

March 24, 2024

# Steps—Mark, Chapter 14-16

## The Passion

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The passion of Christ at the end of his mortal life is also the beginning of our passion for Jesus and the reason for our faith. While you read these chapters, try to absorb the emotions of each scene. Imagine yourself as a witness to these events.

### Outpouring of Love

It is two days before Passover. Only Jesus understands that he is the Passover Lamb and is being prepared for the ultimate sacrifice.

Read Mark 14:1-11. Jesus is having a meal at the home of Simon the Leper. A woman enters and worships Jesus generously by anointing him with expensive perfume.

- What is symbolic about the woman anointing Jesus with perfume?
- Why is the woman criticized? What emotion might Jesus feel as she anoints him?
- Why does Jesus rebuke the others?
- In John 12:4, Judas Iscariot is named as one of the men who criticized her. What did he do after the meal?

Read Mark 14:12-26. Jesus and the disciples are preparing for Passover together.

- What are Jesus' instructions to the disciples in preparation for the celebration?
- What does Jesus reveal to them during the meal?
- Jesus' words are very familiar, but what is he actually telling the disciples?
- What is the significance of using Jesus' words for our celebration of communion?

### Abandoned

After the meal, all the disciples except Judas go to the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus is preparing for the worst day of his life. As fully human, he knows that his suffering will be enormous. He needs time with God and the support of his friends. But, Jesus knows that he will be abandoned even by those closest to him and quotes from Zechariah 13:7.

Read Mark 14:27-52. Notice how the abandonment begins symbolically before it happens physically.

- Have you, like Peter, ever made a bold pronouncement of your ability to withstand the pressure of the world, and then failed? What is the lesson here?

- What did Jesus ask the disciples to do and why did they fail? Have you ever been too tired for Jesus?
- What is Jesus feeling in Gethsemane? What does he pray for? What does that tell us about Jesus? Why is Jesus *overwhelmed* with sorrow?
- What strategies could we use to stay alert and ready as we follow Jesus?
- Why do you think they arrest Jesus in the garden instead of while he is teaching in the temple courts?
- Have you ever had friends or family abandon you when you needed their support? How did it feel? What is the worst thing about abandonment?
- In John 18:10, Peter is named as the one who drew the sword to defend Jesus. Peter is impulsive. He is still expecting Jesus to become a warrior/savior, so he fights back. The battle has begun—but not as Peter expects. Peter is using the wrong sword. What is Jesus' sword (Ephesians 6:17)?

Read Mark 14:53-72. Jesus is brought to trial before the Sanhedrin. They need to convict him in a way that keeps the support of the people without causing a rebellion of his followers.

- Why is the Sanhedrin having difficulty convicting Jesus? What tricks do they use to gain support?
- How does Jesus answer their questions? What effect do his responses have?
- Who are the people who recognize and question Peter? How does Peter respond?
- How did Peter feel when the rooster crowed?
- How do we, as Christians, deny Jesus in our lives? What kind of fear do we succumb to?

## Torture and Death

The Romans do not allow the Sanhedrin to hand down a death sentence, so the Jewish leaders send Jesus off to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate.

Read Mark 15:1-15.

- Why was Jesus being called “King of the Jews” treasonous to Rome?
- Why does Pilate refuse to condemn Jesus and take him before the crowd? What does he expect to happen? Why doesn't the crowd react as Pilate expects?
- Why would a political official go against his better judgment? What does this say about lobbying, mob mentality, and the power of people to influence the government?

Read Mark 15:16-47.

- What is the purpose of mocking and beating Jesus from the soldiers point of view? What is the significance of that treatment from a spiritual perspective?
- Why is Simon recruited to help carry Jesus' cross? What does that mean for us?
- Why is the wine with myrrh offered to Jesus? Why do you think he refused it?
- What is ironic about the charge notice on Jesus' cross?
- Jesus is mocked, insulted, humiliated, and brutalized. Why didn't he just call on the angels to rescue him?
- Describe what the witnesses see and hear at the sixth and the ninth hour? What is the significance of the tearing of the curtain?
- Why does Jesus feel abandoned by God? Was it necessary? Why?
- How do the witnesses react to Jesus' death?

## Alive

Because of Passover, Jesus' body is not properly prepared for burial. As soon as the Sabbath is over, the women who are closest to Jesus go to the grave to complete the job. Their main concern is how they will move the stone to get to the body.

Read Mark 16:1-8.

- What do they find at the tomb? What are they told? By whom? What do they do?
- The Greek word used and translated as trembling, *tromos*, also means quaking with fear or ecstasy. Why is that word appropriate here?

Read Mark 16:9-20. This section is not in the earliest manuscripts of Mark. It is also not consistent with Mark's style, his vocabulary, and other peculiarities of his writing according to experts.

- Assuming that Mark did not write it, why would Mark end so abruptly on verse 8?
- Why would it have been added later?
- What important points did the author make in this section?
- Jesus rebukes the disciples for their lack of faith and stubborn refusal to believe witnesses of his resurrection. What lesson can we learn from this?
- What is the disciples' charge?
- How is God's protection for those who preach the good news emphasized?

## Take Action

Why is Jesus' sacrifice important to you? How can you share that with others? Write the name of one person with whom you want to share this message. Make a plan for how to share it and write it here.