

Have you ever made a promise that you had every intention of keeping, but couldn't?

When I was 11 years old I promised God I would read the Bible everyday. Everything in me wanted to. But I didn't.

Over the years I've thought about what went wrong. It wasn't a lack of desire. It was a lack of dependance.

TITLE: Willing but Weak TEXT: Mark 14:27-42
SERIES: The Jesus Journey

Context: Passover has been observed & Psalms sung. The night has fallen & they head for the Mt of Olives.

Markan sandwich-
-Prediction of betrayal (v17-21)
-Last Supper (v22-26)
-Prediction of defection (v27-31)

The sandwich highlights the contrast between the self-sacrifice of Jesus and the infidelity of the disciples

MARK 14:27-28 Then Jesus said to them, “All of you will fall away, because 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 to Galilee.”

As they walk Jesus He predicts 2 things: They will fall away & He will rise (Zechariah prophecy)

This is God's redemptive plan unfolding, which means: **Jesus is not a victim**

V27 is an encouragement that the Lord is not caught off guard by our failures

V28 holds a glimpse of the redemptive heart of Jesus

MARK 14:29-31 Peter told him, “Even if everyone falls away, I will not.”

³⁰ “Truly I tell you,” Jesus said to him, “today, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.” ³¹ But he kept insisting, “If I have to die with you, I will never deny you.” And they all said the same thing.

Peter and the others believe they know themselves better than Jesus knows them.

They have wildly overestimated their own strength & character.

Beware a posture of confidence grounded in your own character rather than in Christ

Listen, God knows us best, we ought to listen to what He has to say about our lives.

Jesus says, “*abide in me apart from me you can do nothing*”.

What do we do? We go abide with our phones' and our hobbies, our kids and coworkers, and everything but Jesus.

Then we are surprised when we are feeling despaired, lost, confused, burdened or burned out, etc.

MARK 14:32 Then they came to a place named Gethsemane, and he told his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.”

There's great significance on various levels:

- Gethsemane= Oil press- He is the “anointed one” who will bless the world through His crushing
- Gethsemane is a garden (John 18)- Jesus enters a garden to correct what Adam and Eve failed to do in their garden
- We tend to gloss over the severity of Gethsemane.

The Gospel writers, specially Mark, paint Gethsemane as almost a greater agony and internal suffering than Golgotha.

It is on the hill of the skull where He surrenders His body to be crucified & mocked, but it is in the garden where He surrenders His will & His soul is swallowed in sorrow

MARK 14:33-36 He took Peter, James, and John with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled.

These 3 were witnesses of the transfiguration & glory, now they are witnesses of His humiliation & sorrow.

They have NEVER seen Jesus like this before. *“Are we supposed to see this?”*

³⁴ He said to them, “I am deeply grieved to the point of death. Remain here and stay awake.”

Dr. Luke will tell us that Jesus’ sweat became drops of blood (hematidrosis)

³⁵ He went a little farther, fell to the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

This is by far the most profound look into Jesus’ human nature

It’s not physical pain that makes Jesus coil, but the full weight of the judgment of God against sin.

Do not glance over this too quickly- it horrifies Jesus and overwhelms Him with anguish

³⁶ And 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.”

Abba= relationship

the cup= Judgment

The contrast is clear and will continue to become more apparent as the book draws to a close:

Jesus’ faithfulness vs the humanity’s failures

The overflowing message for us is clear and profound on the deepest and most practical levels

Jesus is faithful where we fail

In His moment of testing, He endures “not what I will”, a contrast not only to the disciples who fold under pressure, but to us who do as well

DA Carson- *“In the first garden ‘Not your will but mine’ changed Paradise to desert and brought man from Eden to Gethsemane. Now ‘Not my will but yours’ brings anguish to the man who prays it but transforms the desert into the kingdom and brings man from Gethsemane to the gates of glory.”*

MARK 14:37-40 Then he came and found them sleeping. He said to Peter, “Simon, are you sleeping? Couldn’t you stay awake one hour? ³⁸ Stay awake and pray so that you won’t enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” ³⁹ Once again he went away and prayed, saying the same thing. ⁴⁰ And again he came and found them sleeping, because they could not keep their eyes open. They did not know what to say to him.

