

Mark 14:27-52
The Stricken Shepherd

Introduction

1. The concept of Israel being a flock of sheep cared for by a shepherd is found throughout the Old Testament:
 - a. Most often it is God who is referred to as Israel's shepherd
 - b. At other times, King David is referred to as Israel's shepherd
 - c. However, it is the descendent of King David, the Messiah, who will serve as the ultimate shepherd over all of God's people (Ezekiel 34:23-24): **"Then I will set over them one shepherd, My servant David, and he will feed them; he will feed them himself and be their shepherd. My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances and keep My statutes and observe them."**
 - d. This is why Jesus refers to Himself as the Good Shepherd in John 10:11-18 (READ)
2. In Zechariah 13:7-9 the Lord states that this shepherd will be struck and as a result the sheep will scatter:
 - a. The context of the passage indicates that it will ultimately be orchestrated by God (READ 7)
 - b. It also indicates that God's purpose is to test and refine Israel like one does silver and gold (READ 8-9a)
 - c. Finally, we see that one-third of Israel will return to the LORD and call Him their God (READ 9b)
3. In our passage today, we see this event beginning to be fulfilled as Jesus is portrayed as the Shepherd who is struck down, and His followers scatter

A. The Shepherd predicts His abandonment by His sheep (27-31)

1. After the Passover meal and Last Supper, Jesus takes His disciples out to the Mount of Olives and warns them that they will all fall away (READ 26-38):
 - a. The context indicates that only the twelve Apostles were with Him
 - b. Jesus quotes from Zechariah 13:7-9 as a fulfillment of what is to take place—The Shepherd will be struck down and the sheep will scatter
 - c. This isn't a mere running away, however; Jesus says His disciples will **"fall away"**:
 - 1) The Greek word refers to putting a stumbling block or impediment in someone's way, though it is only used metaphorically in the Bible (e.g. as a synonym for sinning, taking offense, stumbling in one's faith)
 - 2) In the strictest and proper sense, the noun form of the word refers to the moveable stick or trigger in a trap or snare to which you attach the bait
 - 3) It is always used in a negative sense in the NT, and something that always leads to sin
 - 4) In other words, as the context bares out, Jesus' arrest will become a stumbling block for the disciples which will lead them—ALL OF THEM--to abandon Him
2. That this would be a temporary falling away is evident:
 - a. First, Jesus states that after He rises from the dead He will meet them in Galilee (28): **"But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee."**

- b. It's also evident from the long conversation that Jesus had with the disciples between the Last Supper and this conversation on the Mount of Olives (only recorded in John):
 - 1) In John 14:1-31 Jesus encouraged the disciples to not lose heart at His talk of going away because He was going away to prepare a place for them and would return for them
 - 2) He reminded them in John 15:1-17 that they were His friends and that they didn't choose Him so much as He chose them and that they would ultimately bear fruit
 - 3) In John 15:18-16:4 He warned them that the world would hate them but that He would send them the Holy Spirit as their Helper to keep them from stumbling, and that as a result they would bear witness of Him
 - 4) He then prayed for the disciples, and those that would come to know Jesus because of them, in the Garden of Gethsemane where He spoke of a time when these very disciples would be with Him forever
 - c. All of these things indicated that the falling away of the disciples to which Jesus is now referring would be a temporary thing
3. Peter and the rest of the disciples object and claim they will never abandon Jesus (29-31)
- a. Peter, as always, is the first to object (29): **"But Peter said to Him, 'Even though all may fall away, yet I will not.'"**
 - b. Jesus reminds Peter that he will indeed deny Him, and not just once but three times...and he will do it this very night (30): **"And Jesus said to him, 'Truly I say to you that you yourself this very night, before a cock crows twice, shall three times deny me.'"**
 - 1) I said Jesus *reminded* Peter here that he would deny Jesus because this isn't the first time Jesus and Peter had this conversation
 - 2) It actually came up during the Last Supper (READ Luke 22:31-34):
 - 1) Jesus warned Peter that Satan had demanded permission to sift the disciples (the "you" is plural) like wheat (a process used to separate the wheat from the chaff)
 - 2) But Peter argued that he was willing to go to prison and even face death before he'd deny Jesus
 - 3) Jesus warned him, however, that He would deny Him, but that because He had prayed for his faith not to fail Peter would **"turn again"** (back to Jesus after denying Him) and strengthen the other disciples in their faith
 - c. Now again, during this second discussion, Peter insists that even if he has to die with Jesus he will not deny Him (31): **"But Peter kept saying insistently, 'Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!'"**
 - d. The rest of the disciples echoed Peter's confidence (31b): **"And they all were saying the same thing also."**

B. The Shepherd prepares to be struck down (32-42)

- 1. Jesus arrives at Gethsemane with His disciples (32-33a): **"And they came to a place named Gethsemane and He said to His disciples, 'Sit here until I have prayed.'"**
 - a. It was a garden at the foot of the Mount of Olives across from Kidron Valley
 - b. The exact location is no longer known
 - c. As they enter the garden, He instructs nine of the disciples to wait there while He went further on with Peter, James and John
 - 1) It's not clear why He only took these three with Him, but He had done it before:

