

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Mark 14: 27-42

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. We'll continue to read Mark chapter 14, verses 27 to 42.

Campbell Morgan, who served as a pastor at Westminster Chapel in the United Kingdom a century ago. His exegesis was filled with inspiration, and I often refer to his works when preparing daily readings. In the 14th chapter of the Gospel of Mark, his division into sections is spiritually insightful, helping us understand the mindset of Mark as he wrote. He divides this chapter into three sections: the first section covers verses 1 to 26; the second section covers verses 27 to 52; and the third section covers verses 53 to 72.

The key theme of the first section, verses 1 to 26, is "Emotion." This section records two feasts: at the first feast, Mary broke an alabaster flask and anointed Jesus with very costly spikenard, expressing her unconditional love for Him; at the second feast, Jesus, as the Passover Lamb, shared the Passover Feast with His disciples. Judas Iscariot, while partaking in the feast of love with the Lord, also plotted to betray Jesus, expressing baseless hatred towards Him. Love and hatred intertwine, revealing the mindset of Jesus at that time. He, being the holy and righteous God, detests sin, yet now, out of love for humanity, He is to become the sacrificial Lamb, bearing all human sins, even those He detests, upon Himself. Enduring hatred for the sake of love indeed epitomizes the intertwining of love and hatred.

The main theme of the second section, verses 27 to 52, is "Willpower." This encompasses Jesus's will, as He chooses to obey the will of God, and also includes the will of the disciples, who, due to their fleshly weakness and unclear thoughts, have their will overcome by fear and eventually flee.

The main theme of the third section, verses 53 to 72, is "Thoughts." Jesus is brought before the high priest, and everyone tries to accuse Him with all their thoughts, yet they cannot discredit Jesus, who represents the truth. Meanwhile, Peter, due to a moment of confusion, denies the Lord three times, but upon hearing the rooster crow, he remembers the words of the Lord, and his thoughts become clear, leading him to weep bitterly.

Today, we will begin reading from verse 27, and I will follow Campbell Morgan's outline. The main theme of the first section is "Willpower," attempting to delve into Mark's mindset to share the scripture and the hidden meanings behind it.

Verse 27: "Then Jesus said to them, 'All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered.'"

At this moment, as they went to the Mount of Olives, they sang the Hallel Psalms from Psalm 113 to Psalm 118. These six psalms praise God, recounting how He has treated and protected His chosen people, the Israelites, and bringing forth Israel's praise and worship of God. However, what's particularly noteworthy is the conclusion of the praise in Psalm 118:27-29, "God is the Lord, And He has given us light; Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar. You are my God, and I will praise You; You are my God, I will exalt You. Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever." At the end, it mentions, "Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar." Jesus clearly knew that He was the sacrifice prepared by God, and now He was to be brought to the altar. This was His destiny, He was very clear about it, but His disciples were not. Despite having repeatedly told them that He would suffer, be killed, and rise again on the third day, it seems that only Mary truly understood.

Jesus was genuinely concerned for His disciples, so He once again quoted Scripture, this time using Zechariah 13:7: "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, Against the Man who is My Companion," says the Lord of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; Then I will turn My hand against the little ones." Here, it

speaks of the Lord raising up a sword to strike the Shepherd, and this Shepherd is Jesus Himself. The sheep will be scattered, and these sheep are the disciples who follow Jesus; they will all scatter and flee. Jesus here tells the disciples about what is about to happen and how they will react. Jesus knows His disciples far better than they know themselves, just as a shepherd knows each of his own sheep, while the sheep do not recognize themselves, often even thinking highly of themselves.

Verse 28: "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."

The cross has both a horizontal and a vertical dimension. The vertical dimension represents rising from death, connecting earth to heaven. Without the promise of resurrection, there is no hope. In the face of trials, without hope, no one can endure. Therefore, Jesus prophesied His being struck by God, and the scattering of the disciples, but these are temporary. Jesus immediately continues to prophesy that He will rise again, and after rising, He will go ahead of the disciples to Galilee.

Here, Jesus established the covenant of Galilee, as mentioned in Matthew 28:16, where the disciples were to go to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had appointed them, and there, Jesus would give them the Great Commission. This covenant of Galilee would become their hope in suffering, and the light in darkness. Here we see Jesus truly loving His disciples, meticulously preparing for them. In fact, even today, if we have spiritual insight, we can see God preparing various spiritual provisions for us in our environment, so that we may not be dismayed, nor lose hope.

Verse 29: "Peter said to Him, 'Even if all are made to stumble, yet I will not be.'"

Peter remained consistently brave; he said, "Even if all are made to stumble, yet I will not be." Perhaps you may think Peter was ignorant or overly confident in the flesh. But Jesus knew he spoke sincerely; he was truly willing to stand for Jesus. In

fact, Jesus appreciated such determination. However, Jesus also knew that Peter did not fully understand himself.

