

Daily Bible Study

“Predictions of Failure”

Mark 14:27-31

November 18 –November 24, 2012

THE LORD’S DAY & MONDAY –This week we come to **Mark 14:27-31** which we will use for our text of study. This passage contains what we have entitled the lesson, *Predictions of Failure*. Last time in **verse 26** we saw the disciples and our Lord sing a hymn and then head out from the Upper Room to the Mount of Olives. On the way to the Mount of Olives (like He had done earlier, in the Upper Room) Jesus predicted that He would be left and denied by His disciples; that they would fall away and forsake Him. In short this is fulfillment of **Zechariah 13:7** which we see quoted in our text. All of the disciples protest and profess their loyalty; especially the spokesman for the group, Peter. Jesus explicitly tells Peter that he will deny Jesus that very night three times and as we know, this was exactly what happened. From this passage we can learn not only things concerning facts of history about these men and Jesus but also some very practical lessons and warnings concerning us as believers today and Jesus. We see the danger and hear the warning about being confident in ourselves and our own power to stand up for Jesus and do the right and righteous thing. We learn of the Lord’s patience and power to both forgive and bear with men who fail Him. Among much more, we also learn a bit more from this text and the following verses concerning Jesus supernatural yet human nature as He predicts future events with detail and yet prays in the garden for the Divine decree to be changed if it is possible. Needless to say, this passage and the following one contain as usual, much food for us to chew, digest, and then move forward and grow on. Let’s look at the text: **Mark 14:27-31**: *“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.’ “But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.” Peter said to Him, “Even if all are made to stumble, yet I will not be.” Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you that today, even this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.” But he spoke more vehemently, “If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!” And they all said likewise.”*

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, teach me from Your Word and open my eyes and heart to see the wonderful things concerning Jesus and give me genuine desire to obey and rejoice in You.*

TUESDAY – **Mark 14:27**: *“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.”* It is a remarkable and wonderful thing that Jesus was the only man who ever lived who was properly prepared both in heart and mind for all situations that came to Him and He is the only man that handled them all without sin and to the pleasure and glory of God The

Father. For example; He handled critical opposition, people's mockery and misunderstanding, the hatred of the hypocritical religious people, the hurtful betrayal of one of His own inner circle of 12 disciples, the pain, horror, and agony of the cross—he was prepared for them all. He experienced a totality of physical and mental suffering as “The Man of Sorrows” (**Isaiah 53:3**) Today we come to what as a human man (to whom we can relate in feelings and emotions) could be argued was one of the most hurtful moments of His life, when He was failed and forsaken by His friends. It is when things are hard and difficult that we most look for and need to lean on our friends and this is precisely when Jesus' friends left him all alone and let him down. Jesus here predicts their failure when He says; *All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night*. There is none left out of this difficult prediction for Jesus, *All of you* is what He says. Jesus sees in the failure of the disciples the fulfillment of the Scripture which he quotes from **Zechariah 13:7**. It is interesting that in the context of Zechariah's prophecy the one who smites the shepherd is not named. An order is simply issued to “*strike the shepherd*”. We do however see in the entire context of that passage it is none other than Yahweh who is the acting subject. This is why Jesus says, “*I will strike the shepherd...*” This is similar to other passages which confirm this; namely **Isaiah 53** where, “*It pleased the Lord to bruise Him...He has put him to grief...He will make His soul an offering for sin, etc.*” We see it also in the New Testament writings such **Romans 8:32**, where the Apostle tells us that “*...God did not spare His own son...*” Both the disciple's failure and God carrying out His will and plan with total control is seen here. Interesting is that the Greek verb translated *made to stumble* is a future passive indicative. Jesus is predicting an event yet to happen; namely, that the disciples will fail (future), it will indeed and actually happen (indicative), but it is ultimately The Father's plan that Jesus endure and suffer this way as He is the sacrifice for His people and will bear the punishment for their sin (the passive voice signifies that the subject is being acted upon; i.e., the subject is the receiver of the verbal action).

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, thanks for being the One who initiates and orchestrates all of the details of life, my life. Help me to fear, love, adore, worship, and obey You for being such a God.*

WEDNESDAY – Mark 14:27-28: “*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. But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.*” As we began to explore yesterday, Jesus quotes from **Zachariah 13:7** to describe His prediction of the failure of his friends. When a shepherd is struck down, the sheep scatter in every direction, for they have lost their rallying point and Jesus is the center point, the rallying point if you will of His men and all of life for that matter. So when Jesus will be captured and subsequently crucified, His followers will panic and flee. This is His prediction and it was indeed fulfilled which is clear from passages such as **Mark 14:50:** “*Then they all forsook him and fled*” and **Mark 14:71:** “*Then he began to curse and swear, “I do not know this Man of whom you speak!*”. We also see reference to this event in passages such as **Luke 24:21** and **John 16:31-**

