

11.22.15 Mark 14:1-11

***Since most groups are not meeting this week there is no study guide.**

O. INTRO:

*Gene Roddenberry was the creator of Star Trek.

*He was a WWII combat pilot and later an airline pilot who survived three plane crashes.

*His last crash caused him to consider how short life is and to give up flying and pursue his dreams of writing and directing.

*He was a creative and courageous man...and he was an enormously immoral, addicted man who indulged his own desires in violation of his commitments to others...this is not my judgment on him...these are the objective facts of his life...good and bad.

*His choices were in line with his worldview...no God, no ultimate right or wrong, no final accountability...so why not do what you feel like doing?

*He was a committed and vocal atheist who grew up in a Christian family but once said... "How can I take seriously a god-image that requires that I prostrate myself every seven days and praise it? That sounds to me like a very insecure personality."

*I agree with him...I could not take seriously a "god-image" that requires that I prostrate myself one day a week.

*First...I could only take seriously the God who made everything from nothing...the uncaused cause of everything...no man made image, no lesser gods make any sense to me.

*Second...I would only be taking **that** God seriously if I gave all seven days in worship to him...not one token day a week.

*Last week I heard a Sr. commander tell some commanders under him to take this message back to their people...

"What you do every day matters."

"You have been on mission, standing watch day after day...but you must remain vigilant because on the day you will be called upon...you must not fail."

*These military leaders he was speaking to, do take seriously their 7-day a week, 24 hour a day commitment to their mission.

*Yet they still need ongoing encouragement and vision casting to continue to remain vigilant.

*Compare these two stories:

1. Roddenberry rejected a cartoonish insecure "straw-god" who asked for 1/7 of our lives. I too reject that god. It's a far too small god, asking for far too little from us.

2. The commander knew that the reality and vital necessity of their mission requires both ongoing vigilance as well as continual encouragement..."stay alert, this matters."

*Roddenberry's image of a pitiful, insecure god...begging for a day a week, was not compelling to him.

*The commander's call for a full commitment to a full time commitment to vital mission was compelling.

*I have spoken often of faithfulness as a life principle."

*And it is a principle...a principle is something that must be turned into application by each of us...day-by-day, choice by choice.

*But the principle of faithfulness...the vital importance of a 7-day, 24-hour commitment to God is foundational for our lives.

*Either the gospel is true and must be accepted in total...24/7...or it is false and it must be rejected completely...like Roddenberry did.

*The gospel is "all or nothing" proposition.

*What doesn't make sense at all is to believe that gospel is true **and** that it can be accepted...part time, or half way.

*Roddenberry was right...who could take seriously a God that required part-time devotion...that idea is absurd...irrational.

*His problem was, he created a "straw man" argument..."This is your god, I reject that god."

*That is not my God.

*Even a boss or some hobbies require more devotion than that.

*And to understand this God...the creator of the very stars Roddenberry dreamed of traveling to...

*Is to know that he demands worship of us not because of his insecurity but because of love for us...he doesn't need us to worship him...we need to worship him.

*Like my two introductory stories demonstrate a contrast, our narrative today gives us a striking contrast as well.

*One, who in symbolic, if not in real terms gave her all...and was criticized for it.

*Another who, while hiding in plain sight, appeared to be giving all...but was living for himself.

Mark 14:1 Now the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the

chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some sly way to arrest Jesus and kill him. 2 “But not during the Feast,” they said, “or the people may riot.” 3 While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. 4 Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, “Why this waste of perfume? 5 It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages and the money given to the poor.” And they rebuked her harshly. 6 “Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. 7 The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. 8 She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. 9 I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.” 10 Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. 11 They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

1. All In

*Over 1/3 of the book of Mark is the last week of Jesus' life...from the entry into Jerusalem to the cross.

*We can see how this is called the "gospel of Mark"...his focus is not on a nice, wise, religious fellow who wandered around doing good deeds in the 1st century.

*His focus is completely on the "meaning" of the deeds and death of Jesus.

*Jesus is the answer to the prophecies, the fulfillment of the OT...his actions certified his statements.

*His greatest prediction and action will be the cross.

*Mark presents Jesus, his life, death, and resurrection as the center point of all of human history.

