

Cup, Gethsemane, Desires

Mark 14

March 18, 2018

DAY 1: Desires

Mark 14:32 They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray."

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

Mark 14:34 "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."

Mark 14:35 Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him.

Mark 14:36 "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

1. We get into the deepest caverns of the heart of Jesus in today's passage. He is engaged in a massive battle between His desires and suffering. He comes face-to-face with agony and gets a clear picture of His upcoming death.

2. This week we'll look at how we process the difference between our desires and our circumstances particularly when the gap is so large we call it "suffering."

3. There are different kinds of desires:

- Good
- Godly
- Bad, evil
- Deceitful
- Loud and strong
- Deep and barely audible (at first)

3. In Mark 14:33, Mark records that Jesus had two strong feelings.

a. "Deeply distressed"

The Greek word for this is "astonished." There is some terrible aspect of reality that stuns Him, stops Him in His tracks.

b. "Troubled"

The Greek word for this means "to be overcome with horror."

4. Jesus had told His disciples, on at least three occasions not only that He was going to die, but some of the gruesome details of it. But now the horror of what's in front of Him hits Him in ways that horrify Him. Was it the reality of the physical pain? Suffering? Or something else?

5. The answer to that question will be found tomorrow, in the content of His prayer.

DAY 2: The “cup,” the wrath of God

Mark 14:36 "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

1. “Cup” – is the main metaphor for God’s wrath.
2. Why was Jesus horrified? It wasn’t the physical pain and suffering that horrified Him. It was the realization that the justified wrath of God that was due as a consequence for human sin was going to fall, all on Him. This is what prompts His prayer.
3. The wrath of God is viewed by a secular culture in the same way it views human wrath, only worse. Human wrath is brutalized as arbitrary, rage-driven, and totally overblown – way too much considering the small offense. Consider road rage.
4. Ironically, the problem of God’s wrath in the bible is that it seemed to be needed sooner than it came. Wrath is the just punishment meant to stop evil in its tracks when nothing else has worked, including God’s mercy and His long-suffering.

Habakkuk 1:2 How long, O LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, "Violence!" but you do not save?

³ Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds.

⁴ Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted.

5. Jesus comes to the very brink of His arrest, the first domino of death. And He now sees “the cup” like He had never seen it before. When He sees the horror ahead, He turns to the Father, and there is silence.
6. What does He see? For eternity, all He has known is the triune dance of love. He has never experienced a perversion of love or a lack of love. He has always known what it means to be personally secure, relationally secure, delighted in, enjoyed, important, in short, everything we as humans long. At this moment in time, He realizes He is going to lose every bit of that! The prospect of physical torture and death is the least of His fears.
7. That’s the cup.
8. What strikes you most from today’s devotional?

DAY 3: Unmet desires' options

1. Recently, I was talking with a young woman who is a relative of mine back in the Midwest. She asked me what topics I enjoyed speaking on. Marriage, husband issues, wife issues, anxiety, depression, anger, were topics people wanted to hear about. We all long for a certain level of happiness and in some areas, there is a sizeable gap between what are expectations are and what realities are. The greater the gap, the greater the unhappiness. When there are great gaps, we call that "suffering".

2. And when suffering occurs what do we consider our options?

a. We scramble to change our circumstances. When circumstances are largely unchangeable, we move to plan B.

b. We flee our circumstances. ("I'm outta here!")

c. Suppress our desires. (We are to say "no" to temptation).

d. Denial. We pretend we don't need what we desire.

3. We think this way because it seems to us that our desires are the most important thing of all.

Mark 14:36 "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

4. When we see Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane dealing with His desires, what is His approach?

5. What is your usual approach to dealing with unmet desires?

DAY 4: Jesus, processing desires and circumstances

Mark 14:36 "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

1. At first He appears to be trying to arrange the first approach: a change of circumstances.
2. Jesus is in fervent prayer. He is in an agony of heart that is stunning.
3. His prayer to God, His Father, is as raw as it gets. He is pleading for God to find another way to accomplish His redemptive purpose.
4. What is so striking is this: though He is pleading with God to find a change of circumstances, He is NOT trying to control the circumstances.
5. How would you describe the way Jesus is processing His desires?
6. Jesus:
 - a. Expresses the depth of His feelings, desires, and emotions.
 - b. Submits His desires to God.
 - c. Refuses to grab control of the circumstances.
 - d. Doesn't run from the circumstances.
 - e. Submits His will to God.
 - f. Continues to wrestle with God, but with the clear bent of yielding to God's plan.
7. As you deal with your desires, which of the above things that Jesus does challenges you?
8. What has struck you most from today's devotional?

DAY 5: “Loud” desires versus “deepest” desires

1. One of the things this episode in the life of Jesus illustrates is that many different desires can all be “alive” at the same time, but we tend to only “hear” the one that is the “loudest” desire.
2. The “loudest” desire Jesus felt was the desire to avoid the hell of judgment that was before Him.
3. But there were other desires, less loud, but deeper, that helped navigate Jesus through this severe trial!
4. Beneath each of the verses below, jot down what “deeper” desire the writer knew to be in his heart:

Psalms 21:2 You have granted him the desire of his heart and have not withheld the request of his lips.

Psalms 27:4 One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.

Psalms 37:4 Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Psalms 42:1 As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God.

Psalms 63:1 O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

John 4:34 "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.

Psalms 40:8 I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."

5. Many times in our lives we are faced with competing desires! But, all we may be aware of is the desire that is the “loudest,” the one we feel the most.

6. But, God places desires deepest in our hearts, as in the case of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane

Hebrews 12:1 (RSV) Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

7. What’s your biggest takeaway from today’s devotional?