



March 28, 2021 Mk. 14: 1—15:47. Isa. 7:10-4-7

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### ENTERING THE SCENE:

There are many people in chapter 14 who play a part in Mark's telling of the story of Jesus' last hours. There is so much going on; so many different agenda's. I invite you to read this chapter (which is only a portion of the designated reading) and pick out someone to focus on for your time of reflection. For example; if you were one of the teachers of the law, what would you be thinking and feeling? Or the woman with the alabaster jar? Which person in this chapter attracts your attention and why?

### People in this text:

Father (Abba / Blessed One /Mighty One)

Jesus (Nazarene / Christ / Son of Man)

Simon the Leper

Woman with alabaster jar

Peter

James

John

Disciples

Servant girls

High priest

Chief Priest

Teachers of the law

Sanhedrin

Young man

Man carrying the water jar

Owner of the house

Judas

Crowd

Those testifying against Jesus

Servant whose ear was cut off

Guards



**DISCUSSION QUESTION:** There are many people in chapter 14 of Mark's gospel who have a part in our story of faith. Which person would you like to talk to if you could? Why did you choose that person?

**PRAYER:** Lord each person, other than you and the Father, in some way represents me. I feel the confusion and fear of the disciples, the servant girls, and the young man that runs away. In my quiet moments I recognize the times I have betrayed my own truth and you as well. Often my choices reflect my concern for safety or wanting to be right rather than in relation with you and the Father. Help me be like the woman with the jar of precious ointment who does whatever it takes to show my love for you, as I meditate on your love for me. Amen.

## SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

**Palm branches:** Like modern drugstores, ancient pharmacies offered prophylactic medicines for protection against diseases. For the Egyptians, green palm branches were prophylactic shields placed on top of mummies to protect the deceased in the next world and to ensure eternal life.

Miners used to carry small pieces of blessed palms in the shape of a cross as protection when they entered the dangerous bowels of the earth. Palm branches woven into crosses were placed in homes to ward off disease, pestilence, lightning, and demons. Farmers would place palm crosses in their fields to repel blights and ensure fertility. These and similar pious practices attribute almost magical powers to blessed palm branches which have long been considered signs of strength in adversity. Old legends hold that if a heavy weight is placed on top of a palm tree, it will stand tall. This explains why Nike, the Greek goddess of victory, was believed to have rewarded palm branches to the victors for remaining strong in great conflict.

To know God without being God-like is like trying to swim without entering water. Orest Bedrij

Pilate was not a happy choice as Prefect of Judea. He had a reputation as a man who had sticky fingers. In a period where graft and corruption was the prerogative of a provincial official, he still had a high profile as somebody who was corrupt. He had a reputation for executing untried prisoners, for venality and theft.... He's not somebody you'd want to get on the wrong side of. Pilate occasioned riots in Jerusalem. He would get nervous when there were crowds of Jews. And of course he was legally responsible to be up in Jerusalem when it was the most crowded of all. He would leave this very nice, plush, seaside town in Caesarea, which was, you know, a nice pagan city. Plenty of pagan altars. All the stuff he wanted. And had to go up to Jerusalem where all these Jews were congregating and stay there for crowd control until the holiday was over. He was in a bad mood already by the time he got to town. And Passover would fray anybody's nerves.

[And] remember in this period, government depends on spies. It's particularly [important] if you're an occupying power. You need to have spies to know what's going on. People reporting came back, "Look it, there's somebody who's really getting people excited and agitated talking about a Kingdom of God." Pilate doesn't care about theological niceties. Pilate doesn't even care about legal niceties. This is why ... ultimately, he's fired for his corruption and incompetence. Hearing that somebody is a trouble maker would be enough. Boom. He's dead. I think that's probably what happened with Jesus....

