

Mark 14:10-26

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Date: 15 December 2019

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

- [0 : 00] Good morning and a warm welcome to the service this morning. If there are any people who are visiting with us that haven't clocked yet, then you're very welcome.
- The intimations you've got on the sheet and on the screen, and if I could just highlight one or two of these. The first is to note that on Tuesday of this week, the 17th, that's the day for the community lunch. It says 12 noon to 1pm, I think it's probably 12 noon to 2pm, and there are takeaways available as well.
- The Jam Club is noted down here for Friday, and the Connect Club, but there isn't actually a Jam and Connect Club this coming Friday.
- We're going to finish, last week we finished with ice skating, and I think everybody enjoyed it, and so we're going to finish on a high, and we'll not have a Jam Club this coming Friday.
- YF Party, you can see details of that there, YF please take note of that. The service is next Sunday, 11 o'clock, the morning service will be a family service, Christmas family service, and as the children are taking part in that, if you could be here, boys and girls, or parents of boys and girls, ready for 10.45am, just so you can go through the songs that you'll be singing.
- [1 : 29] And then in the evening service at 6 next Sunday, there will be the Sacrament of Baptism. Antony and Christian, as you know, are Granny and Schenner now, and baby Olivia will be here with us, and Olivia's grandfather, Hannes' father, who's a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church, will be administering the Sacrament of Baptism.
- So that's next Sunday evening, and all are encouraged to come out to these services. Also to note that there are new envelopes for those who give by envelope.
- There's new envelopes out there. If you didn't get an envelope, and you're looking for one, please speak to Angus Alec, and he'll sort that out for you. And for those who perhaps don't know about giving and how to give, there is the option to get envelopes, and you can speak to Angus Alec if you want to do that.
- You can also give by standing order and direct debit. So speak to David Cameron or Mary Cameron about that if you find that easier in the envelope system.
- Also, we were very happy on Friday here to have the marriage, the wedding of Angie Glenn and Annabelle.
- [2 : 46] Strange seeing Angus, not in a boiler suit, looking around and looking for jobs to do. I never saw them so nervous in this church before, but it was a good day, and we pray God's blessing on them.
- And the wedding cake is through in the, or part of the wedding cake is through in the hall there. And for those who are staying behind for tea and coffee at the end, there's a bit of cake there for you.
- So please stay if you can. We might even get Ina staying for tea and coffee today. She baked the cake, and Angus Glenn iced it and did all the decorating. There's no limit to what that man can do.

So these, I think, are all the... Community Carol Service, next Sunday, 8 o'clock in the CEC. Okay. We don't have that down here, sorry.

That should have been the intimations. The Community Carol Service is on next Sunday at 8 o'clock. There is a poster, I think, I saw lying out on the table, did I? So if that can be put up somewhere visible.

[3 : 48] So that's this coming Sunday, a week today, as has been the tradition over past years, in the Community Centre, 8 o'clock, and various churches, all the churches will be taking part in that service.

These, I think, now are all the intimations. Let's pray.

Our people who struggle to know each other, and we struggle even to know ourselves. But you are the one who knows all things.

And we thank you that as we come to the Scriptures, you show to us our own hearts, which is never a sight that encourages us.

But you show us our own hearts in order that as we see our sin, we would look to and call upon the name of Jesus, who is our Saviour.

[5 : 06] And we ask, Lord, that we would be found doing that this morning. If there are any here this morning who don't yet see their sin, we pray, Lord, that you would open their eyes, that they would see the great danger they are in, apart from Christ.

And we pray that each one of us would hear and heed the call of Jesus to come to him for that rest, that eternal rest, that salvation, that reconciliation, that we can find no other place.

So hear our prayers. Help us, Lord, we pray, as we turn to your word. And we pray for the children once more. And we ask that you would be at work, Lord, in their hearts, that in their early years, when their hearts are soft, they would look in faith to Christ, and that they would walk all their days close with Jesus.

So we ask that you would be at work, Lord, amongst them as we pray, that you would be at work amongst us. And we ask all this in Jesus' name.