- a) The healing of the dead girl (Mark 5)
 - b) The transfiguration (Mark 9)
- 2) Some have suggested that Jesus took them along for moral support, and I suppose that's possible
 - 3) However, the context suggests there might have been another reason:
 - a) These three would serve as three of the most prominent leaders in the Church after Jesus' departure
 - b) They were about to face some major temptation, and they would all fail (fleeing when Jesus is arrested)
 - c) Jesus tells them to keep alert and pray that they might not enter into temptation
 - d) He even interrupts His own prayer twice to go back and check up on them
2. Jesus goes off to pray by Himself (READ 33b-36):
 - a. The words Jesus uses here describe intense, emotional anguish:
 - 1) The word "**distressed**" refers to being alarmed or shocked, often with a sense of fear
 - 2) "**troubled**" refers to deep distress or anguish
 - 3) "**deeply grieved**" means to be filled with sorrow, so being "**deeply grieved to the point of death**" suggests that Jesus was being stretched to His emotional limits
 - 4) Luke describes Him as being in so much "**agony**" that He was sweating so much that it became like blood and was dropping to the ground" (Luke 22:44)—this is known as hemohidrosis which is an exceptionally rare condition brought on by intense stress when tiny capillaries in the sweat glands rupture causing blood to mix with perspiration
 - 5) Luke also records that an angel appeared to Jesus to strengthen Him (Luke 22:43)
 - b. So, after calling on His disciples to pray and stay alert, Jesus goes a short distance ("**a stone's throw**" according to Luke) and begins to pray by Himself (READ 35-42):
 - 1) Jesus begins by addressing God as "**Abba Father**"
 - a) It was common for Jews to refer to God as "Father", but what Jesus does here is unprecedented
 - b) "**Abba**" was used within patriarchal families and designated a deeply intimate relationship between a child and his or her father; It was also used sometimes by students to refer to their rabbi
 - c) While it's popular (and makes for great preaching) to claim that "Abba" is the equivalent of our term "Daddy" that's not really accurate—it's more akin to when we hear someone refer to their father directly with the more formal term "father" rather than "dad" (kind of like in old movies)
 - d) Here it stresses the deep, intimate relationship Jesus shared with God the Father as His Son, as serves to prove Mark's point throughout the Gospel that Jesus is the Son of God
 - 2) Two requests make up the heart of Jesus' prayer:
 - a) The first is rather general and likely refers to all of the events that are to follow: "**the hour might pass Him by**" (35b)—in v. 41 Jesus refers to "this hour" as His betrayal, arrest and being handed over to sinners
 - b) The second is more specific, that the Father might "**remove this cup from Me**" (36b):
 - The cup to which Jesus refers here is God's wrath

- There are numerous references in the OT and NT where God’s wrath is likened to a cup that gets poured out
 - Romans 1:18 says that God’s is revealed against sin, but 5:9 says that we are saved from this wrath through the blood of Jesus
 - In other words, He faced God’s wrath so we wouldn’t have to
 - We see this in some of Jesus’ final words when He called out to God and asked, **“My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?”**
- c) While we can’t downplay the horrific suffering Jesus was about to experience and the emotional toll that took on Him, that paled in comparison to what He was about to experience by taking on the sin of the world and experiencing separation from His heavenly Father
- 3) There are two assumptions in Jesus’ prayer that are important for us to consider (36):
- a) The first is that He knows that God can do all things, including putting a stop to what was about to happen (36): **“...all things are possible for you”**
- b) However, the second assumption is that He knew that what He wanted did not trump the Father’s will: **“...yet not what I will but what You will”**:
- Jesus clearly didn’t “want” to go to the Cross, otherwise He wouldn’t have asked that the hour pass him by or the cup be removed from Him
 - However, Jesus was committed to God’s will over His own desires
 - In fact, He claimed that He was responsible for laying down His own life (READ John 10:18)
- 4) PRACTICAL APPLICATION: What we have here is not Jesus using prayer to beg God the Father to intervene and prevent His crucifixion, but rather Jesus using prayer to overcome the anguish and commit Himself to doing the will of the Father in spite of the horrific fate He was about to experience (certainly a good lesson for us when it comes to our prayers)

C. The Shepherd is abandoned by His sheep (READ 43-52)
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1. For the sake of time I won’t spend much time here, except to highlight a few things
2. First, Jesus’ prediction that His disciples would all abandon Him came to pass
3. All three of the synoptic gospels indicate that a large multitude of people accompanied Judas and the religious leaders, while John’s account states that a Roman cohort was there as well (a cohort was generally made up of six hundred soldiers)
4. They came with clubs and swords specifically to arrest Jesus as if He was a common criminal
5. At first, some of the disciples asked Jesus if they should attack (“strike with the sword”; Luke 22:49) and before Jesus can answer them Peter takes a swing and cuts off the ear of the slave of the high priest!
6. This initial boldness evaporates rather quickly, however, because as soon as they arrest Jesus all of the disciples flee (including some unnamed dude who ran away naked)
7. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: our will power doesn’t always match our intent:
 - a) We are often the disciples making bold claims and promises to Jesus, only to find that when it comes right down to it we abandon Him (so to speak)

- b) The good news is that even though they abandon Jesus at the hour of His most pressing need, He didn't abandon them and ultimately they all returned (except Judas)
- c) Jesus wasn't shocked by their behavior (after all He predicted it), and even told them that He would meet them in Galilee after His resurrection
- d) In a striking example of forgiveness we find Jesus walking along the beach with Peter commissioning Him with feeding His sheep