Verse 30: "Assuredly, I say to you that today, even this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times."

Jesus knew Peter's character well. He was honest and sincere, prone to taking the lead, and capable of assuming responsibility and guiding others. In Matthew 16:19, Jesus promised to give Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven, indicating his leadership role. Therefore, Jesus forewarned Peter about what was about to happen: that before the rooster crowed twice that very night, he would deny Jesus three times. This detail is mentioned so explicitly only in Mark's Gospel because Mark recorded Peter's testimony. These details were deeply ingrained in Peter's memory, as it was the greatest failure of his life. If Jesus had not foretold Peter of these details, Peter might have stumbled and even failed in the task entrusted to him by God. Jesus' prediction, or rather warning, indeed helped Peter, prompting him to remember these details and instructing Mark to record them as a testimony.

Verse 31: "And he spoke vehemently, 'If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!' And they all said likewise."

"Peter vehemently said," here we see the will of man, built on a faulty foundation. We all, like Peter, think highly of ourselves, believing we are good and brave. Peter said he would even die with Jesus and never deny Him. It's not just Peter who said this; all the disciples were the same; they were all willing to die with Jesus. Dear brothers and sisters, are we not also like Peter? With some experience of the Lord, we overestimate our faith, thinking we can surely stand with the Lord. We often establish our will on ourselves, even on our blind self-confidence: we will surely do this and that. Yet, we ourselves are truly unreliable; the truly reliable is God's word. Jesus knew the true condition of the disciples; He also knew they needed to

experience failure to clearly understand themselves. Therefore, Jesus no longer said much and continued to lead the disciples towards the Mount of Olives."

Verse 32: "Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, 'Sit here while I pray.'"

The name Gethsemane means "olive press" or "the place of pressing olives." This olive grove was called Gethsemane. Just as olives need to be pressed to extract olive oil, Gethsemane was a place of pressing. The Garden of Gethsemane was located only 1200 meters from the walls of Jerusalem and was likely owned by Mark's family. John 18:2 tells us that Jesus often brought His disciples to this garden. Perhaps in the past, Jesus, accompanied by His disciples, was hosted by Mark's family in Jerusalem, and they frequently visited this garden. But this time, Jesus Himself was to be pressed in this garden, just like olives. Jesus asked the disciples to stay at the entrance of the garden while He went in to pray.

Verse 33: "And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed."

"Jesus left eight of the disciples at the entrance of the Garden of Gethsemane and took Peter, James, and John with Him into the garden. These three disciples had previously witnessed Jesus displaying the glory of the Son of God on the Mount of Transfiguration. However, this time, Jesus experienced anguish again. Jesus, being fully human, faced difficult situations, and just like anyone else, He felt sorrow and pain. Jesus also needed the support of companions. At this moment, Jesus 'began to be troubled and deeply distressed.'"

Verse 34: "Then He said to them, 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch.'"

In this verse, Jesus looked at Peter, James, and John, not only as His disciples but also as His friends. He sincerely said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death." Jesus spoke these words without exaggeration; it was His genuine feeling. He asked them to stay there and keep watch. Here we see Jesus' humanity; facing extreme difficulty, He felt sorrowful and needed companionship. He needed the presence of His disciples and their watchful waiting.

Verse 35: "And He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him."

Jesus walked ahead alone. In Luke 22:41, it tells us that the distance was about the length one could throw a stone, roughly about 20 to 30 meters. The distance between Jesus and the disciples might have made it difficult for the disciples to hear what Jesus was saying, but they could see His silhouette. Jesus then prostrated Himself on the ground, expressing the deep sorrow in His heart that overwhelmed Him. Jesus began to pray to the Father, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me." When was this? Jesus knew that the first step of redemption was for everyone's sins to be placed upon Him. And God, being holy and just, distances Himself from sin. When everyone's sins are placed upon Him, God the Father would have to distance Himself and even judge Him. It was indeed a dreadful moment. Therefore, Jesus prayed to the Father, asking if it were possible, to let that time pass from Him, not to come upon Him.

Verse 36: "Then He said, 'Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will.'"

Jesus prayed to the Father, "Abba, Father," expressing His intimate relationship with God. "All things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me," refers to the cup of God's wrath, which was the deserved portion of sinners. However, Jesus, as the sacrificial lamb, bore the wrath of God upon Himself. The wrath of God is terrifying, so in His humanity, Jesus prayed for the cup to be removed from Him. The Father is

omnipotent and could remove the cup, but He cannot compromise His righteousness. If the cup is removed from Jesus, it would return to the sinners. Jesus understood this, so His prayer ended with, "Nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will." Obeying God's will is not easy. People often submit to God's will not in strength but in extreme weakness and difficulty. If you can submit to God's will with strength and ease, it's likely not God's will you're submitting to.

Verse 37: "Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, 'Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour?'"