Jesus is trembling in agitation, sweating blood, praying like they’ve never seen Him- and they sleep.

Zach Hollifield- *“Peter’s zeal far outruns his ability. He envisions himself dying alongside Jesus when he can’t even keep his eyes open to pray. And the very reason Peter is unable to withstand the test is because he hasn’t considered how weak he actually is. And so he falls, and falls unwittingly. What Peter is forced to come to terms with is that willingness alone cannot carry the day.”*

Romans 7:18-19 For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For the desire to do what is good is with me, but there is no ability to do it. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good that I want to do, but I practice the evil that I do not want to do.

The tragedy isn’t that we are willing but weak; the tragedy is that we are weak and not dependent

Spiritual maturity doesn’t mean you are more confident, more knowledgeable, more experienced;
Spiritual maturity means you are more dependent.

Have we bought into the lie that the more mature or grown up we are, the less dependent on God we'll be?

Trying to parent in your own strength; keep the marriage together in your own strength;
Overcome temptation by your own grit; get it together by your own effort, etc.

The reality is the more we grow in maturity, the more our lives are marked by deeper dependence.

Gavin Ortlund, [Deeper, Real Change for Real Sinners](#)- "The Christian life is not about graduating from grace but growing deeper into our awareness of our need for grace."

RC Sproul would say that one of the marks of sanctification is a growing distrust in ourselves and a growing trust in Christ

The Christian life is less about becoming less weak and more about becoming more dependent

The growth of a Christian is not about increasing strength, but increasing surrender
Not my will for my situation Lord, but Yours

MARK 14:41-42 Then he came a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The time has come. See, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up; let's go. See, my betrayer is near."

Note that Jesus is not won over by force, He offers Himself to His approaching captors-

Whatever wrestling's were to be fought in prayer are now resolved on the steady face of Christ
But for the sleeping disciples who could not stay awake, neither will they be able to stay and stand

INVITATION

Examine- **What specific areas of my life am I willing but weak?**

Parenting, purity, sobriety, devotion, commitment, etc.

What do we do with our weakness?

- 1. Be Ready in prayer**
- 2. Be Resting in Christ**

*JESUS PAID IT ALL- I hear the Savior say
"Thy strength indeed is small
Child of weakness, watch and pray
Find in Me thine all in all"*

CALL UP WORSHIP TEAM

COMMUNION

Every single one of those disciples who partook of that first Lord's Supper went on to forsake Jesus
It was never about who is worthy enough to take and eat, but who is the one worthy to give Himself
He drank the cup of God's justice so we could drink the cup of the new covenant

BULPEN-

First glance outline:

V27-28 the prediction: their falling away; His rising up

V29-31 Denial/ overconfidence

V32 The Press

V33-34 the 3 witnesses of the transfiguration now become witnesses of His humiliation

Matt. 26:38; Luke 22:44

V35-36 The request/ submission/ cup/ will

V37-38 the paradox of willing yet weak (alert prayer as the antidote)

V39-40 2nd confirmation of weakness

Once again at a loss of words (Mark 9:6)- but soon enough they won't be

V41-42 3rd confirmation of weakness

V36 'this cup'- Is Jesus referring to the 4th or even 5th cup of the Passover Seder?

Was the Last Supper a Passover Seder Meal and can we rightfully identify the liturgical elements to the greater gospel narrative?

The formal Passover Seder developed after the destruction of the Temple in AD 70, largely as a result/ reaction/ response to the inability to continue Temple-centered worship. It is likely that many of the traditions and liturgical patterns incorporated into the Seder had already begun to come together before AD 70, even if they had not yet been formally standardized.