*If he is the center point of all human history...what does that fact alone say about the place he should have in our lives?

*On this day he is at the home of a man named Simon the Leper (likely he had been healed by Jesus of his disease)

*Now his former shame was now part of his name...

*Leprosy brought shame them...it separated you from others.

*Now his identity is forever tied in with the need that brought him to Christ...for him it was his leprosy.

*Jerod Fogle, the smiling, nice Subway spokesperson last week went to prison for 15 years..

-His crimes deserve the justice he received

-I couldn't help but pray that years in the future and into eternity...this day of shame when all his sin was made public...will be the day he praises God for...because it will be through the shame that he will come understand his reason for existing.

*So Jesus is the house of the Redeemed Leper.

*It is Passover week; we will talk more of this in detail next week.

-Very important time of celebrating freedom.

*Because of the importance of this week the city would have swelled from around 25k to 50k people.

*There were people everywhere, there was literally not an alley the Lord's enemies could drag him down and escape the view of the people.

*So they decided to wait until the Passover week was over to arrest Jesus.

*As Jesus is dining at the home of his friend...a woman, unnamed by Mark, comes up behind him and anoints his head with oil.

*The shepherd is living out Psalm 23.

Ps. 23:4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

*Here in the valley of the shadow of his death...as his enemies plot against him.

*God has prepared a table for him and his head is being anointed with very expensive oil.

*This oil would cost a year's wages...perhaps for her it represented her entire life's saving.

*At any rate...it was an extravagant act of worship.

*So extravagant it brought a sharp rebuke from some of those present.

*John wrote that the most vocal critic was Judas, the treasurer of the group...he saw her pouring out money he could have used for himself.

*The word Mark uses expresses their anger, outrage...something like..."What in the () are you doing?"

*Jesus rebuked the rebukers..."Leave her alone, she has done a **beautiful** thing."

*"You will always have the poor...and you can help them whenever you want...but I'm here a short time."

*"She has prepared me for burial...and what she has done will be remembered whenever the gospel is preached throughout the world."

*Her act of extravagant worship was a visual presentation of the gospel...whether she fully understood it or not...she was preparing him for his death...and resurrection.

*She was proclaiming the gospel with her action.

*Its clear there that Jesus is an egomaniac, or the Lord of heaven of earth...he cannot merely be a good man.

*A good man would not believe someone would gain world-wide fame simply by serving him.

*He is predicting his own worldwide fame here...and saying that this woman will become famous because of her simple act that day...he was right on both counts.

*The irony was that no one cared more for the poor than Jesus did...but what this woman did that day he called "beautiful."

*It was not a waste...it was the right thing for her to do on that day.

***The large question for all of us is...What does God want from me?**

*The answer is... "He wants **me** to do what **he** wants me to do."

*"So how is that a helpful answer?"

*Our tendency is to decide what God would have us to do, based on what makes perfect sense to us.

*Here the perfect "utilitarian" sense or the "loving" sense would be...

*So..."I have some expensive oil, there are lots of poor people, therefore God wants me to sell the oil and feed poor people."

*"Wait...that woman is 'wasting' the oil in a single moment...Jesus...rebuke her!"

*No...she is praised and her act is called beautiful, not wasteful.

*So how are we to make sense out of life...are we to live modestly, extravagantly, usefully? What are we to do?

***We are to find what God wants from us and do it.**

*"Great...how are we to find what he wants from us?"

*Good question...Let's go on

2. ALL OUT

*The next verse is frightening.

10 Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. 11 They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

*Judas was, it seems, hiding in plain sight...heart slipping or slipped...while in the company of Jesus.

*Was he in and fell away, was he never in?...well he was never fully in.

*** 1John 2:19 They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.**

*Mark is strikingly understated in his description of the greatest betrayal in human history.

*I read a fascinating book about a man who betrayed our country in the 1940's...much was said of him.

*When Judas betrayed the Savior of the world...its described in one line.

*We are left to speculate on motive...greed? (we do know he was a thief who took the group's money and used it on himself.)

*However he didn't get much for his betrayal.

*Maybe disappointment.

*Perhaps he signed on for the popular view of the Messiah...conquering king, ruling from a physical throne in Jerusalem.

*Since he was the treasurer of the little group...he likely thought he would be treasurer of the King of Kings.