Jesus finished the first prayer and returned to the disciples, only to find Peter, James, and John all asleep. After all, they had been through a busy day and had just finished a lavish meal, so now they were simply too tired, all asleep. Jesus woke Peter up and said to him, "Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch for one hour?" Here we see Jesus' loneliness; in His most painful and needing-support moment, these three disciples who had followed Jesus for the longest time, perhaps considered His best friends on earth, couldn't empathize with Him. Jesus was prostrate on the ground praying fervently to the Father, and yet they were all asleep.

Verse 38: "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Jesus woke Peter up and said to him, "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. 'Temptation' is also translated into English as 'temptation,' or it can also be rendered as 'do not enter into temptation.'" Watching and praying maintains a channel of communication between us and God, enabling us to resist various temptations that come from Satan. Therefore, Jesus instructed the disciples to be vigilant, wait, and pray.

But on the other hand, Jesus was also very understanding of these three disciples, making excuses for them, saying, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." The term "spirit " is translated as "spirit" in the original text, so a better translation would be "your spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Here we see the struggle between the spirit and the flesh. As in Galatians 5:17, "For the flesh lust against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another," where the term "flesh" is translated as "flesh," so it can also be translated as "the spirit and the flesh are opposed to each other."

Verse 39-40: "Again, He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words. And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him."

After waking them up, Jesus instructed them to stay awake, and He went off to pray for the second time, speaking the same words as before. Jesus' burden had not been lifted, so He went to pray again, expressing His sorrow and difficulty to the Father openly and sincerely, while also accepting comfort and encouragement from the Father.

According to Jesus' original arrangement, the eight disciples remained at the entrance of Gethsemane, staying alert for Him; the three closer disciples entered the garden, staying about twenty to thirty meters away from Him, also remaining alert for Him; meanwhile, He came before the Father alone, maintaining an open communication with Him. Jesus had no issue in His communication with the Father, but the disciples seemed unable to overcome their physical weakness. After Jesus prayed for the second time and returned to the three disciples, He found them asleep again, their eyes heavy with sleepiness. He woke them up, but they were still confused and did not know how to respond.

Verse 41: “Then He came the third time and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.’”

Indeed, Jesus went off alone to pray for a third time. Here we see the principle of praying persistently, not necessarily three times, but repeatedly until the burden is lifted. When facing difficulties and uncertainties, we should pray to seek God's will. Once we understand God's will, we mustn't stop there, as we may still struggle to obey. Therefore, we should follow the principle of these three prayers, praying until we reach a point where we can obediently follow God's will. God's will often leads us down the path of the cross. Without the three prayers in Gethsemane, Jesus wouldn't have been willing and able to obey the Father's will, leading to His crucifixion on Golgotha.

We often hold a mistaken notion about the cross, thinking it involves gritting our teeth and enduring suffering with all our might, believing this is what it means to bear the cross. However, this is not the essence of the cross. Before the cross, there must be the three prayers in Gethsemane, allowing us to fully submit to God's will. Only then can one willingly and even joyfully bear the cross to follow the Lord. When a person's heart is filled with sorrow, bitterness, and resentment, they are not bearing the cross but rather their own bitterness.

After three prayers, communing with the Father, Jesus completely aligned with God's will and unloaded the burden in His heart. When He returned to the disciples for the third time, He saw them sleeping again. This time, instead of waking them, He said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting?" Their drowsiness was too heavy, and they couldn't stay awake. Jesus let them rest while He stood guard beside them.

This is such a beautiful picture. Initially, Jesus was deeply distressed, almost to the point of death, needing the companionship of His disciples, yet they were overcome by fleshly weakness and slept. After enduring three prayers alone, finally submitting to God's will, He returned to the sleeping disciples, guarding them, allowing them to rest—this is our Lord. While He faced His own difficulties, He remained

concerned for and protected His disciples. Jesus calmly watched over the three disciples, letting them rest until the darkness approached. Then, He woke them, saying, "Enough! The hour has come." Perhaps He heard the approaching footsteps, knowing that those who would arrest Him were coming, so He said to the disciples, "Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."

Verse 42: "Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

Let's rise up, for "he who betrays Me is at hand." The Passover feast hasn't finished yet, but Judas has already left. He went to the chief priests, gathered people, and came to arrest Jesus. The time has come. Jesus bravely goes forward to meet those who are coming to seize Him. In today's passage, we see Jesus's will completely obedient to the will of God. But the will of the disciples, overcome by the weakness of the flesh, they all fell asleep.

Let's pray together: Lord, thank You for showing in the Gospel of Mark how You loved Your disciples, enduring great suffering yet still guarding them, allowing them to rest. Today, You are the same, guarding every saved saint, standing by our side. Even though You call us to stay awake, when we are weak in the flesh, You guard us until we are willing. Lord, help us truly understand Your heart, willing to entrust all our will to Your grace, not relying on ourselves, for we are utterly unreliable. Help us trust Your words, Your promises, so that in every aspect of our lives, we may seek and obey Your will. Bless my life, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen!