

12.6.15
Mark 14:26-51

12.6: 14:26-51 Denial and betrayal: The Unique One

12.13: 14:52-15:1-37 Crucifixion: theodicy

12.20: 15:38-47 Jesus: Advent, Time, Space, Matter

O. INTRO:

M. Jordan: arguably the greatest basketball player in history.

*One the one hand that sounds impressive, on the other hand...not as much

*Let me rephrase it...He is the greatest "player" of a game, where you throw a ball into a basket.

*At age 50, 10 years after his retirement (2 years ago)...he said "I would give up everything now to go back and play the game of basketball."

*At his Hall of Fame induction speech he rebuked his enemies and talked about himself.

*When Jordan, brought up his three children...he told them he felt sorry for them because of the tall shadow they have to live with.

*During the same ceremony...David Robinson...mostly thanked people who had helped him along the way...he encouraged his three children, expressed his love for them.

*Jordan's security team has assigned him a code name..."Yahweh"...A Hebrew word for God.

*Jordan confessed, "My ego is to big now that I expect certain things."

*Now he struggles to find his place and his peace apart from Basketball...but it never did give him peace...it was an imitation of the real thing.

*Basketball was invented by a PE teacher who was given 14 days to develop an indoor game that would keep a rowdy class distracted during the harsh New England winter.

*Nailed a peach basket to a wall...basket-ball.

*There is nothing wrong with making a living in the world of sports entertainment...but to believe that playing a game...makes you valuable or can give peace is a recipe for disaster.

*Jordan's code name may be Yahweh...but he is a 52 year old former athlete who will die.

*We all struggle with "creating gods to worship" and "thinking of ourselves as god's to be worshipped."

*Either approach will strip a soul bare.

*It is interesting that when God actually became a man he didn't live or die like men believe a god would live and die.

Mark 14:26 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. **27** “You will all fall away,” Jesus told them, “for it is written: “‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’ **28** But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.” **29** Peter declared, “Even if all fall away, I will not.” **30** “I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “today — yes, tonight — before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times.” **31** But Peter insisted emphatically, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the others said the same. **32** They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” **33** He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. **34** “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,” he said to them. “Stay here and keep watch.” **35** Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. **36** “*Abba*, Father,” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.” **37** Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Simon,” he said to Peter, “are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? **38** Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.” **39** Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. **40** When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him. **41** Returning the third time, he said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. **42** Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!” ...**50** Then everyone deserted him and fled.

*Some years ago my dad went through a terrible, challenging time in his life.

*He was (and is) a strong man, a man of sacrificial love and great faith.

*But during this time some of his closest friends had turned on him, unjustly implicating him in their own misdeeds.

*He was in great distress...as anyone would be.

*I remember standing with him beside his mailbox, the weight of grief crushing him.

*We hugged, I said I was there for him...I got in my car...drove away and wept...the strongest person in my life, was not strong on that day.

*All of us have experienced someone we have relied on being struck with illness or grief, maybe a key leader lost their way.

*We can just begin to imagine the effect on the disciples of the sudden change that came over Jesus in Gethsemane.

*He has been in control, strong, standing up to opposition, storms, demons, disease, death...taking authority over vast crowds in the Temple.

*He always had the right words and actions.

*Now he is warning them..."you are all going to fall apart, you will all fail me/"

*Not much comfort or encouragement in those words...not a compelling vision to cast.

*This is a frightening narrative...Jesus is in horror, his best friends are drowsy and unprepared for what is coming.

*This is God's plan and on the Eve of D-day...things don't look good for the distressed leader or his listless followers.

*When the renowned Greek philosopher Socrates went to his death he was calm, in control throughout the process.

*His followers were distraught and in tears...while he was comforting them, teaching them up to the end.

*But the gospels are not a typical "hero" story.

*They are certainly no fabrication; they are not embellished to make the main characters look "good".

*Here in the gospel of Mark...Jesus is overcome with horror, praying for another way.

*He is back in one of his favorite spots...a garden near the Mount of Olives...he had spent a lot of time alone there praying.

*On this night he took his three closest friends with him, allowing them to see that he was "deeply distressed and troubled."

*These words are not redundant but together they form a phrase that indicates..."bewilderment, fear, uncertainty, anxiety."

*These things in themselves are not sin...in Jesus, or in us.

*But it is breathtaking to think of Jesus experiencing these things.

*In his distress he prayed to "Abba", the Aramaic word for "Father"

*A word that always went with intimate affection and devotion.