*Now, they are in Jerusalem, the crowds are on his side...yet he is not capitalizing...in fact, he continues to speak of his death.

*Here a woman wastes resources and he uses the occasion to wax morbid again...talking about his burial.

*Maybe Judas just had enough..."Count me out...I didn't sign on for this."

*So what is clear...

*It is possible to "hide in plain sight" in the middle of fellowship with God's people and the plane view of the activity of God...to have a heart that is going its own way.

*Of course Peter and others betrayed him as well...but theirs was the betrayal of temporary denial...fear, self-preservation...and they repented and recovered.

*Judas was more calculating, and he did not appear to repent and recover.

*Now the enemies of Jesus were happy to have a way to get at him without having to wait for the crowds to dissipate...the path to the cross is now opening up for Jesus.

3. ALL IN/ALL OUT

*Let me present my case to you for saying we are "all in or all out"

*In the Postmodern world we live in reality has been described as sythesis, both/and:

-A thesis (Jesus is Lord)

-An antithesis (Jesus is not Lord)

-A synthesis (Jesus is Lord if you want him to be, or not if you don't.) (Or "Lord for you and not Lord for me.")

*Truth and reality are flexible...personal...like flavors of ice cream.

*What flavor of ice cream is "true" or "real"...its a non-sensical question.

*It's a preference.

*And to many this is the category the gospel falls into...it can be true for you but not for me...Jesus is your "flavor" not "mine"

*First, let's refute this whole line of thinking by showing it is self-refuting.

*If you say to me "you can't push your truth on me, I have my own and you have your own."

*Is that not a truth you are pushing on me?...namely that "truth is relative and not absolute."

*If you insist that truth is relative...that is your absolute...you cannot have room for someone whose truth, like mine, is absolute.

*Your truth "that there is no absolute truth" rejects my truth, that there is.

*Truth is "either/or" not "both/and"

*If I asked a woman if it were true that she was pregnant and she said "Yes" and her husband standing next to her said "no"...I would not conclude she was both...or that they both had their own "truth" or being pregnant was like flavors of ice cream.

*I would, very awkwardly conclude...she hasn't told him yet, or perhaps she's lying to me...but clearly she is not both pregnant and not pregnant at that moment.

*Truth exists...and the opposite of truth is false.

*So either Jesus is Lord or he is not...and we have made him Lord of our lives or not.

***Luke 16:13 “No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.”**

*The example here is money, but it can be substituted for anything...the point is it is impossible to serve two masters.

*"Terry, I have two bosses at work."

*If one boss tells you to leave the office and the other to stay in your office...can you do what both tell you in the same way at the same time?

*You will pick a boss to obey...because when "masters" conflict you will pick which master to obey.

*Jesus is not speaking devotionally here, he is speaking rationally...he is using logic...sound reasoning about the way the world (and our hearts) actually work.

*"Truth is "thesis/antithesis"...it is "either/or"

-Either you serve God **or** idols

*It is not "both/and"

-You cannot serve God **and** idols.

*In the real world you cannot do what two different masters, telling you two different things want you to do...it is impossible.

*We are all in or we are all out...we can only serve one master.

4. WHAT ABOUT SIN?

*It would appear then, that we are all out...because we all sin.

*So:

a. We are all in or out all

b. We sometimes sin

c. Therefore we are all out

*The problem with that logic is a misunderstanding of the nature of the Gospel and human life.

*That would be true if being "all in" depended on our efforts rather than on the gospel.

*To be all in is to have come to the place and time where you believed and received the gospel.

*The good news of what Jesus has done for you.

*His all-in sacrifice did for us what we cannot do for ourselves...he paid for our sins.

*"All in" is a "yes"..."I believe and I receive this gift."

*It really is that simple.

*However our salvation, this side of heaven has two parts...justification and sanctification.

*Justification is point in time and is a legal term.

*We admit our need, believe the gospel and are declared "not guilty" based on the merits of Christ not our own.

*At that point of surrender to Jesus as supreme Lord...Savior...we receive the very life of God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit into our lives.

*This may sound "strange" but "black holes" in space and "sink holes" in cities sound strange as well.

*How something sounds has more to do with how much we are used to it or not...we are often not used to thinking and talking in these ways.

