

March 11, 2018 -

Mark 14:26-42-

In the Garden at Gethsemane

Introduction:

On February 15, 1947 a DC4 passenger plane heading to Ecuador, South America crashed into a 14,000 foot high Columbian mountain and fell thousands of feet into a ravine below. All the passengers were killed instantly. Glen Chambers was aboard that plane flying to Quito, Ecuador to become a missionary with the Voice of the Andes. This was his life-long dream to begin his ministry in missionary broadcasting. But he never arrived. Before he left from the Miami airport he penned a quick note to his mother. All he could find for stationery was a page of advertising on which was written the single word "WHY?" Around that word he hastily scribbled a final note. It went off into mail and caught up with his mother a week after his death. She opened the letter and saw the word why printed below the note that her son had written. No doubt this was the questions on her mind. It too was on the minds of the disciples, of all the questions this is the most probing and taunting of them all.

They were trouble, sorrowful and eventually dispersed. Mark describes the close of the supper and the progress of the Lord and his disciples on their way to Gethsemane, in 26-31.

I. Jesus Prediction of Abandonment.

1. The very hymn that Jesus and the disciples sang as they left the upper room was a part of the Old Testament. Unquestionably, it was the Scripture we now know as Psalms 113- 118. This was the traditional hymn called the great Hallel that was sung at the close of the Passover Feast. Hallel is Hebrew for "Praise to God" and these psalms focus on one theme: Hallelujah. It is significant that the closing verse of the great Hallel includes these words, "Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar," {Psalms 118:27b)

2. As they sang those words, they left the upper room and made their way down across the darkness of the Kidron Valley, into the shadows of Gethsemane's garden. And as they went, Jesus quoted from the prophecy of Zechariah. He said to them, "**You will all fall away; for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.**" "There are two things to note in this brief paragraph:

3. This passage reveals very clearly how Jesus knew what was going to happen to him. The Lord seems to understand fully what the divine program was, anticipates it; even makes arrangements for it. Jesus' knew the struggle in the Garden of Gethsemane. Zechariah had predicted that Jehovah would say, "Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered,"

--- Zech 13:7b

4. Gethsemane's struggle was the smiting of the Shepherd, and the result would be the scattering of the sheep. You can see how true that is if you look forward a bit to verse 50, where it says of the disciples, "And they all forsook him, and fled," In John 10, where Jesus says, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep," He is reassuring his disciples that after the dark event of Calvary, there will come the glory of the resurrection. He will go before them as the shepherd, still guarding his flock, still watching

over them, and he will meet them again in Galilee.

5. It is interesting to think that never once did Jesus speak of his cross to these disciples without setting it against the emerging light of the resurrection. And yet they never seemed to grasp it. Not one of them believed Jesus would be raised from the dead.

6. The second thing to note about this passage is the confident of Peter and the disciples. Peter said to Jesus, "Even though they all fall away, I will not." Notice the contrast between "they" and "I." "They will all deny you," Peter said. "I know these fellows, Lord, and you can't trust them! They'll all deny you, you're right about that! But, Lord, you're wrong about me. I will not!" Peter is confident that he will not do what the rest will do. He is not at all hesitant to point out that he expects the others to fall, but it is going to be different with him.

2. But Jesus saw far more clearly than Peter. He saw that Peter's confidence was resting upon his own human determination, his own will, and Jesus knew the weakness of it. So he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times." It is interesting to see how Jesus narrows down the time. --- Application:

II. The Agony in the Garden vv. 32-36

1. For the first time in the ministry of our Lord, we have the sense of division between Jesus and the Father. This separation is manifested when Jesus says, "Not my will, but thine be done." Up to this point in our Lord's ministry he knew clearly that he was going to the cross. But this is the first sign that he was not willing and ready to go to the cross. He spoke of it, he understood what it would involve, yet before this point there is no indication that he was in any way reluctant to go. He had said, "I delight always to do those things that please the Father," {cf, John 8:29}.

2. Even though it involved a degree of hardship and difficulty for him he wanted to do it. So Jesus went toward the cross with a confident sense that he was in the Father's will. And though it would be hard and dangerous, difficult and even fatal, he was willing to do it.

3. **And saith unto them... My soul is exceeding sorrowful within me, even to the point of death.** Now very few of us have ever stood at the place where we were so troubled, so hurting within, so deeply distressed that we feared it might take our life. But Jesus was; "Even though he knew it was inevitable. He prays, "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me." There are some who think that the cup refers to the agony of Gethsemane itself. That cup is still ahead, the cup of agony and terrible separation that he knew awaited him on the cross. He prayed.

III The Absent of Prayers vv. 37-42

1. Peter is as weak as putty when the moment comes. He is weak because he lacks the strengthening of prayer. The devil only had to make him sleepy that is all. Jesus analyzes the situation. He comes and finds them and there is almost a touch of humor here. After he wakes

them up, he says to these disciples, "Peter, couldn't you watch one hour? Couldn't your resolve and fierce determination last at least that long?" Then he tells us why Peter could not do it. "The spirit is willing, Peter, I know your heart. I know you love me. Your spirit is perfectly willing. But Peter, you relied upon your flesh. The flesh is weak."

2. This is the analysis Jesus gives of Peter's problem. The key is prayer. If Peter, like Jesus, feeling sleepy and weak, had cast himself upon the Father and had told him the problem, the Father would have carried him through, and he would not have denied his Lord. You see, it is our weakness that is our security, not our strength.

3. Prayer is a simple principle, but what a transformation is obtained in our lives when it is practiced! Prayer -- what a difference it makes! Strength is what prayer provides, and that is what Gethsemane teaches. Jesus prayed when the flesh quailed. And though he sweat drops of blood, he stood firm and did the will of the Father. Peter slept.

4. Last Jesus goes back to pray again. Mark does not record the final pray but John does in chapter 17 of his book. There is something different in this prayer. "The request of our Lord given in John's seventeenth chapter is clearly no prayer of an inferior to a superior:

Constantly there is seen in it the co-equality of the Speaker with The Father. Most of us know what it is to hear a true man or woman of God deep in prayer; there is something holy and awesome about it. Far beyond all that was this prayer Jesus prayed unto His God and Father, which is the only long, continuous prayer of Jesus recorded in the Gospels. Let's look at it briefly and observe some important facts.

Conclusion:

He prayed that you would have the same joy that the Father had given Him: a divine joy, a joy that comes from a deep and unwavering relationship with the Father. It is a joy that is grounded firmly in a relationship with God that no change in circumstances could ever shake it. This is the kind of joy that Christ is praying will be in you.

Don't deny yourself that which is your birthright as a child of God. Jesus did not pray that you would merely be happy or even that you would escape grief.