32. I mentioned earlier the patience and love of Jesus that is seen here as He is gentle and forgiving to those who fail Him and whose hearts He truly knows. The beauty in all this is not only that Jesus reveals that He loves them all the same, but also that His very prediction would serve the purpose of bringing the scattered sheep together again, once they meditated on and remembered His words of warning to them. We see this as the text moves forward with **verse 28**, “*But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee*”. This prediction of His resurrection is an optimistic one in contrast to what He has just predicted concerning the failure of His friends. As a side note, who did raise Jesus from the dead? The New Testament often attributes the work of the resurrection to all three persons of the Godhead: (1) God the Father raised Jesus (**Acts 2:24, 3:15, 4:10, 5:30, 10:40, 13:30, 33, 34, 37, 17:31, Romans 6:4, 9, 10:9, 1 Corinthians 6:14, 2 Corinthians 4:14, Galatians 1:1, Ephesians 1:20, Colossians 2:12, 1 Thessalonians 1:10**); (2) God the Son raised Himself (**John 2:19–22, 10:17–18**); (3) God the Spirit raised Jesus (**Romans 8:11**). Here as in many areas, Scripture is strong with a Trinitarian emphasis. So in **verse 28**, Jesus speaks clearly about being raised from the dead as He is assuring His men that He will meet them in the very region, *Galilee*, where they were from, lived, and where the Lord had originally called them. You will remember that after Christ’s resurrection an angelic messenger reminded the disciples of this promise (**Mark 16:7**). In fact, Jesus met these men in Galilee as He said (**Matthew 28:16**).

Suggestion for Prayer: Jesus, thank You that although I often fail You not believing as I ought, You remain faithful taking initiative to serve & love me in spite of my sin. Holy Trinity, thanks for being one God in three persons all working to bring the plan of redemption to completion.

THURSDAY – Mark 14:29-30: “*Peter said to Him, “Even if all are made to stumble, yet I will not be.” Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you that today, even this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.”* The *Even if* are written in a grammatical structure which is assumed to be true from the author’s perspective or for his literary purposes. What this is saying is that Peter could imagine the others failing Jesus, but not himself! Matthew substitutes, “I will *never* become untrue.” Peter here commits the sin of treating the words of Jesus (“*All of you will be made to stumble*”) with unbelief. He was emphatically making the statement that he would never leave Jesus (**Luke 22:33, John 13:37–38**). He was proclaiming something he would not and could not fulfill in his power. His attitude is one of superiority over his fellow disciples and he shows that not only does he not know his own heart, but he has an inflated opinion of himself, being over-confident and conceited. Jesus counters this pride with a direct statement, *Assuredly, I say to you...you will deny...* The “*you*” is emphatic! It is interesting that the detail of the rooster crowing twice is an eyewitness memory of Peter and only Mark’s Gospel records it. The rooster-crowing served as a time indicator and **Mark 13:35** shows that it marked the third of the four watches of the night; namely 12-3 A.M. Jesus is shown as the great Prophet. Peter did not know his own heart but Jesus did and He also revealed it with exacting detail (*three times*). In this failure of Peter we remember Luke tells us of Jesus teaching moment with this man and His assurance that He has prayed for him and that he will come through it the better man of God (**Luke 22:31-34**). Jesus

words and line of sight do in fact come back to Peter at the appropriate moment and Peter's conscience is struck to the point of bitter weeping and leads to repentance (**Luke 22:60-62**).

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, thanks for providing this wonderful Sacrament meal where I meet with & feed on Jesus by faith; Jesus, thank You for strengthening and nurturing me there.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY –Mark 14:31: “*But he spoke more vehemently, “If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!” And they all said likewise.*” Incredibly, Peter, who was singled out by the Lord for this specific prediction persists in his profession of dedicated loyalty. The phrase in the NKJV, *But he spoke more vehemently* is rendered in other translations as: *kept saying insistently, said vehemently, answered more strongly, and repeated still more earnestly*. Peter truly felt he would not deny Jesus. With all his heart and will power he was determined to stand by Jesus. Just like David's sins and forgiveness function to encourage us believers, so Peter's do as well. Often we as sinful and weak humans want to do the right thing (**Romans 7**) but often find ourselves incapable. What is necessary to remember is that Jesus can bear with failure, but will not bear with unrepentant unbelief. Notice also that we are all included in this sinful bunch of friends who fail Jesus for Scripture records it was not merely Peter who thought He would stand true but *they all said likewise*. We would do well to remember the words of **1 Corinthians 10:12-13** (...*let anyone that thinks that he stands, take heed, lest he fall* – ESV). Another lesson for us is found in the Greek words used for ‘*stumble*’. The verb is *skandalizein*, from *skandalon* which meant “the movable stick or trigger of a trap, a trap stick”. It describes the bait in a trap and the stick on to which the animal was lured which snapped the trap when stepped on. So the word *skandalizein* came to mean to entrap, or to trip up by some trick or guile. Peter and these men were overconfident in the flesh and forgot the traps that lay out there in the path of life. It is easy to step in the slippery place and fall. He had forgotten his own human weakness and the strength of the world, flesh, and devil's temptations. But Peter was a genuine believer with a true heart for Christ. He had a lover's heart that did in a moment fail most shamefully. Judas on the other hand, had a cold heart of hate and selfish bitterness. Let those condemn Peter who never broke a promise to our Lord and who were never disloyal in thought or action toward Him. Peter loved Jesus, and even if his love failed, like the risen Christ, it also rose again.

Suggestion for Prayer: Almighty God, thank You for being patient and forgiving toward me and for giving me strength, will and desire through Your Spirit & Word to love and obey You.