

Wil Owens

Preparing His Disciples for the Unimaginable; Matt 26:30-35

GPBC

6.5.22

Introduction – 3 weeks ago I preached a message from the previous verses, vv17-29. In those verses Jesus revealed to the disciples that one of them was going to betray Him. And 11 of them were utterly shocked at such a revelation. Judas, on the other hand, already knew what he was planning to do. But the rest of the disciples could never imagine in their wildest dreams that one of them would be betray Jesus. And so each of them took their turn asking, “Is it I, Lord?”

Can you imagine sitting at that table, eating with the Lord, and having to ask that question! Your heart is racing, your throat is dry – what if Jesus answers you in the affirmative? What if it’s you? Once that question leaves your lips you look for any verbal or nonverbal communication from Jesus that would clear your name.

So it is that all the disciples leave the Passover meal and the institution of the Lord’s Supper and they are still unaware of the identity of the betrayer. But they know this – one of them, one of the 12 is horribly guilty. Yet, to their dismay, Jesus is not finished revealing their upcoming actions.

As it turns out, they will all abandon Jesus on that very night! If you’ll notice, there’s no need now to ask, “Is it I, Lord?” Every single disciple will prove guilty of fleeing and undeserving of being a disciple. You see, not only will Jesus face His greatest test tonight – so will they. The difference being, of course, Jesus will stand and they will run. There are many lessons in this text for us today, and to begin we can say this: there is no such thing as the perfect disciple. There is not a single believer in this world or in this room who is perfect. But thanks be to God, although Jesus builds His kingdom with imperfect people, we serve a perfect, and faithful, and holy Savior! He has never failed a test and never will!

- I. A Lesson on the Word and on the Shepherd
  - a. Jesus first says, “You will all fall away because of me this night.” Now, Jesus is God, so when He says something, it is undeniably true. When He predicts the future, it cannot be changed. As God in the flesh, He knows all things.

- b. But notice with me that Jesus doesn't appeal to His divine nature to substantiate this word, but rather He appeals to the Word of God – "For it is written." And He quotes Zechariah 13:7.
- c. So there is an invaluable lesson here that Jesus is teaching us about the Word of God. Scripture will not be broken and it will not fail. It is true, it is unchangeable, it is eternal, it is God's divine self-disclosure. When God speaks, so shall it be!
  - i. That means there are at least two monumental implications for us as we read and encounter God's Word.
    1. We can't loophole or tweak or caveat the Word of God to our liken or to please our flesh or to bend to our will. When we come across a doctrine or teaching or verse that we don't like or that rubs us the wrong way or doesn't fit our previous understanding or our way of thinking or living – God's Word will not change. We don't change God's Word; God's Word changes us! So we are to humbly submit and embrace and align our wills to the perfect will of God. And every single time we do, we find that God's will is not meant to deprive us but rather to awaken us to life and salvation!
    2. We can stand on the promises of God because they will never change and never fail! We can trust the character of God. We can take him at His Word. We can hold to every promise spoken as if it were directly spoken to us if we are in Christ!
    3. Listen to 2 Cor 1:20 – For all the promises of God find their Yes in Him. That is why through Him that we utter our Amen to God for His glory!
      - a. Never leave you
      - b. Peace I leave with you
      - c. Come to me all who are heavy laden
      - d. Whoever believes in me shall never die
      - e. How do you know? Because the Word of God never changes and never fails!
- d. But there's also an invaluable lesson here for us concerning Jesus, the Shepherd of our souls. After Jesus says you will all fall away

because of me this night, He then goes on to say, “But after I am raised, I will go before you to Galilee.”

- i. You know what Jesus is telling His disciples, who are going to fail Him? That He will never fail them! They may leave him, but He will never leave them. He is faithful!
- ii. 2 Tim 2:13 – when we are faithless, He remains faithful
- e. God’s Word never fails and our Shepherd never fails. That’s how Jesus prepares His disciples for the unimaginable.

## II. The Right Desire But the Wrong Response (v33)

- a. Oh Peter couldn’t take this word. He didn’t like this word. He set out to change God’s Word. He had the right desire – I will never fall away. But he had the wrong response to the Word of God.
- b. You see, instead of trying to convince Jesus that He was wrong, the right response would have been to say I don’t want to fall away, but if it’s true, I’m so very sorry. I repent. Please forgive me.
- c. When God’s Word calls out our sin, repentance is the only proper response.
- d. But Peter essentially throws the rest of the disciples under the bus, doesn’t he? Though they all fall away, I will never fall away. Poor Peter, he can’t imagine just how far away he will fall. You know what Peter was saying here? He was saying, “I’ll do far more than the rest of the disciples.” And Jesus corrects him, “No, Peter you won’t do far more, you’ll do far worse – you will deny Me 3 times.”
- e. 1 Cor 10:12 says, “let anyone who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” You see, Peter had great confidence but it was greatly misplaced. “I will never fall away.” The truth is we can’t do anything good apart from God and His grace.
- f. Jesus would tell the disciples in the next passage – “the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.” Peter is the perfect example of that truth. In and of ourselves, we are far weaker than we think. We can’t take a step or a breath without God. We often stumble and fail because we are so weak, and when we do stand, it is by God’s grace alone!
- g. The right desire but the wrong response.

### III. The Right Pledge But the Wrong Time (v39)

- a. Oh this is exactly the right pledge for any believer! “Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!” That’s what it means to take up our cross and follow Him. The Christian life is one of constantly dying to self and desires and passions that are against God. And ultimately, to be willing to lay down our own lives for Christ and the gospel as He laid down His life for us. Christians throughout history and throughout the world today make this pledge and many are faced with living up to it and giving their lives!
- b. But you see, it was the wrong time for Peter to make this pledge because Jesus had already spoken the truth about what he would soon do.
- c. Oh but by the mercy and grace of God, the right time will come one day for Peter. After the resurrection, Jesus will restore Peter and its then that Jesus will tell him, “You know Peter you will one day make good on that pledge when the time is right.”
- d. Numerous church fathers and historians attest that Peter was crucified in Rome under the persecution of Nero in AD 64.

Conclusion – You see when Jesus was crucified and buried, Peter thought he was finished and he was worthless. After all, he was the one who made the big pledge, and he was the one who denied Him. He might as well go back to fishing. Surely, there’s nothing left for Him to do for Jesus. But from God’s perspective, as long as Peter was living, there was still plenty of time and plenty to do.

Now for everyone of us sitting in this room today – you may have run from Him, but He hasn’t run from you. You may have cowered away when it was time to stand. You may have slid back to your old life. You may have done what you never dreamed you would do. But if you are still living and breathing today, there is mercy and grace sufficient for you! You may have convinced yourself that you are worthless now and there’s nothing left for you to do for Jesus. But He is here today and He is ready to restore you just as He did Peter. And there is plenty of time and plenty to do! Even if you have denied Him in your words and in your actions, if you will come to Him today, you will find Him to be a faithful Shepherd!