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Supernatural Power

Stories from Mark’s Gospel

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# Week 15 | Mark 14:42–15:20

### Mark 14:1–42 Summary:

We’re coming to the climax of Mark’s Gospel as we build to Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection. This week we’ll witness Jesus’ betrayal, arrest, and trials.

# Day 1

## Read

### Mark 14:42–52 (NIV)

42Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

43Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders.

44Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: “The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.” 45Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Rabbi!” and kissed him. 46The men seized Jesus and arrested him. 47Then one of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

48“Am I leading a rebellion,” said Jesus, “that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? 49Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.” 50Then everyone deserted him and fled.

51A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him, 52he fled naked, leaving his garment behind.

## Study

* The fact that Jesus’ captors didn’t know who he was suggests that Jesus was not as well known in Jerusalem as he had been in the surrounding areas. He didn’t seek recognition among the prominent citizens of Jerusalem but spent his time with the people out in the countryside.
* Read the Faithlife Study Bible notes on [Mark 14:49](https://biblia.com/books/fsb/Mk14.49) to see what scriptures Jesus might be referring to.

## Think about

Here at this crucial time in Jesus’ life, the disciple’s failure is on full display. As we saw in last week’s passage, Jesus predicted Peter’s denial and the disciple’s abandonment (Mark 14:27–30). We also saw them unable to stay awake and pray during his darkest hour. Now we see Judas, one of Jesus’ own, betray him with a kiss, and the rest of disciples flee when he’s arrested. Jesus will face what’s to come without those who pledged their allegiance to him.

That Mark and the other Gospel writers include these unflattering stories of the apostles is notable. In the ancient world, the leaders of a movement would typically be portrayed in glowing terms. Here we get an unflinchingly honest depiction of their failure. And yet ultimately, I doubt the disciples who were about to become Jesus’ chief witnesses and leaders of his church minded one bit.

Why? Because while they failed, Jesus succeeds and that makes all the difference in their lives and ours. When they responded in fear, Jesus responded with love. When they prized money or safety over Jesus, he prized them enough to die on a cross for their sins.

The disciples came to understand something that we all should — it really is all about Jesus. His forgiveness is complete, wiping our slates clean. There is no sin so big his grace can’t cover it, and when we receive such a gift, our focus should be on telling people about the Giver.

## Pray

We’ve all done things we regret. The disciples surely did. Yet, they were able to rejoice in the mercy, grace and forgiveness found in Jesus. They didn’t cower in shame over what they’d done. They recognized the new life they’d been given and committed their lives to Jesus. They wouldn’t run in fear again, but instead proclaimed Jesus until they were ultimately killed for their loyalty to him. Pray for that kind of faith and devotion today.

# Day 2

## Read

### Mark 14:53–65 (NIV)

53They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, the elders and the teachers of the law came together. 54Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire.

55The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any. 56Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree.

57Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him: 58“We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with human hands and in three days will build another, not made with hands.’ ” 59Yet even then their testimony did not agree.

60Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, “Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?” 61But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.

Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?”

62“I am,” said Jesus. “And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

63The high priest tore his clothes. “Why do we need any more witnesses?” he asked. 64“You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?”

They all condemned him as worthy of death. 65Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, “Prophesy!” And the guards took him and beat him.

## Study

* According to Garland, the trial before the Sanhedrin is a “preparatory investigation” before Jesus will be transferred to the Roman governor for final deliberation. “Apparently, it is not enough to arrest and flog Jesus, which was in their power; the ruling priests want him dead and disgraced before the crowds. They presume his guilt, because he is a threat. The hearing will serve to convince anyone with misgivings that he is worthy of death and will fix the charge they will present to the Roman governor.”[[1]](#footnote-2)
* Garland also notes that “For the first time in the Gospel, ‘the Son of God’ title appears on the lips of a human character in the story. Only demons (3:11; 5:7) and the voice from the cloud (1:11; 9:7) have uttered it until now. Also, for the first time in the Gospel, Jesus publicly accepts that he is the Messiah, with his reply: ‘I am.’ The title of this Gospel is ‘the beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God’ (1:1); Jesus now himself affirms his identity before the high priest and his council and continues with, ‘And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One [literally, Power] and coming on the clouds of heaven.’”[[2]](#footnote-3)

Think about

This scene is hard to imagine. Our Savior and Lord is treated with such hatred and disdain, and the violence is only beginning. What kind of love must Jesus have for us to endure such treatment?

