

# Growing Deeper in Mark

## MARK 14.12-31

**VERSES 12-16:** Jesus direct two disciples to go make preparations for the Passover meal. It seems ridiculous to tell them to go into a city that likely has a quarter of a million people (because of all the pilgrims) and find a man carrying a water jar. There was no plumbing. Lots of people would be carrying water jars. That they found the right man tells you how rare it was for a man to do that work. Women carried the water.

**VERSE 17:** We are told Jesus and the Twelve arrive at evening. The Passover meal was eaten after sundown. Rather than midnight, sundown marked the end of one day and thus the beginning of a new day. So, as soon as the sun sets it begins the Passover.

**VERSE 18:** In this culture they did not sit on chairs, but reclined on cushions (or one another) as they ate their meal. The table was typically “U” shaped and each person would lay propped up on their elbow with their head near the table. You would typically be very close to one another.

Jesus brings a heaviness to what is to be a joyous occasion celebrating God’s deliverance from the Egyptian captivity. ‘One of you will betray me—one who is eating with me. Betrayal is a strong word. An enemy cannot betray, only a friend. Added to that is the custom of the day. To share a meal is a sign of trust and friendship. You would not share a meal with an enemy...it would be too easy for them to do you in. It was a major offense to betray someone with whom you have broken bread. For Judas to be present was as two-faced as it could get.

**VERSES 19-21:** All of the disciples are saddened by this news. It is telling to me that they do not ask who it is, but if it could possibly be them? The fact that “Surely you don’t mean me?” is a question and not a statement reflects the disciple’s recognition of their frailty. It would be good if we all would recognize our frailty, our capacity to fall, to sin. When we think ourselves beyond such things, we are in great danger! Jesus, attempts one last time to warn Judas, “woe to the man who betrays the Son of Man,” but to no avail.

**VERSE 22:** It was customary for the host to take the bread give thanks for it, bless it, and distribute it to those present. In so doing, the partakers of the bread were also partakers in the blessing. Jesus does this, with the added twist that he is the bread. Those who partake of him are blessed. How have you partaken of Jesus today? Jesus has taken, given thanks for, blessed, and given bread before; once to Jews and once to Gentiles in the feeding of the multitudes. Jesus blessing is available to all.

**VERSES 23-25:** Some understand this cup that Jesus took was what is referred to as the cup of redemption. There are four cups of wine taken throughout the Passover meal (sanctification, deliverance, redemption, and restoration). While Jesus is central to all of these topics, the unfolding events of this day are all about redemption. He claims this cup of redemption is his blood “which is poured out for many.” This is what the prophet Isaiah foretold, “he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” (Is. 53.12) Jesus says he will not drink again from the fruit of the vine (there is still the 4<sup>th</sup> cup to go in the meal), but this is the cup of restoration. He says he will drink it “new in the kingdom of God.” That is at his return, his second coming.

**VERSE 26:** They sing a hymn and leave the upper room and head to the Mount of Olives. This is where the triumphal entry took place. My how things have changed. Crowds followed him into the city, now on their way out to the mount, Jesus tells them that even they will desert him.

**VERSES 27-31:** Jesus quotes Zechariah 13.7 to them. “I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.” But Jesus also give them the rally point, “after I have arisen, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.” I am struck by the level of care Jesus has for his disciples. He is not chastising them that they should ‘buck up’ and be ready so that they won’t abandon him. He simply makes provision for their getting back to him. Have you ever failed Jesus? He is more interested in you getting back to him than in chastising you!

Peter makes his declaration that he will never fail Jesus...even if everyone else does. Jesus knows better. We cannot trust in our own will-power, we must trust in the power of the Holy Spirit if we are to follow Jesus faithfully. But when we fall Jesus redeems. Read John 21.15-19.