

## 17. Betrayal, communion and denial

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I was told that from those who go through divorces that divorce seems harder to deal with than their spouse's death. Because death does not bring rejection, denial or betrayal, but divorce does, especially when it involves marital unfaithfulness. It is extremely hurtful, it leaves a lasting mark in a person's heart. That is what betrayal and denial do to a person.

If a betrayal from a close friend who spent three years side by side was not bad enough, our Lord Jesus received the second blow from another close friend Simon Peter even after he swore up and down that he would stand by Him.

But our Lord Jesus' love for His people is beyond what we can imagine. Even though He knew what would happen to Him by His infinite wisdom, He still gave us the way of salvation through His love.

### A. THE WORST ACT OF BETRAYAL IN THE HUMAN HISTORY

*Mark 14:10-11 Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Him to them. 11 And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. So he sought how he might conveniently betray Him.*

Mary gave her best in faith and love. Judas gave his worst in unbelief and hatred. He solved the problem of how the Jewish leaders could arrest Jesus without causing a riot during the feast. He sold his Master for the price of a slave which was thirty shekels of silver, the worst act of betrayal in the human history.

### B. CELEBRATING HIS LAST PASSOVER TO MAKE A TRUE PASSOVER

*Mark 14:12-21 Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover lamb, His disciples said to Him, "Where do You want us to go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover?" 13 And He sent out two of His disciples and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him. 14 Wherever he goes in, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?" ' 15 Then he will show you a large upper room, furnished and prepared; there make ready for us." 16 So His disciples went out, and came into the city, and found it just as He had said to them; and they prepared the Passover. 17 In the evening He came with the twelve. 18 Now as they sat and ate, Jesus said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you who eats with Me will betray Me." 19 And they began to be sorrowful, and to say to Him one by one, "Is it I?" And another said, "Is it I?" 20 He answered and said to them, "It is one of the twelve, who dips with Me in the dish. 21 The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born."*

It would not be difficult to locate the man carrying the jar of water because the women usually performed this task. Some theologians try to speculate who this man was. I'd rather be silent where the Bible is silent. Let's go to something important.

The Passover lamb was selected on the tenth day of the month Nisan which is our March-April. The priests examined for blemishes, and then slaughter it on the four-

teenth day of the month. The lamb had to be slaughtered in the temple precincts and the supper eaten within the Jerusalem city limits. For the Jews, the Passover feast was the memorial of a past victory, but Jesus would institute a new supper that would be the memorial of His death.

The original Passover feast consisted of the roasted lamb, the unleavened bread and the dish of bitter herbs according to Exodus 12. The lamb reminded the Jews of the blood that was applied to the door posts in Egypt to keep the angel of death from slaying their firstborn. The unleavened bread reminded them of their haste in leaving Egypt, and the bitter herbs spoke of their suffering as Pharaoh's slaves.

I don't know why, but some people try to defend Judas by saying that he was nothing but a servant who obediently fulfilled God's Word as a traitor. I tell you for sure, Judas was neither a martyr nor a robot. He was a responsible human being who made his own decisions but, in so doing, fulfilled the Word of God.

*Psalms 41:9 Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me.*

Judas must not be made into either a hero or a helpless victim of merciless predestination. He was lost for the same reason millions are lost today. He did not repent of his sins and believe on Jesus Christ. If you have never been born again and continue to refuse the invitation of Jesus Christ the only Savior, one day you will wish you had not been born at all.

According to John 13, Judas was sitting in the place of honor at our Lord's left, while John was reclining to His right. When Jesus gave Judas the bread dipped in the herbs, it was the gracious act of a host to a special guest. In Middle Eastern culture, betraying a friend after eating a meal with him was and is regarded as the worst kind of treachery.

### **C. THE LAST SUPPER**

*Mark 14:22-26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." 23 Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. 24 And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many. 25 Assuredly, I say to 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 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.*

After Judas left the scene, Jesus instituted what Christians commonly call "the Lord's Supper," "Communion," or "the Eucharist." The word Eucharist comes from a Greek word which means "to give thanks."

Since Jesus said, "This is My body," for the bread He broke, and "My blood" for the fruit of vine, many Christians have debated for centuries about the true nature of the bread and the cup at this supper:

- The Roman Catholic Church holds the idea of transubstantiation, which teaches that the bread and the wine actually become the body and blood of Jesus.
- Martin Luther held the idea of consubstantiation, which teaches the bread remains bread and the wine remains wine, but by faith they are the same as Jesus' actual body. Luther did not believe in the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, but he did not go far from it.

- We don't believe that bread and wine are literal broken body and blood of Jesus. But we do believe that Jesus gave them a wonderful new meaning that becomes memorials of His death.

