

Message #53

Mark 14:26-31

A couple of years ago, Psychology Today published an article on how to improve your self-confidence. Some of the things they listed were:

- 1) Make three lists—strengths, achievements, things you admire about yourself.
- 2) Think positive about yourself.
- 3) Dress sharp
- 4) Exercise
- 5) Manage stress levels

The view was if you learn to like yourself and trust in yourself and have self-confidence, your odds of success are much higher.

We live in a world that loves self-confident people. There are courses taught on how to become a self-confident type of person. Self-confident people are winners. They achieve. They get jobs; they get promotions; they win battles and they make it in almost any area of life. Self-confident people can make it big in this world, but it doesn't work that way with God. **In fact, self-confidence, when it comes to God and spirituality, will take you down fast. You trust in yourself and not God and you are destined to fail.**

The problem with people analyzing themselves is their heart. According to Jeremiah, all men have a deceitful and sick heart. So if you try to do self-analysis on yourself so you can achieve self-confidence, you will never have it in a relationship with God.

Every now and then you will hear some believer dogmatically and confidently say, "I will follow Christ anywhere." "You can count on me." I actually know of a person who confidently said "I know what I was and I know where I came from and I am not ever going back there." "I won't ever do that again." It wasn't long before the person was right back doing the same thing again.

Kent Hughes said something that is so accurate: "Presumption has always been dangerous for anyone who follows Christ, for following him necessarily involves some hardship. Many are those who have fallen along the way" (*Mark*, p. 351).

The disciples of Jesus Christ had been with Him for over three years. They had experienced some amazing things. They had participated in miraculous things. **They thought, spiritually speaking, that they were men of steel, but Jesus was about to show them that they were men of straw.**

According to **verse 26**, after sharing the meal together in the Upper Room, they sang a hymn and then left and went out to the Mount of Olives. We don't know what hymn they sang together, but most believe it was one or several of the Psalms.

What we know is that they headed out of Jerusalem to the east and to the western slopes of the Mount of Olives, because that is where Gethsemane is located (v. 32). Now the first message Christ gives them after this wonderful meal is not positive. It is not a message designed to boost their ego. It was a message that would tell them the truth. **Jesus gives His own disciples a prophecy of failure.** What Jesus says is this:

ALL HIS DISCIPLES WILL ABANDON HIM; BUT AFTER HE HAS BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD, HE WILL REGATHER THEM AND USE THEM.

One big problem that exists today is that people do not know their own weakness and they will not admit they are weak. They are self-confident. They are proud. The problem is that our confidence should never be in ourselves. **Know this with absolute certainty, if these disciples can fall away after actually being with Jesus Christ, so can we.** The potential is there.

Mr. Miles always used to say any believer who gets out of fellowship with God is capable of anything. If these disciples can fail, we better admit so can I.

There are two verbal messages that Christ gives as He moves toward the cross:

VERBAL MESSAGE #1 – All disciples will fall away in full conformity with Biblical prophecy. **14:27**

It had only been a short time ago that Jesus said one would betray Him. Now they get up on this mountain and Jesus said, “all” will abandon Me. He basically says every one of you will defect in your commitment to Me.

The verb “fall away” is one that means all of them would stumble in their faith because of what was happening to Him. They would all run away (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, pp. 407-408). They would not abandon Christ permanently, but they would temporarily.

Now Jesus says the reason why you will fall away is because this is what has been predicted by Zechariah the prophet in Zechariah 13:7. It has been predicted that when the Shepherd is struck, the sheep will scatter. When the process of smiting the Shepherd begins, the sheep will scatter.

The beauty of this prophecy is that in the aftermath of this happening, Zechariah predicts that the Shepherd will establish a glorious Kingdom in which He will be king over all the earth (Zech. 14:4, 9). So this prophecy sits in an amazing context.

Everything is carefully predicted. God would strike down the Shepherd and when He does, the sheep will run and scatter. So this is a fulfillment of Biblical prophecy.

I read an interesting account of a minister who was praying and said, “O God you would be just in smiting me because I deserve it.” He said as he thought about it, he said that is not right because God’s justice was fulfilled in smiting the Savior/Shepherd. Now it is true we are the ones who deserve to be punished, but Jesus took our punishment and God accepted His sacrifice. He was smitten so we would not have to be.

Now we may recall that just prior to this, when Jesus informed them that one of them would betray Him, they all said, “Surely not I” (14:19). At the end of this section they all say we won’t do that (14:31). **So we may conclude that the will of all of these disciples was to be loyal to Jesus Christ and not defect from Him.** That was their will. That was their wish.

But what we see here is significant, regardless of what the will of a person is, the fact remains that God’s prophetic Word will be literally fulfilled. No human can stop the prophetic plan of God. Even God’s own people fulfill God’s Word when it is negative.

These disciples would fall away and run away from Jesus Christ because God’s Word said that would happen. There are three observations we want to make:

Observation #1 - God fulfills His prophecy literally.

Drop down to **verse 50**. They literally did this.

Observation #2 - No one can change prophecy nor stop it, not even His own people.

Observation #3 - Even those closest to Jesus Christ are capable of defection.

