Now in addition, in only Peter's case, it would take place not as a simple denial, but now as a TRIPLE denial! The new later of prediction from Jesus for Peter, would not be simply a momentary succumbing to pressure, but rather a deliberate and calculated dissociation from Jesus as rabbi and friend. This would be not merely weakness and wavering, but actual apostasy. No wonder the statement of Jesus would next evoke from Peter an even more vehement repudiation of the new prediction from Jesus. If a simple desertion was unthinkable, a denial repeated three times must be more so, and for all of that to happen within the next few hours was outside the realm of possibility, as Peter saw it.

Back in Mark 8:34, Jesus had called for denial of self, instead of denial of Jesus. Listen to Mark 8:34, "*And calling the crowd to Him [Jesus] with His*

disciples, He [Jesus] said to them, 'If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.'”

So, if Peter were humble...if Peter did not have a pride problem...Peter should have been humbled by this new prediction from Jesus. Where is the Peter who a moment earlier had been told that one of the Twelve would betray Jesus, and that recent Peter had turned to Jesus and asked, “Is it I?” Where is that humble Peter now? Why did not Peter say, “Surely I won’t deny you Lord, will I?”

Instead, Peter offered yet another layer of rebuttal to Jesus in verse 31. Peter went still further on the pathway of his own pride! We use the phrase double-down. Peter doubled down! It means Peter repeated his previous idea, and now Peter strengthened it. How did Peter strengthen it? Peter strengthened it with emphasis, and with more intense words. Peter raised the stakes significantly. Look carefully at verse 31, “*But he [Peter] said emphatically, 'If I must die with you, I will not deny you.'*”

One thing is clear from verse 31 – it is finally sinking in to Peter that at last he has grasped the seriousness of the insistence of His Rabbi Jesus that Jesus is going to die. Because Peter finally seems to understand that, Peter must also be starting to understand that it has huge implications for Peter and the other disciples. They were at some risk of dying also! In fact, what it means is that Peter had only two choices a) being willing to die with Jesus or b) deny Jesus. Peter here seemed for the first time to be realistic about the prospect of dying with Jesus, even if Peter was not realistic about his own ability to avoid the escape hatch of denying Jesus, in order for Peter to follow through with dying with Jesus!

Now please remember that all the other disciples were there hearing this whole interchange between Jesus and Peter! When the other disciples heard Peter say this, it seems that it was too much for them! They also then objected and protested their loyalty too! The last words of our passage tonight are in verse 31 at the end, “And they all said the same.” No one doubts the desires of the disciples. No one doubts their sincerity in saying these things. The only question that we all have as we look at this report their statement was the quality of their commitment to their statement. Would they be able to follow through with their statement? Would they die with Jesus, or would they fall away? That is the question. We all know the answer in the short-term, and when you extend the timeline more, we all know the different answer in the longer-term. So, the disciples are still deepening in their commitment to Jesus!

The Twelve who were so close to Jesus for 3 years must have had glimpses of the enormous privilege that was theirs to have such a place. However, were they about to also get a glimpse of the other side of the coin? “*Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required.*” This was a quote of the teaching of Jesus over in Luke 12:48. Much was given to the apostles – they got to be in the

upper room partaking in The Last Supper which was the First Lord's Supper. Now they were expected to be loyal to Jesus. They were expected to not deny Him the very same night in which He took bread and broke it with them and gave it to them. They were expected to follow Jesus unto death. Were the disciples true?

This is not just a lesson for Christian leaders, but it is actually a reality check lesson for every Christian. Commitment is a universal principle for all of life. At that national level or the local level, in our workplaces or families or other places across society, our major concern should not be the employees or boss, the voters or citizens, the constituents, clients, consumers, members, patients, or loved ones. Rather, we are expected to be loyal to the God who gave it all to everyone, and we must be loyal to our God sees how each person uses what has been given to us.

Conclusion: two things to keep on learning.

1. Learn how weak we really are and how strong our Savior really is.

Take a sad and accurate measure of yourself, and a joyful and accurate measure of our Savior.

Whenever we are tempted to say, "I got this," Jesus replies to us No, look again. Don't make the common mistake of trusting in what you think you can do. Trust in what I have done, and in what I can do. You do not have this. I have you. I got you. I paid for you. I support you. I will never let you go.

The reading of Peter's protesting of over-confident loyalty to Jesus makes for sad reading for us, because we know what did eventually take place after Peter's bold statement, 'I would never.' Peter got it wrong about whether or not Peter himself could stand on his own when the battle became the fiercest. The rest of the disciples got it wrong in the exact same way.

Yet, despite their overconfident statements at the end of our passage tonight, and despite their inevitable and approaching failure, Jesus would never be disloyal to them, and Jesus would never give up on them. In fact, as I promised to read you where the word Galilee is written the second time, the message from the Risen Christ later in Mark's report in chapter 16 will be sent from the angel to the disciples which would include Peter. Listen to Mark 16:7, when the angel in the empty tomb said to Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, *"...He has risen; He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He is going before you to Galilee. There you will see Him, just as He told you."*

2. Learn to keep trusting our fellow Christians, despite their many failures.

We are called to treat our brothers and sisters in a Christ-like way, that is, we treat others how Christ treats us. How does Christ treat us? Christ knew what the twelve disciples were before their conversions – wicked, guilty, and defiled, yet Jesus loved them, converted them, and called them to follow Him as His disciples. Then, Christ also knew what the Twelve disciples were after their conversions –

still weak, still filled with errors, still feeble, and yet Jesus loved them. It is to the glory of Jesus that He passes over the many sins of His people, and covers their wrongs. Christ will never send away His people, despite our imperfections.

We apply that now to our approach to our brothers and sisters. Our brothers and sisters are not angels. Our spouses, our family members, and our fellow church members are not perfect. However, they are not merely sinners. Remember that our fellow Christians are sinners saved by grace. In other words, each sinner who is a Christian is also a child of God, and therefore a saint. That means their faults and flaws and sins have been covered in the blood of Christ, and therefore heaven considers them to be holy in Christ by faith. That does not mean that they have become perfect! It remains true that our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ will fail us. The flip side is that we will fail our brothers and sisters. The only one who is unfailing is Christ. So, we learn to put our trust in Christ first. Then, when we are all doing that, and we are all putting our trust in Christ first, it is at that moment that together we have reached the beautiful community that is learning to live within the fellowship of failures. That is, we learn how to endure the mishaps of others, knowing that even in the fallout left after the failure of brothers and sisters, Christ Himself will never fail us. Because we have Christ, we need to learn to keep on trusting our fellow Christians, despite their many failures.

2 Thessalonians 3:5, *“May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.”*