Paula Fredriksen; William Goodwin Aurelio Professor of the Appreciation of Scripture, Boston University

For enlightenment to have any power to change the world, it has to go beyond the personal, beyond the subjective experience of the individual. Imagine what it would be like if you were able to come to the end of division within yourself, and then come together with another, or many others, who had also done the same. You would have an experience that transcends conflict. You wouldn't be able to distinguish where you ended and the other began. At the same time, you would be aware of differences—of gender, age, culture—but the fact of those would in no way interfere with the profound experience of nondual wholeness. And that's miraculous, because in that the inner spiritual revelation of oneness enters this world in the form of relationship. Only when you bring it into this world does the circle become complete. Heaven has come to earth. This, to me, is the most meaningful thing about enlightenment—the potential to complete the circle. It's the true fruition of the spiritual experience. If enlightenment remains an inner or personal matter, it does not penetrate this world. It simply allows you to transcend it. **But heaven** coming to earth literally means the transformation of the world. It's the ultimate solution. When that begins to happen, victory has emerged on this planet. Andrew Cohen

Willfulness characterizes the unharnessed human will, whereas willingness identifies the strong will of a person who is willing to go where he or she is called or led by a higher power. William May

Reclining was practiced virtually universally throughout the Greco-Roman world at any meal of significance, including Jewish meals of this period that we know about. Also the Mishnah, though it dates from a later period, specifically mentions reclining as the posture at the Passover meal: "And even the poorest Israelite should not eat until he reclines at his table" (m. Pesah. 10.10). As for the number of guests at the Last Supper, the earliest story we have, that of Mark, certainly implies that Judas was present for the meal ("one who is eating with me.... who is dipping bread into the bowl with me," Mk. 14: 18,20. In any case, the difference between twelve or thirteen people (or perhaps a few more, if, in fact, women disciples were present at meals of Jesus; see, for example, Lk. 10: 38-42 would have been minimal. Finally passing a shared cup around at a meal, as Jesus is said to do in Mk. 14:2; was a common feature of the wine ceremony at a Greek banquet. Pg. 45. Dennis E. Smith. Bible Review. 10/04.



The coming to consciousness is not a discovery of some new thing; it is a long and painful return to that which has always been. Helen Luke

I am called here to grow. 'Death' is a critical point of growth, or transition to a new mode of being; to a *maturity* and fruitfulness that I do not know (they are in Christ and in His kingdom). The child in the womb does not know what will come after birth. He must be born in order to live. I am here to learn to face death as my birth." December 1, 1965, V.333-34 From *A Year with Thomas Merton, Daily Meditations from His Journals*, selected and edited by Jonathan Montaldo (HarperSanFrancisco, A Division of HarperCollinsPublishers, New York, 2004), P 31

"... Finally, about being united with God's will: I don't mean that you should specially formulate this in words frequently but rather just develop a habitual awareness and conviction that you are completely in His hands and His love is taking care of you in everything, that you need have no special worries about anything, past present or future, as long as you are sincerely trying to do what He seems to ask of you. And of course by that I mean simply what is called for by the obvious needs of the moment, duties of state, people you meet, events to cope with, sicknesses, mistakes, and so on. 'When hungry eat, when tired sleep.'" Merton, Thomas. [The Hidden Ground of Love](#).

Wanting to reform the world without discovering one's true self is like trying to cover the world with leather to avoid the pain of walking on stones and thorns. It is much simpler to wear shoes. Ramana Maharshi-Hindu sage



THE REAL HOLY GRAIL was certainly not the jeweled chalice described in the knightly legends. It might have been made of glass or wood (in which case there is virtual chance it could have survived for millennia), or looked like this mug-shaped drinking vessel from Jerusalem. Carved from white chalk (soft limestone), this type of cup was extremely common throughout Israel from the mid-first century B.C.E. to the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. It was a period when ritual purity was particularly important Jews of all social classes; according to Jewish law, stone was to impurity like glass or ceramics, so vessels made of chalk could be continually reused rather than destroyed. Bible Review. 8/04 Pg. 14.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS:

#### I'VE GOT TO GO: (Imaginary inner dialogue of Judas)

I don't know what's happening, but I've got to go. I've got to make something happen. I'm sick of being confused and feeling like an outsider. I've been with him all this time, and I still don't understand what he says, what he does -- washing our feet, him of all people.

I can still feel those hands of his on my feet. I can still hear him say, "He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me." Heel? Feet? What did he mean by that? I don't understand what he does and what he says. Then he said, "Truly, truly, one of you will betray me." Does he mean me? What does he know?

"Truly, truly!" How many times have I heard that! That's what they're all buzzing about, but I'm not like them. I caught what he said before that: "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives any one whom I send receives me."