*But Jews did not use this term to address God because they thought it was disrespectful.

*Jesus, however, didn't hesitate to use it.

*He knows that anything is possible for God...and yet he prays that "if possible"...the cup could be taken.

*The "cup" is a common OT metaphor for God's punishment and judgment on sin.

*God can do anything that can be done...he can create the universe from nothing...no logical contradiction in that.

*He cannot redeem without a redeemer...there is no other way.

*Jesus prayed to Abba that if possible this cup would pass from him...is there another way?

*The answer he receives is "no"

*The "cup" will not be removed; he will drink judgment...for our sins.

*So...he submitted his will to his Father's will.

*Think of this...If Jesus received this answer to his own...faith filled, heartfelt prayers...why are we surprised when we sometimes receive the same answer?

*This refutes the belief that we should calmly and without emotion accept the sometimes terrifying will of God for our lives.

*We are full of emotion, and passion, and longing, and dread...of course we should take all of this to God.

*Jesus was filled with dread and dismay...there was no detached, robotic surrender.

*His death was called The Passion of the Christ for good reason...it was full bore emotion... no mindless resignation.

*This also refutes the belief that if we have real faith...we will escape real suffering.

*Jesus asked in faith if the cup could be taken from him and God said "no"

***A "no" to our prayers does not indicate a lack of concern in God's heart...it indicates a different purpose in God's mind.**

*While Jesus is struggling in his soul...his best friends are struggling to stay awake.

*Jesus emerges from his agonizing time of prayer, surrendered and ready... and says to his friends... "Wake up, let's go."

*He is once again composed...he asked for another way, there was none...he yielded to God.

*He emerges from his struggle, prepared.

*He was disorientated, he took his pain to God...where was re-orientated...now he is surrendered and resolved.

*His sleepy friends, who did not accept his challenge to "watch and pray" will indeed fall in to temptation"...they are unprepared for what is about to happen.

*What we see here is that Jesus is not serenely sailing through his trials, unconcerned with the mundane world around him...he is almost dead with distress.

***It is inconceivable that the early church could or would have created a story like this one about Jesus...they wouldn't have.**

*There is nothing of myth in this narrative.

*This fact is compelling.

FOCUS ON THREE VERSES AND THREE WORDS FOR OUR APPLICATION:

14:34 “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,” he said to them. “Stay here and keep watch.” 35 Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. 36 “Abba, Father,” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

Soul

*You have one

*You are more than the physical, you are not less than or other than...you are both/and physical and spiritual.

*Temporal and eternal

*When Jesus said that his "soul" was overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.

*He could see that was ahead for him...separation from God.

*Nothing caused him distress...demons, disease, death...but this did.

*To experience separation from God the father...burdened his soul to the point of death.

*I don't understand it...I do, however, know it is real.

*A poet once wrote that...

***"Had Mary been filled with reason, there'd have been no room for a child."**

*This is not saying that our experience of God is irrational but that its above the full reach of our reason.

*People tend to think it is reasonable to disbelieve what we cannot fully comprehend...this is in fact irrational.

*Its reasonable to believe that reality is much more than our reason can comprehend.

*This is certainly true of God becoming man...the incarnation.

*This all happened...just like this...Jesus lived, like Mark said he did.

*He did the things that Mark said he did.

*And his soul suffered like Mark said it did...but why...why was this so painful for him?

*Jesus had a "full" soul...because he lived in intimate relationship with God the Father.

*What he contemplated was separation from his father...the source of all fullness.

*Jesus was going to choose to empty himself...he is showing us here the despair of an empty soul.

*Mike Jordan was driven by an inner need...some say it made him great...this hunger drove him...but listening to him now and looking at his life...it has not made him healthy or happy.

*He had a drive to make his own name great...even today it is said that "He cares what his critics say...like a needle for a hungry vein."

*Without speculating on condition of his soul, I will simply say that M. Jordan has a soul... and like every single soul...it is made for God and empty without God.

*Every sinful desire and action is the result a misdirection in our souls...looking for a substitute for the reality of God and what he alone gives.

*"Am I valuable?"

*"Am I loved?"

*"Am I safe?"

*"Am I in control?"

*This questions drive us to God or to folly...finding our life in God...or creating gods and becoming gods.

*Our struggles are rooted in attempts...at different levels...to fill our soul apart from Christ.

*Jesus suffered in soul, as he looked at what was in front of him...separation from his Father.