It is critical that we see ourselves for who and what we really are. We are sinners and apart from God’s help, we will not accomplish anything positive for the glory of God. In and of ourselves we are failures. This is exactly what the Word of God says. We make a fatal mistake if we walk around with self-confidence in ourselves. I put no confidence in myself. In us lieth no good thing. Our confidence is in the Lord. It must always be in the Lord.

When the Lord taught the disciples to pray, He said to ask God not to lead us into temptation but deliver us from evil. Why didn’t He teach them to pray that they choose to do right and that they would deliver themselves from evil? The reason, we can’t do it. God must do it.

Had Christ ended the discussion here, it would have been depressing. But He did not. He makes another prediction that would have been so encouraging for these disciples and it sure is for us.

VERBAL MESSAGE #2 – After I have been raised from the dead, I will meet with you in Galilee. **14:28**

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is proof Jesus Christ was who He claimed to be—the God/Savior/Messiah/King. Jesus has told His disciples about His resurrection multiple times (Mark 8:31; 9:9; 9:31; 10:34; **14:28**).

The entire future program of God hinges on Him being raised from the dead. Now God never presents any person being able to stand on their own in a relationship with Him. The only way anyone stands is by Him doing the work. Any person who tries to stand on his own will fall flat on his face. These disciples would fall flat on their faces and yet Jesus promises He will meet with them, in spite of this, in Galilee.

In fact, after Christ's resurrection, an angel would remind them of these very words (Mark 16:6-7)

What Christ is promising these disciples is I will restore you to complete fellowship with Me. Not only this, but also I will greatly use you even after you have run away from Me in My darkest hour. Even after you have failed Me, I will still use you.

When Jesus says that He would "go ahead" of them, He is making a very powerful point. He does not just mean that He would beat them all there or that He would outwalk them and get there faster, although this did happen (Mark 16:7), but He also means "I will become the head of your life again in Galilee."

Now Galilee had been the place they lived when He called them. It would be a fitting place to restore them.

This verse is sure good news for the rest of us. Not only would the disciples be scattered from Christ, but they also would be reunited with Christ. Later, in this book of Mark, this was literally fulfilled (Mark 16:7).

When God's Word predicts something, take it literally because that is how it will be fulfilled. There were three verbal responses.

Verbal Response #1 - Peter responds to Jesus Christ. 14:29

Peter listened to Jesus teach this and said all the rest of these guys may fall away, but not me. Peter had real confidence in himself. He truly believed nothing could shake him for a loyal commitment to Jesus Christ. In fact, here, as David Garland said, "He insists that he will prove himself more trustworthy than the rest, who, he implies, probably will fall away" (*Mark*, p. 531).

Ever said that? Ever promised God "I won't ever do that"? "I won't fail you." "You can count on me God; I would never do something shameful or sinful." Ever said that?

Frankly, God's people make promises to God they don't keep. They defect all the time. They come to Christ and they are on fire, then they back away from reading the Bible; from prayer; from church. They don't come Wednesday night or Sunday night. These are the same people who say to God, you can count on me.

Now in saying this, Peter is actually disbelieving what Jesus just said and is implying that Jesus is not telling the truth and he is also implying that I am one who will not fulfill the Biblical prophecy of Zechariah. Both of these assumptions are ludicrous.

William Hendriksen said Peter has “an inflated opinion of himself, is overconfident, conceited, as events are quickly going to prove” (*Mark*, p. 579).

Verbal Response #2 - Jesus responds to Peter. 14:30

Jesus said to Peter, truly before the rooster crows two times, you will deny me three times. You, Peter, won't even make it to morning. Before dawn tomorrow morning Peter, you will deny me three times. Not only will you run like all the rest, you will take it to another level and deny me three times.

Now I want you to remember that Mark is writing this, but he is getting this from Peter. Peter is flat out telling the truth about himself.

Now you would naturally think that since Jesus just told Peter what he was going to do, he would purpose not to do it. You would think Peter wouldn't ever do that. That is exactly what Peter thought.

Verbal Response #3 - Peter responds to Jesus. 14:31

Peter comes across here with real discipleship “bravado.” This is what he truly believes about himself. This is what he truly feels in his heart.

Peter was dogmatic in his response in that he would never deny Christ but would be willing to die with them. He says, “I am not going to deny you; you can count on me.” In fact, all of them were saying the same thing. Now there are six important observations to make from this:

Observation #1 - Jesus knows the real you and He knew the real you when He saved you.

Observation #2 - Very few people actually know and admit the truth about themselves.

We are all sinners. Those who are unsaved don't see themselves truthfully as that and neither do those who are saved.

Observation #3 - God knows the absolute truth about each one of us.

He knows what we will do and say and think today, tomorrow and the next day.

Observation #4 - We need to always depend on the Lord because we are capable of anything.

Observation #5 - If God can forgive and use one who would deny Him three times, He can forgive and use you.

Observation #6 - The reason this all happened to Jesus was so He could save people like us.

His purpose for coming here was to save sinners and that is what we are. We are dirty, filthy sinners. Please do not put your confidence in you to save you, put it in Him.