*It is at the point of surrender...justification...that we are all in or all out.

*I am convinced that Jesus is, or he isn't who he says is...belief.

*I either will or I will not submit to him as Lord...faith.

*The second part of salvation...sanctification is the ongoing process of saying "yes" or "no" to Jesus in our lives.

*It is here that we live either in ongoing victory or ongoing defeat in a personal and practical way.

*These are the "thousand yes/no's" that follow the larger "yes" to be all in.

1. We all must choose to believe or not believe and receive or not receive the gospel.

2. If we have believed and received then we live in ongoing fashion choosing or not choosing to follow through on what we believe and have committed to.

*Analogies are imperfect but helpful...let's use marriage to understand.

Marriage:

A. Today, you are either legally married or you are not legally married.

B. If you are legally married you made a commitment, a choice...to be all in.

C. Assuming your spouse is a good and healthy person and going to stay with you, through thick and thin...the joy, closeness, happiness, effectiveness, beauty of your marriage is tied very directly to the choices you make day by day to live in line with your marriage commitment.

*The many "yes" that follow that initial "YES"

*So you are "all in" when you say "I do"...but to experience the joy that is possible...you must live an "all in" and "I still do, right now" kind of life on an ongoing basis.

*Then when you make an "I don't" choice...you repent..."I'm sorry, that was wrong" and go back to the "I still do" lifestyle.

CONCLUSION:

1. The woman's extravagant offering of oil to anoint the head of Jesus was an "all in" act.
-She was rebuked by the disciples but Jesus called it a beautiful thing.

*I'm convinced that what "all in" looks like...in principle, is to simply do what Jesus wants me to do today.

*She could have:

- a. Saved the oil, left it on the shelf
- b. Sold it and given to poor
- c. Poured it all on the head of Jesus

*Which of these actions is right? On that day it was "c."

*That was what faithfulness looked like for her on that day.

2. Judas revealed his heart was never fully in. We saw signs of it...as he deceptively betrayed his trust as the treasurer and was unfaithful in the little.

*Then we saw the little betrayals of his stewardship with money, turn into a historic betrayal of Jesus.

*This is compare and contrast...A woman who demonstrated in that moment an "all in" extravagant obedience.

*A man who demonstrated in a moment of betrayal what had been brewing in his heart for some time.

CONCLUSION:

*I spoke last week with several fighter pilots...now if anyone has an exiting life it's those guys.

*Not for me, I get airsick...but for many...sitting on winged rocket zooming around for a living...that's exciting.

*"Especially compared to my life".

*But the vast majority of their work week is spent waiting...not zooming into the wild blue yonder...sitting in a chair and waiting.

*But to do what we really them need to do to keep us safe...they cannot be zooming here and there...when we need them to be waiting in a chair.

*Faithfulness can be counterintuitive.

*"Clearly Jesus would want her to sell the oil and give the proceeds to charity, right?"

*Wrong...he wanted her to pour it on his head as a symbol of the gospel.

*What does God want me to do? In principle he wants "faithfulness"

*That is the grand principle that defines the parameters of our lives.

*But principles have to be unpacked and applied...turned into choices.

*What faithfulness looks like in practice is very specific to each individual life, day, opportunity.

*Our largest "trust" as believers is the gospel...we have been given this gift and we are to live it, and share it.

*But we have contexts...challenges, families, possessions, opportunities that are specific.

*How do we know what it looks like in practice to be faithful with our stewardship...how do we find the faithful life?

***Answer by looking at two barriers to finding the faithful life.**

1. "Looking for the Big"

*I wonder if this is what tripped up Judas...he grew disillusioned with the "smallness" the "day to dayness" of the Lord's strategy.

Tish Warren...grew up a traditional Christian him and wondered if there was more...she said that she became reactionary in her approach to life.

*Instead of looking for faithful actions, she reacted against what she had known.