In Mark 14, we’ve witnessed the disciple’s failure. Now we see the injustice of a religious system that refuses to acknowledge the truth. We should find in the actions of the Sanhedrin a warning for us. We can be as quick as the religious leaders to label that which we don’t want to hear as blasphemy and condemn those who speak an inconvenient truth. May God give us the wisdom and humility to recognize the God’s truth when it’s right in front of us.

## Pray

Take some time today to praise Jesus for willingly sacrificing himself. And pray for wisdom and humility to see the truth, even when it’s hard.

# Day 3

## Read

### Mark 14:66–72 (NIV)

66While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by. 67When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him.

“You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus,” she said.

68But he denied it. “I don’t know or understand what you’re talking about,” he said, and went out into the entryway.

69When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, “This fellow is one of them.” 70Again he denied it.

After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, “Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.”

71He began to call down curses, and he swore to them, “I don’t know this man you’re talking about.”

72Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows twice you will disown me three times.” And he broke down and wept.

## Study

* Peter and Jesus are both interrogated, but there is a stark contrast between their questioners: Jesus is before the chief priests and Sanhedrin, while Peter is confronted by a mere servant girl.[[3]](#footnote-4) Jesus stands firm and speaks truth. Peter, however, denies the truth, being ashamed of the Son of Man and of his words. As Gombis points out, he answers the servant girl, “I don’t know or understand what you’re talking about” (verse 68) Ironically, he truly doesn’t understand what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. Throughout Mark’s Gospel, we see Peter struggling to match the Jesus in front of him to the conquering Messiah he expected. His resistance to Jesus’ message of the cross left him unprepared and vulnerable.

## Think about

Garland helps us learn from Peter’s failings:

“Sins of omission lead to sins of commission. Three times Peter failed to understand Jesus’ announcement of his suffering. Three times he did not heed Jesus’ urgent appeal to watch, stay awake, and pray. Three times he denied Jesus. The sin of boastful rivalry led him to think that he was different from all the others—“I will not” (14:29). He relied on his own strength and fell farther than the other disciples. Paul’s warning to the Corinthians is apropos: “So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!” (1 Cor. 10:12).”[[4]](#footnote-5)

Many years later, having witnessed the cross, the resurrection, and seen Jesus again face to face, Peter finally becomes one of Jesus’ biggest champions. His life’s mission becomes sharing the message of the crucified and risen Messiah, and he does so without fear or shame. Peter also learned from his failings. In a letter he wrote to the early church, Peter reminds believers of Proverbs 3:34, “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble” and warns them the “Be alert and of sober mind” (1 Peter 5:6, 8) — instruction that comes from his Lord and ours.

## Pray

Pray that you would have the courage of your convictions when it comes to Jesus! Pray that the Spirit will empower you to be humble and strong, alert, and aware.

# Day 4

Don’t miss the Pastor’s Pregame Podcast! Listen at [*CFhome.org/pregame*](https://subsplash.com/christfellowship-tx/lb/ms/+hg732gk) or through [*Apple Podcasts*](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/pastors-pregame/id1582563644).

## Read

### Mark 15:1–15 (NIV)

**15** Very early in the morning, the chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin, made their plans. So they bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate.

2“Are you the king of the Jews?” asked Pilate.

“You have said so,” Jesus replied.

3The chief priests accused him of many things. 4So again Pilate asked him, “Aren’t you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of.”

5But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed.

6Now it was the custom at the festival to release a prisoner whom the people requested. 7A man called Barabbas was in prison with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the uprising. 8The crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually did.

9“Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?” asked Pilate, 10knowing it was out of self-interest that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him. 11But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead.

12“What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?” Pilate asked them.

13“Crucify him!” they shouted.

14“Why? What crime has he committed?” asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, “Crucify him!”

15Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

## Study

* Garland helps us understand how the legal system worked in the first century Roman empire. The Romans did not interfere in local politics any more than necessary to maintain order. Local councils took care of the day-to-day chores of governing. “They had the power to arrest, to take evidence, and to make a preliminary examination for the purpose of presenting a prosecution case before the governor for a formal trial.” The governor, in this case Pilate, held the power of life and death. In the case of non-Roman citizens, he was free to make his own rules and impose whatever penalties he saw fit.[[5]](#footnote-6)
* Roman governors would not get involved in religious disputes unless they threatened Roman order. The Sanhedrin was careful to present Jesus as an insurrectionist who did just that by claiming to be King of the Jews. Still, Pilate is reluctant to execute Jesus. He is suspicious of the motives of the Jewish leaders, but ultimately succumbs to the pressure from the crowd.

## Think about

Pilate represents the worst kind of politician. He has no true convictions but acts according to the needs of the moment and the whims of the crowd. Pilate offers his Roman overseers a false kind of peace — one that crushes dissent and gives the appearance of stability. Yet the true peace that flows from a commitment to goodness and justice is denied to the citizens of Judea.

Jesus’ trial is a travesty of justice from start to finish. Barabbas had been arrested for committing murder in a literal insurrection. So. a truly guilty man goes free, and Jesus, the only truly innocent man who’s ever lived is sentenced to die. It’s unfair. Yet, ultimately, we are all Barabbas, aren’t we? Those who have put their faith in Jesus will escape judgment for all their wrongs because Jesus took those sins on himself.

## Pray

Pray that you will stand for true goodness and justice in this world. That you will promote true peace. Praise God for his mercy, that because of Jesus you have been declared righteous before God.

# Day 5

## Read

### Mark 15:16–20 (NIV)

16The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers. 17They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. 18And they began to call out to him, “Hail, king of the Jews!” 19Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. 20And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

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## Study

Wright helps us understand what crucifixion signified in the ancient world:

* “Polite Romans didn’t even mention the word ‘crucifixion’ or ‘cross’. The reality was so brutal, ugly, and repellent. But crosses were the reality on which their empire was in fact constructed—the empire which boasted of bringing justice and peace to the whole world.”
* “The cross was a political symbol long before it became a religious symbol. Pilate knew, the crowds knew, the chief priests knew, and Jesus knew, what it meant. It was the ultimate symbol of Roman power. It said, ‘We are in charge here, and this is what happens to people who get in our way.’ They had crucified thousands of rebel Jews when Jesus was a boy in Galilee. They would crucify thousands more when they took Jerusalem in ad 70…and in between those two devastating repressions of revolts they crucified lots of people for a variety of reasons, often on small pretexts.”[[6]](#footnote-7)

## Think about

For all of us who follow Jesus as our King, worship him as our Lord, and love him as our Savior, these verses are difficult to read. Mark paints a vivid picture of the humiliation and mockery that Jesus endured, and it is hard to see. Yet, we should look so that we know. In times of indulgence when we rebel against his word, or in moments of suffering and pain we doubt his love, we should remember what Jesus went through, all so he could spend eternity with us.

## Pray

Spend some time with Jesus in prayer today. Praise him, thank him, and devote yourself to him. Bask in his love for you, and allow it to strengthen your faith and obedience.

Go back and reflect on all of [Mark 15](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Mk15). What is the Spirit saying to you through Mark’s Gospel?

1. David E. Garland, [*Mark*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nivac62mk?ref=Bible.Mk14.53-65&off=1109&ctx=ment+(John+18:31).4+~Apparently%2c+it+is+no), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 560. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Garland, 562. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Timothy G. Gombis, [*Mark*](https://ref.ly/logosres/strygdcm62mk?ref=Bible.Mk14.66-72&off=377&ctx=wd+to+arrest+Jesus.+~Peter+and+Jesus+are+), ed. Scot McKnight and Tremper Longman III, The Story of God Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2021), 520. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Garland, 573. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Garland, 576. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Tom Wright, [*Mark for Everyone*](https://ref.ly/logosres/evry62mk?ref=Bible.Mk15.1-15&off=1935&ctx=and+did%2c+and+meant.%0a~The+cross+was+a+poli) (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004), 207. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)