

- (e). Many people question whether the *only* way to God is through Jesus and his death on the cross. It has been suggested that this is the question Jesus himself wrestled with in Gethsemane (vv.35-6)

What conclusion did he reach?

How might this passage help us deal with this question?

- (f). In v. 34 and again in v. 38, Jesus encourages the disciples to watch and pray, so that they do not fall into temptation.

What particular temptations were they about to face?

How might prayer have changed the outcome?

- (g). What significance, if any, might be placed on the fact

that Jesus found them sleeping three times?

How do you understand the phrase "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Psalm 51:12)?

- (h). Have you ever felt like the disciples must have felt in v.40? Explain.

- (i). What conclusions and encouragement can you draw from the disciples' experience?



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

SESSION 16: CHAPTER 14: 1 - 42 "THE CRISIS COMES"

For the festival of the Passover, all Jewish males over 12 years of age were required to go to Jerusalem. The Passover commemorated the night the Israelites were freed from Egypt (Exodus 12) when God "passed over" homes marked by the blood of a lamb while killing firstborn sons in unmarked homes. The day of Passover was followed by a seven-day festival called the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This, too, recalled the Israelites quick escape from Egypt when they didn't have time to let the bread rise, so they baked it without yeast. This Jewish holiday found people gathering for a special meal that included lamb, wine, bitter herbs and unleavened bread. Eventually the whole week came to be known as Passover because it immediately followed the Passover holiday.



Read Mark 14 : 1 - 11.

QUESTIONS:

- 1.(a). Why were the enemies of Jesus not moving against him? What sorts of tactics were they adopting?
- (b). In the events that happened at Simon the Leper's house, is there a possible link here to the story of Luke 7:36-50?



What possible motives are present in the conflict that arises in that home?

- (c). What legitimate concerns do the objectors raise?

How might Jesus' own teaching have prompted this response?

What is he concerned about?

- (d). The woman's act is, in one sense, an act of worship. What light, if any, does this incident shed on the competing claims for beauty in worship and concern for the poor?
- (e) Does the fact that we will always have the poor (v.7) imply that there is not much point in trying to help them?
- (e) How do you think the subsequent actions of Judas might have been related to this incident (v.10)?

NB

Jerusalem was filled with a strong smell from the temple sacrifices. If the wind blew from the east, the smoke from the altar turned back not only into the temple courts but over the whole city, bringing a mixture of the horrible reek of burning flesh and the heady smell of incense. Women who could afford it tended to use a great deal of scent, though the rabbis argued in vain that the incense of the temple ought to be enough for a person.

Henri Daniel-Rops, *Daily Life in the Time of Jesus*

Read Mark 14: 12 - 16.

- 2.(a). How had Jesus arranged to eat the Passover?
Do you think every detail had been arranged beforehand?
- (b). What does the fact that someone was prepared to offer a large upper room imply?

Read Mark 14: 17 - 31.

We must not forget that Jesus chose Judas to be his disciple and that while Judas betrayed Jesus, all the disciples abandoned him. With the other disciples, Judas shared a persistent misunderstanding of Jesus' mission. They all expected Jesus to make the right political moves. When he kept talking about dying, they all felt varying degrees of anger, fear and disappointment. They didn't understand why they had been chosen if Jesus' mission was doomed to fail

We do not know the exact motivation behind Judas' betrayal. What is clear is that Judas allowed his desires to place him in a position where Satan could manipulate him. He got paid to set Jesus up. He identified Jesus for the guards in the dimly lit garden of Gethsemane. It is possible that he was trying to force Jesus' hand - would he or would he not rebel against Rome and set up a new political government?

What ever his plan, though, at some point Judas realised he didn't like the way things were turning out. He tried to undo the evil he had done by returning the money to the priests, but it was too late. How sad that Judas ended his life in despair without ever experiencing the gift of reconciliation God could give even to him through Jesus Christ.

- 3.(a). During the Passover feast, Jesus tells the Twelve that one of them will betray him.
What do you think they were feeling as they responded to announcement (v.19)?

- (b). Few words have involved as much debate regarding their meaning as those Jesus spoke in vv.22-4. Regardless of how literally we take them, what are the bread and cup meant to symbolize for us?
- (c). In v. 27, Jesus predicts that his disciples will desert him under pressure. How do you empathize with or fail to empathize with Peter's assertion in vv. 29-31?



Read Mark 14: 32 - 42.

QUESTIONS:

- 4.(a). Why did Jesus take the three disciples with him when he went to pray?
Why was he "greatly distressed and troubled" (v.33)?
- (b). The words of Jesus in v.34 appear to be an allusion to Psalm 42:6. Can an understanding of this psalm help us to understand what was going through the mind of Jesus?
- (c). Was he trying to avoid his fate through his prayer?
Why does he refer to God as "Abba" ?
- (d) What is the key theme of v.36?
What is its significance for us?