"I was nearly 22 years old and had just returned to my college town from a part of Africa that had missed the last three centuries. As I walked into church I bumped into our new associate pastor and introduced myself. He smiled warmly and said, "Oh, you. I've heard about you. You're the radical who wants to give your life away for Jesus." It was meant as a compliment and I took it as one, but it also felt like a lot of pressure because, in a new way, I was torturously uncertain about what being a radical and living for Jesus was supposed to mean for me. Here I was, back in America, needing a job and health insurance, toying with dating this law student intellectual (who wasn't all that radical), and unsure about how to be faithful to Jesus in an ordinary life. I'm not sure I even knew if that was possible. I entered college restless with questions and spent my twenties reading Marx and St. Francis, being discipled in the work of Rich Mullins, Ron Sider, and Tony Campolo,"

Fast forward...

"Now, I'm a thirty-something with two kids living a more or less ordinary life. And what I'm slowly realizing is that, for me, being in the house all day with a baby and a two-year-old is a lot more scary and a lot harder than being in a war-torn African village. What I need courage for is the ordinary, the daily every-dayness of life...Giving away clothes and seeking out edgy Christian communities requires less of me than being kind to my husband on an average Wednesday morning."

Ron Horton in his book "Ordinary" wrote:

"Facing another day, with ordinary callings to ordinary people all around us is much more difficult than chasing my own dreams that I have envisioned for the grand story of my life. Other people — especially those closest to us — can become props. "The Poor" can be instruments of our life project. Changing the world can be a way of actually avoiding the opportunities we have every day, right where God has placed us, to glorify and enjoy him and to enrich the lives of others. It is all too easy to turn other people in our lives into a supporting cast for our life movie."

*First barrier to finding faithfulness...the search for the "Big"

*So...one more time..."You are positioned to know what faithfulness looks like, if you know that faithfulness is what you are looking for."

*God has not called you to the "big" he has called you to himself. (Of course, there is nothing bigger than that)

2. The second barrier: Looking for the Rails

*It is common to decide that we want to be "all in" and then to desperately try to find the rails, so we can set our lives on them like a train engine...and only pay attention to keeping the engine running not where the engine is running.

*Where are the rails that will simply my life?...So I can finally stop working so hard, staying so diligent and let the rails keep me on track.

*There is too much thinking, deciding, struggling...to know what God wants...just show the rails.

*There are no rails...there is a road laid out in front of you.

*Finding faithful will never be simple...but it will be possible.

*It will require...daily trusting Jesus, turning to him, re-orienting to him.

*It will require...ongoing community...joining with others who share your desire to live all in.

*The Psalms (where we will be for the bulk of 2016) can be divided into two big themes:

-Disorientation

-Reorientation

*There are no rails...there is just a road...and the need to keep getting back on track.

*Our lives were designed to run on principle, but our lives require Jesus and others to turn the principle into actual.

*There is no rail, only a road...and it will not be easy to live faithfully, just possible.

***Radical worship is simple faithfulness.**

***That is the path...there are no rails.**

THE GOSPEL OF

MARK



Mark 14:1-11

**“FOR EVEN THE
SON OF MAN
DID NOT COME
TO BE SERVED,
BUT TO SERVE,
AND TO GIVE
HIS LIFE AS A
RANSOM FOR
MANY.”**

MARK 10:45

J. STILL



STAR TREK



"How can I take seriously a god-image that requires that I prostrate myself every seven days and praise it? That sounds to me like a very insecure personality."

Gene Rodenberry

"What you do every single day matters."

**Faithfulness is a life principle that must
be turned into application**

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Mark 14:5-11 It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her harshly. "Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her." Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

ALL IN

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"Leave her alone, she has done a beautiful thing."

**He wants me to do what he wants
me to do.**

ALL OUT

Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

1 John 2:19 They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

ALL IN/ALL OUT

A Postmodern View of "Truth"

Thesis: "Jesus is Lord"

Antithesis: "Jesus is not Lord"

**Synthesis: "Jesus is Lord for you but not
for me."**

"Truth is like a flavor of ice cream."

Luke 16:13 “No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.”

Either/Or

not

Both/And

What about sin?

1. We must all choose to believe or not believe the gospel.

We must all choose to receive or not receive the gospel.

2. If we have believed and received then we will live choosing or not choosing to follow through on what we have committed our lives to.



1 = "YES"

10,000's = "yes"

Barriers to Finding the Faithful Life

1. Looking for the "Big"

2. Looking for the "Rails"

Radical worship is simple faithfulness

There is nothing "bigger"

and

There is no rail, just a trail