Suffering:

*Jesus asked to be excused from the suffering.

*He was told "no"...you will go through this.

*Our souls are not safe from suffering they are safe through it.

*I can be terrified by thoughts of what might befall me and mine.

*There have been times in my life when my greatest fears have been confirmed.

*I can also become hardened...impervious to happiness and joy because I don't trust that these feelings will

last.

*They mock me, because around the corner they only lead to loss...this is wrong thinking and living...but it my reality at times.

*Some live in constant terror of what might be...some just occasional fear.

*But for everyone, if the time is right (or wrong) the thought of and the reality of suffering...is overwhelming.

*When we are suffering there are some common questions: **God...**

1. "When will it stop? Will it stop?"

2. "Why me?"

3. "Where are you?"

4. "Are you good, was I wrong about you?"

5. "How do I make sense out of life now...after this has happened?"

***Santa Claus is a myth...**its likely you already knew that.

*In Christmas lore...

*Santa is semi-omniscient (knows the good deeds and misdeeds of everyone)

*Santa is semi-omnipresent (and least on one night a year)

*Jesus is semi-omnipotent (can carry billions of toys in a bag)

*Santa is a myth that follows human logic...he gives what we deserve.

*If you have been good, you get good.

*If you have bad, you get bad.

*The greatest question in human history related to the reality of God is the question of suffering.

*The common thought process is..."If I have been good (however that's defined) I will get good."

*This thought process is coupled with the fact that most humans, even though they might feel shame or guilt for some of what they have done...still believe they are, on a comparative scale...good.

*So, if deep down I believe I am good and I believe God rewards good with good...then what is likely to happen when I suffer?

*Something has to give...our worldview has not proven adequate for the world in which I live.

*There are a number of answers in the scriptures for how it is possible for God to be good and powerful and suffering to still come to people.

*But the most powerful answer is here in this narrative.

*Jesus...sinless; with faith to move mountains...asks for a reprieve from suffering and is told "no."

*I know we are not Jesus, he is the Savior...but Scriptures are clear that we are to emulate him...live as he did...look to him both for salvation and example.

*Suffering sometimes...often...fits the larger purposes of God.

*The premise that God is similar to Santa...where good (as we define it right now) follows good (as we see ourselves right now) is a false premise.

*And it makes us vulnerable to wrong thinking and living.

***I am relieved and encouraged when I watch Jesus...**struggling to come to grips with God's purposes.

*He is not nonchalant, strolling through the garden making bold claims of conquering faith...he is suffering in his soul...feels like he is going to die.

*He was tempted in every way, just as we are...without sin.

*I am encouraged by this...because I had nothing at all like what Jesus or many others have experienced.

*But I have felt like my soul was so burdened that I thought my heart might stop in my chest...not metaphorically...actually...I felt I could die from anxiety.

*On one of the worst days a friend spent the afternoon driving me around...in silence...but my friend was vigilant, praying, alert to my needs.

*Jesus on his worst night, found his friends asleep.

Surrender:

"Yet not my will, but yours be done."

*I have heard people say that if you pray for God to do something...then add "if its your will" is a sign of a lack of faith.

*My conclusion is...If Jesus prayed this way...I'm confident its sound thinking and theology...I will stick with it.

*Jesus went very quickly from soul suffering to surrender.

*It doesn't mean his soul stopped suffering...but he was able to move forward into the life God had for him.

*This is likely **not** because he was the "God-man" it was more likely because **as a man**, he practiced trusting God for many years.

*When he had his dark night...his spiritual, and physical reflexes were well-trained to trust.

*It once took me about 2 years to get the place of saying "Not my will but yours" on a particular life direction...and I could look in the mirror and know it was real.

*Training to trust can be long...and it will be ongoing.

*There is no area of our lives where we believe we could never practice and yet still perform well when necessary...work, sports, music.

*In trusting God this principle holds true as well.

*Jesus was back in Gethsemane...it was not his first time alone there, praying...this is a very important thing to consider.

*During his darkest night...he was not a rookie at praying through the night...in fact this was the very place he was used to being with God.

*The reason he was able to move so quickly to "trust" is that he had for years trained himself to trust.

*"Trained" comes from a Biblical word..."discipline" comes from word for "disciple"

*Are you going through some rigorous training right now?

*Don't despair that getting to "your will, not mine" is hard and may be taking some time.