I heard that -- but what did he mean about "sending" and "betraying"? I couldn't get it all; the ones closest to him, that inner circle, they could hear. He might have been whispering just to them, for all I can tell.

Does he mean me? Is he sending me? Is this odd man out or something else?

Then he dipped that piece of bread into the sauce, gave it to me, and said, "What you are going to do, do quickly." You can see how hard it is to understand him. Was he honoring me or was something else going on? Was he singling me out? And for what? "What you do, do quickly!"



Do what? I don't know what I'm going to do, but I know something has to be done. I know I couldn't have stayed there another minute.

He'll never treat me that way again. No more meals, no more shame. "The poor you always have with you." Mary and her ointment and hair. No more singling out, no more shame, no more not understanding. I've had enough. No more cold, loneliness; no more dark. No more not understanding.

I understand this much. I feel more alive right now than I've ever felt. I feel something I've never felt before. I feel a surge of energy. I may not understand him, but I know what I feel.

Every sense is sharp:

- my feet still feel moist from washing
- my fingers still feel moist from the sauce on the bread
- my tongue still tasting the red wine

-- I feel the cool night air on my skin  
-- I see the stars and the Passover fires  
-- I can even hear the coins jingle

Did they hear them? Did they guess? No, those clods were too busy whispering to each other, "Lord, who is it?" Is what? I despise them. They're so stupid that if they even noticed, they probably thought it was our money, not the money the others gave me. And they're the ones I'm going to. Something's got to be done. I understand that much.

"Quickly," he said. "Well, all right then, I'll give him 'quickly.'" [John Roberts](#)

His message and his public claim, finally his person itself, were indeed rejected by our world. According to all the rules prevailing at the time, he was executed. Nevertheless, even in his dying Jesus was not desperately concerned with his own identity and thus with self-survival. Edward Schillebeeckx – Christ: The Experience of Jesus as Lord.

This is my enlightened, well –founded hope: dying is a farewell inward, and entry and homecoming into the ground and origin of the world, our true home, a farewell perhaps not without pain and anxiety, but hopefully in composure and surrender, at any rate without weeping and wailing, and without bitterness and despair, but rather in hopeful expectation, quiet certainty, and (after everything that has to be settled is settled) ashamed gratitude for all the good things and less good things that now finally and definitively lie behind us – thank God. Pg. 206.

Kung, Hans. [The Beginning of All Things](#)

...this Jesus of Nazareth did not die into nothingness, but into God. So trusting in this message, I hope as a Christian, like many people in other religions, not to die into nothingness, which seems to me to be extremely irrational and senseless. Rather, I hope to die into the ultimate reality, into God, which – beyond space and time in the hidden real dimension of the infinite – transcends all human reason and conceiving. Pg. 205-6.

Kung, Hans. [The Beginning of All Things](#): Science & Religion. Grand Rapids, MI. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. 2007.

Death is not a going out of existence so much as a going to the heart of existence. John S. Dunne

Death is not extinguishing the light but putting out the lamp because the dawn has come. Rabindranath Tagore

"As the body must be born after completing its development in the womb, so a soul, when it has reached the limit of life in the body allotted it by God, must leave the body." - St. Anthony the Great –

#### **SUGGESTED READINGS:**

Links to all the books mentioned in this guide are on The Ark web site: [www.theark1.com](http://www.theark1.com)

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B 2009. Pgs. 83-86. To order contact [Carol Oberfoel](#)

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B 2011-12. Pg. 59. To order contact [Carol Oberfoel](#)

Mitchell, [The Enlightened Heart](#). Harper & Row. NY. 1989 **TRUTH: TUNG-SHAN** (807-869) Page 37.

William J. Bausch [Storytelling](#). Twenty-third Pub. Mystic. CT. 1984. **WHERE IS GOD?** Pages 20-1.

Grana, Janice [Images](#). St. Mary's College Press, Winona MN. 1976. **NOT FOR THE HESITANT:** Page 130 **ENDINGS:** Page 83

Shea, John. [The Hour of the Unexpected](#). Argus Communications, Allen TX 1977. **A PRAYER TO JESUS:** Page 12