In light of this, we should exercise caution when drawing direct connections between the cups or other elements of the modern Seder and the events of the Last Supper. While some parallels may be historically plausible and theologically meaningful, the evidence is too limited to confidently conclude that Jesus celebrated the Passover according to the fully developed Seder liturgy familiar today. We should avoid making stronger claims than the historical evidence allows.

<https://jewsforjesus.org/learn/was-the-last-supper-a-passover-seder>

Jesus' distress is not a reaction to His own impending death, but a response of His approaching Messianic mission- His life as a ransom for many. He will become humanity's sin-bearer and feel the full wrath and forsakenness of God (Mark 15:34)

v36 'this cup'= wrath

Isiah 51:17 Wake yourself, wake yourself up! Stand up, Jerusalem,
you who have drunk the cup of his fury from the Lord's hand;
you who have drunk the goblet to the dregs— the cup that causes people to stagger.

v30 you will fail Peter, worse than you can even imagine

1 Corinthians 10:12 So, whoever thinks he stands must be careful not to fall.

2 Corinthians 12:8-10 Concerning this, I pleaded with the Lord three times that it would leave me. ⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness."

Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may reside in me. ¹⁰ So I take pleasure in weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and in difficulties, for the sake of Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

V36- 3 times he asked for the cup to be removed

Was he backing out? No. he was experiencing the full force of human experience standing at the threshold of the great wrath of God, and He lamented.

We can drink of the cup of the new covenant because Jesus drank the cup of our condemnation.

He took wrath that was ours to drink. We take blessings that is His merit.

We *are* saved by works, just not ours. Jesus'!

Romans 7:18-19, 22-24

¹⁸For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For the desire to do what is good is with me, but there is no ability to do it. ¹⁹For I do not do the good that I want to do, but I practice the evil that I do not want to do. ²⁰Now if I do what I do not want, I am no longer the one that does it, but it is the sin that lives in me. ²¹So I discover this law: When I want to do what is good, evil is present with me. ²²For in my inner self I delight in God's law, ²³but I see a different law in the parts of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and taking me prisoner to the law of sin in the parts of my body. ²⁴What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?

Romans 8:26 In the same way the Spirit also helps us in our weakness, because we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with inexpressible groanings.

Proverbs 3:5-6

A willingness to be committed, faithful, etc. is not enough to actually do so

Sincerity is not the same as strength

Jesus doesn't shame the disciples for their weakness, He directs them on where to cast that weakness

3 times Peter is warned to stay awake and pray- foreshadowing his 3 denials

V28 a note of redemption not to be missed!

Is Jesus shrinking back? No. His response is the only right one.

Jesus is grappling with the reality before Him of the full force of judgement and His cry is "that there were another way!". But there isn't, and so in the same breath He cries out "Your will".

V42 Jesus isn't overtaken by force, He is now calm and steady in the Father's will

We do not know the deepness of our weakness therefore we should not put a limit on our dependance on God

"True faith takes its character and quality from its object. Its strength therefore depends on the character of Christ. Even those of us who have weak faith have the same strong Christ as others."

- Sinclair B. Ferguson

Theo Von- *"God, even as I pray to you right now, there's a part of me that knows I'm probably lying to you... So can you come into that part of me and help me there?"*

Piper- *"Prayer is God's appointed means of receiving the strength He freely gives."*

Jesus didn't just point out their weakness, but also pointed them to the source and means of strength

Keller *"Peter believed his devotion would sustain him. Instead, his devotion collapsed."*

Hymn- Go to Dark Gethsemani

Go to dark Gethsemane,

You who feel the tempter's pow'r;

Your Redeemer's conflict see;

Watch with Him one bitter hour;

Turn not from His griefs away;

Learn of Jesus Christ to pray.

Willingness and determination are no substitutes for watchfulness and dependence