*But understand...that is where you want to go...that is your "soul's" safe harbor.

CONCLUSION:

*3 Words...three important realities:

1. Your soul...you are more than what you see in mirror...and what happens to your soul is of immense importance.

*Jesus asked the rhetorical question..."What good is gaining the world and losing your soul?"

*Again, I don't know the status of Jordan's soul...but he has, as much as anyone, gained the world...and there is clear evidence...he is enormously unfulfilled.

*Jesus was suffering in his soul...at the thought of being apart from his Father.

*This informs us very directly of the reality of our own souls...we are made for him.

*Whatever you think you are looking for...the reality is...your soul is thirsty for God.

*As you look for "fix" your problems, diagnose your struggles...are you looking only externally?

-Look to your soul...who or what do you believe will fill you and fulfill you?

2. Your suffering...he is not Santa, he is God.

*Since your soul is so valuable...and suffering is so important to the development of our souls.

*He is not going to keep suffering from us, if he loves us he would use suffering to perfect us.

3. Your surrender...Jesus did not surrender out of resignation...it is said that "For the joy set before him, he endured the cross."

*We are not after joyless surrender...passionless resignation...but we are training to trust.

*We can become people who surrender because of the joy that is there.

SMALL GROUP NOTES

12.6.15

Mark 14:26-51

Intro:

*We all struggle with "creating gods to worship" and "thinking of ourselves as gods to be worshipped."

*Assume this is true. What does this look like in the world in and around you?

Read:

Mark 14:26 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. **27** “You will all fall away,” Jesus told them, “for it is written: “I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’ **28** But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.” **29** Peter declared, “Even if all fall away, I will not.” **30** “I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “today — yes, tonight — before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times.” **31** But Peter insisted emphatically, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the others said the same. **32** They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” **33** He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. **34** “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,” he said to them. “Stay here and keep watch.” **35** Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. **36** “*Abba*, Father,” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.” **37** Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Simon,” he said to Peter, “are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? **38** Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.” **39** Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. **40** When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him. **41** Returning the third time, he said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. **42** Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!” ...**50** Then everyone deserted him and fled.

Discuss:

1. When has someone you relied on for strength, had a period of weakness?

-What did it feel like?

2. "The Cup" Jesus referred to, is the wrath of God on sin. How does this fact help explain the "terror" that Jesus experienced?

3. Even though Jesus received a "no" to his heartfelt, faith filled prayer...why do you think we are still often dismayed by a "no" to our own prayers?

4. What does Jesus's "agony" tell us about how we can take our own concerns to God?

-Is "real" faith supposed to be void of anxiety?

5. The church would never have invented a story like this about its "hero." Why is this? How does this fact give evidence to the reliability of the Gospel account?

6. Every sinful desire and action is a miss-direction in our souls. Which of these are you most likely to struggle with?

*"Am I valuable?"

*"Am I loved?"

*"Am I safe?"

*"Am I in control?"

7. When we suffer we often move to questions, which of these questions have you had during a difficult time in you life?

*"When will it stop? Will it stop?"

*"Why me?"

*"Where are you?"

*"Are you good, was I wrong about you?"

*"How do I make sense out of life now...after this has happened?"

8. Have you ever operated with the assumption that "If I have been good I will get good and if I have been bad I will get bad?"

-What aspects of this are right and what aspects are wrong?

9. How do we train to trust? (How did Jesus train to trust?)

Apply:

1. Jesus's agony was related to his thoughts of separation from his Father.
 - What does this say about your own soul?
 - Are you looking to God alone to fill your soul at the deepest levels?
2. How is God using suffering (or trials) right now to develop your soul?
3. How can you reframe surrender to God so that you can begin to experience it as joy rather than resignation?

THE GOSPEL OF

MARK



Mark 14:26-51

**“FOR EVEN THE
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BUT TO SERVE,
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MARK 10:45

J. STILL



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Soul

***"Had Mary been filled with reason,
there'd have been no room for a child."***

**The incarnation is not "irrational" but
above the full reach of reason.**

Am I valuable?

Am I loved?

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Soul

Suffering

When will it stop?

Why me?

Where are you?

Are you good? (Was I wrong about you?)

How do I make sense out of life now?

If you have been good = you get good

If you have been bad = you get bad

+

"I have been good"

Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. “Abba, Father,” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

Suffering often fits the larger purposes of God.

The premise that God is similar to Santa...

**where good (as we define it right now)
follows good (as we see ourselves right now)
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