We have to ask one very important question to affirm what we believe: What did Jesus accomplish by His death? On the cross, Jesus fulfilled the Old Covenant and established a New Covenant. The Old Covenant was ratified with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the New Covenant was ratified by the blood of God's Son Jesus. The New Covenant in His blood would do what the Old Covenant sacrifices could not do – take away sin and cleanse the heart and conscience of the believer. We are not saved from our sins by participating in a religious ceremony, but by trusting Jesus Christ as our Savior.

*Jeremiah 31:33-34 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.*

Jesus has not yet celebrated a Passover in heaven. He is waiting for all His people to be gathered to Him and then there will be a great supper – the marriage supper of the Lamb that we find in Revelation 19:9.

#### **D. JESUS' PREDICTION FOR PETER'S DENIALS**

*Mark 14:27-31 Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered.' 28 "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee." 29 Peter said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble, yet I will not be." 30 Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that today, even this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." 31 But he spoke more vehemently, "If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And they all said likewise.*

Don't you wonder what Jesus' singing voice was like? It has to be better than mine.

Even though He knew that the horrible treatments from the Israel religious leaders and crucifixion were waiting for Him in just a few hours, He was praising and worshipping His Father in heaven through songs that most likely came from Psalm 115-118 which were the songs the Israel people used to sing for passovers.

We find here first that Simon Peter pledges his allegiance. He was sincere, of course, but he did not know his own weakness. That is the problem with most of us today. We don't know our own weakness.

Today's psychology doesn't want to talk about the weakness of the individuals, because it might hurt their self-esteem. We don't have a problem with low self-esteem, too much high self-esteem. That is the reason why we are selfish in general and look out for number one, ourselves. I think the only place that we can really see ourselves is in the Word of God. That is the only spiritual mirror that we need to have.

If Peter listened to His word and believed it, he would have saved himself a great deal of anxiety and He would not have denied the Lord. Because he was depending on his own willpower, he failed miserably.

The Apostle Paul sternly warned us about getting to confident the area where we think we are strong.

*1 Corinthians 10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*

When we think we are beyond the reach of some sins, we are ready for a fall.

## **E. PETER'S DENIALS**

We are going to leave next portion of the Scripture for next week's study and continue in the portion of Peter's denial in v54.

*Mark 14:54 But Peter followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he sat with the servants and warmed himself at the fire.*

How do you follow Jesus? From a distance where no one can tell you are a Christian, so that they cannot make fun of you? When you are at a restaurant, do you pray before you eat? Or you don't because you don't want your non-believing friends don't make fun of you being a devout Christian?

You may say, "I am a Christian. I wear a cross necklace," or "I have a Christian fish on the back of my car," or "I attend a Calvary Chapel." They're all fine and dandy. But none of these really matters. What really matters is our hearts for Jesus.

If following Jesus from the distance was not bad enough, Peter decided to hang around with the very people who arrested Jesus at the Garden of Gethsemane. He had no business being with them. It gets worse.

*Psalm 1:1-3 Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3 He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.*

*Mark 14:66-72 Now as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came. 67 And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You also were with Jesus of Nazareth." 68 But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are saying." And he went out on the porch, and a rooster crowed. 69 And the servant girl saw him again, and began to say to those who stood by, "This is one of them." 70 But he denied it again. And a little later those who stood by said to Peter again, "Surely you are one of them; for you are a Galilean, and your speech shows it." 71 Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this Man of whom you speak!" 72 A second time the rooster crowed. Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And when he thought about it, he wept.*

Obviously, the Galileans must had a dialect. So when the servant girl fingered Peter, "You are one of them." Peter answered, "No, I ain't."

It was not the crowing of the rooster that convicted Peter. Rather, it was the remembering of Christ's words. It is always the Word that penetrates the heart and brings about true repentance.

At that point Jesus, according to Luke 22, on His way to Pilate's hall, turned and looked at Peter. It was a look of love, to be sure, but injured love. Peter's heart broken, went out quickly and wept bitterly.

There is a significant contrast between Judas and Peter. Both of them denied Jesus in one way or another, but one was restored and the other was not. Peter repented and received restoration after his sin, Judas was sorry but never repented or received restoration.

*Romans 2:4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?*

Betrayal and denial against Jesus, we all have done that before in one form or another. But we are hoping that we wouldn't do it again. In spite of all of our wrongs, the Lord wants us to remember that He is a God of forgiveness and restoration. When we come to Him with humility and broken hearts, He is quick to embrace us with His loving arms to forgive us and to restore us. Oh, that doesn't mean that we don't have to go through consequences. The best part of this is that we get back in fellowship with Him. That is the most important thing.

## **F. APPLICATIONS**

1) When we think we are beyond the reach of some sins, we are ready for a fall. We must cling onto our God and the power of the Holy Spirit rather than our own willpower.

2) How do you follow Jesus? Close enough to know His will in our lives or so far that you can not tell the difference between His voice from all the other voices that come from the enemy which distract us? Read the Bible daily, you will get to know His voice.