

Mark 14:53-65 St James by the Park

1. Introduction: Marks gospel is full of irony.

When has someone's sense of humour helped you? Is having a sense of humour important?

Drama of discipleship – all Christians are on a journey of discovery of who Jesus is – we often get it wrong or are slow on the uptake. In Mark's gospel unusual suspects seem to see who Jesus is; religious leaders often deny or reject him.

If you were to chart your Christian journey how would you draw it? like a roller coaster ride or a smooth walk uphill or downhill, a maze? etc.

Jesus is the secret of the kingdom - finally revealed in this final sequence. Obituary with an introduction - Prediction narratives 3 predictions of Messiah – 8:31, 9:31 and 10:33-34. Also betrayal predicted in 14:1-2 before the Passover feast chief priests and teachers of the law were looking for some sly way to kill him and Mark 14:10-11 Judas was willing to betray him - every detail in the narrative plays its role – economy of story-telling better than Hemingway

2. Betrayal - The Kiss of Judas:

Crowd are likely to be the Temple police (levites) including high priest's servant

Judas kissed him and said Rabbi yet does not follow - Irony * Judas never saw Jesus again. The Judas kiss has become a proverbial phrase for acts of betrayal e.g. receiving holy communion while continuing to quarrel with another. Do we display a gap between Jesus' lordship and our following of Jesus?

If Jesus is not lord of all he is not Lord at all! - Is this true? Which areas of your current life are not surrendered to his lordship? What can you share in a group today? What do you need to share more carefully with someone you respect as a wise and faithful Christian?

How do you feel when betrayed – at work, in the family, amongst others?

Discuss what you as Christians can do about it?

Many betrayed – Chinese betraying others in Malaya in 2nd world war Freddie Chapman biography Jungle Soldier, Communists in Soviet Union and China – even own families were pressurised, Muslim families when someone becomes a Christian, double agents in UK like Burgess

The kiss was not needed as Jesus stepped forward – “Am I leading a rebellion?” Judas may have wished that he would lead such a rebellion – as Judas may have had Zealot sympathies- irony.

Jesus was teaching in the day in the Temple but they came at night to arrest him - betraying their motives. At night they come and many are not seen again in oppressive cowardly regimes.

Cutting off the ear – without sufficient prayer and preparation for persecution inappropriate reactions can be the consequence. – Have you ever done the metaphorical equivalent of cutting off someone's ear – has being prayerfully prepared ever helped?

Also fled – prayer essential preparation for holding your ground – Jesus remained - They smited the shepherd and sheep were scattered

In Mark 14:50 does not describe disciples with that term of followers but they were fleers.. “they all did a runner” **all abandoned** him and ran away - Mark’s gospel refused them the title of disciples in this instance. Abandoned – being persecuted can be such solitary experience yet not even the flight of the disciples can thwart the plan of God.

Do you feel called to stand with someone or group being persecuted today? How do you do that?

Comment on the young man with cloth (sindon) (some say Mark) but read Amos 2:16 in the day of judgement even the bravest will run away naked. Note also the such a cloth sindon was used as a burial cloth for Jesus and a young man dressed in a white robe proclaimed his resurrection.

3. Fake News is not Good News

See chief priests, teachers of the law and the leaders see 8:31 and 14:1-2 find a way – looking for evidence/fabrication of truth/trumped up charges – carries a new meaning these days in post-truth politics, falsely accused, ludicrous

The holy priests, the wise elders and the true teachers of the law – holiness, wisdom and truth distorted!

There were plenty of witnesses but they did not agree with one another. Witnesses’ testimonies had to agree with each other but only one in the court at each time, Deut 19:15-19

Mark’s gospel clearly shows Jesus as being the ultimate replacement for the temple. However there was fake news about Jesus destroying the Temple. But like all mischievous tabloid headings there was a small amount of truth in it! MK11:1-12:44 It was a man-made temple – many had seen it being built under Herod and descendants, but it was going to be replaced by Jesus who becomes the centre of forgiveness and where God’s presence will be experienced. This will be a divine action.

How is it that the religious temple leaders got it so wrong?

How much of a threat to the Temple and their leadership was Jesus?

In verse 61 Jesus remained silent. He did not waste energy on false accusations. He knew when to be silent - compare with show trials around the world over the ages. In India the Religious Freedom Act ironically limits religious freedom and some Christians are being falsely accused by extreme Hindutva followers. Fake news about India’s Christian past is being promulgated by a few which influencing others. So the Indian church is learning to live with such false accusations.

Scriptures fulfil Isaiah 53:7 He was oppressed and afflicted yet he did not open his mouth, he was led like a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

Good News? V62 Are you the Messiah the Son of the Blessed One?

Jesus is finally revealed to all compare with Mk1:1. “I am” is Jesus reply. Jesus is the true prophet. Tom Wright the theologian summarises that what Jesus said about the Temple will come true, that they will see him vindicated! The masks are off, secrets out, the cryptic sayings and parables are left behind and the son of man stands in front of the official leader of the Jewish people.

Jesus responds with a compound quote! He combines 2 OT texts. The Son of Man term is only used in the gospels and it relates to Daniel 7:13-14 and is mentioned already in Mark 13:26. The future exaltation of the son of man who is given rule is reflected in Ps 110:1 already mentioned in Mark 12:36. Jesus combines them in a powerful response.

The Lord said to my Lord sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet. Ps 110:1

At that time men will see the son of man coming in clouds with great glory Daniel 7:13-14

Caiaphas the High Priest also Chairman of the Sanhedrin cries blasphemy but the irony is that this itself seems to be blasphemous as God has affirmed Jesus in his ministry by 2 witnesses at baptism and transfiguration Mark 1:11 and Mark 9:7 A blasphemer should be punished by death by stoning. Lev 24:10-16

Jesus, however, did not speak against Gods name!

The High Priest cries blasphemy – what do you think?? – this was a leading charge!– Show trial - ritualistically tore cloak. but God tore curtain in the Holy of Holies compare with Is 50:6 “ I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did no hide my face from mocking and spitting.”

Blasphemy laws in many countries like Pakistan are constantly abused and lead to people being persecuted. Blasphemy laws are often very dangerous. Are there ways you can support those facing such blasphemy charges?

They spit at him and blindfold him and ask him to prophesy - oppressive regimes leads to torture and abuse of many including Christians. Now there are those reading these verses today who will be likewise put into very difficult positions but have the example of Jesus to inspire them.

As Cyprian an early church father when facing death under the Roman Empire was to die in front of his flock he said “how marvellous it is that now I see the sheep and in a moment will see the Great Shepherd.”

Jesus’ response is that Son of Man will fill the divine role as final judge of all including the high priest and the Sanhedrin. He is really the ultimate judge.

Many people really judge God but ultimately we will be judged by his appointed judge, the Lord Jesus Christ. How does that truth work out in your life and in your friends lives?