Amen. I should maybe have asked this question when the children were still here.

[6 : 27] How many days now till Christmas? See, they'd have that just immediate. I'm told there's 10 sleeps till Christmas. And I know that we are probably likely fairly busy in the run-up to Christmas.

Booking Tesco slots. Well, actually, if you've not booked one of them, you've got no hope of getting one of them anytime soon. Planning menus. What are you going to be eating over the Christmas week?

Putting up trees and lights and decorations. As I walk shortness around the village and I pass your windows and I visit into the homes, I see rooms that were very sort of understated, bursting into sparkly light.

You're thinking of gifts to buy. You're going to ask the question, what gifts would you like to receive? There's a lot to do. There can be a lot to do in preparation for Christmas.

And it's that word preparation that I want to underline as we move back into Mark chapter 14. Preparations is the first point that we come to in the section.

[7 : 47] Look at verse 12. On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?

And that word prepare or preparations comes up two more times in the next couple of verses. Verse 15, again, we hear Jesus say, make preparations for us there.

Verse 16, so they prepared for the Passover. We find the disciples at this point making preparations for the Passover meal, as they did every year.

And yet it wasn't just the disciples. The camera here is zooming in on the disciples. But if we kind of zoom back out a bit, we know that in the city of Jerusalem, the place was absolutely overrun with people.

I've got a friend who lives in Edinburgh, and he says when the festival is on, the population is, I think it's well over double. It's not a square inch you can go without people being on the streets.

[9 : 07] And that would have been the picture in Jerusalem, except it would have been even more so. Thousands of Jews flooded into Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover.

The whole city, not just the disciples, but the whole city were making preparations for the Passover. Passover, it's estimated that between 80,000 and 300,000 pilgrims flooded into the city for the Passover.

We think we have a lot of camper vans coming to visit. But Jerusalem was just absolutely bursting with people who are preparing for the Passover.

So you can imagine the buzz of the place. What is the Passover all about? Well, I think probably most of us know what the Passover is about.

But let me just read you a short section from one of the commentators who puts it more concisely than I probably would. Garland says, Passover commemorated the liberation of the nation from Egypt, the nation of Israel from Egypt, when God sent a plague that took the lives of the Egyptian firstborn.

[10 : 21] The Israelites were spared by dabbing their doorways with the blood of a slaughtered lamb. Pilgrims came to commemorate this event, filled with hopes and expectations that Messiah would eventually come to deliver Israel.

So everything that was going on, all the preparations, all the activity, all the buzz that was going on in Jerusalem at that time, it was centered and focused on an event that was back in history and on the hope of something that was promised for the future.

As they came together for the Passover, they looked back at how God had powerfully and miraculously saved his people at various points in history.

He saved them in past times from slavery in Egypt. And they were looking forward to the day when the promised Messiah would come to save his people from the slavery of sin.

That was God's promise to them. And yet, the tragedy of this scene is that in the midst of all the preparations and the activity and the buzz, the Messiah was there.

[11 : 52] He was there. Jesus, the one who was promised, the Lamb of God, who came to take away the sin of the world, He had come.

The one who was the promise for the salvation of the people, the one whose blood, when shed, would save His people from their sin. He was right in the midst of it all.

And yet, the crowds, they missed Him. They overlooked, in all the activity and preparations for the Passover festival, the one who was the real focus of everything that was going on.

Now, what lesson can we take from this? I could sit back down and one of you could very easily come up and give the application for this point.

It's not hard to figure. December is the month of Christmas festival frenzy. Not Passover, but Christmas. Christmas. And everywhere we go, we're reminded of the fact it's Christmas.

[12 : 56] Shop windows, school concerts, lights, trees, TV adverts. They're shouting at us, Christmas. Just as in Jerusalem at this point in time, you couldn't go anywhere without seeing the fact that it was Passover.

We could not overlook the fact just now that it's Christmas, even if we wanted to. And yet, just as in Jerusalem, on this day that we read of, the one who was the reason for the season was overlooked and rejected.

Still, is it not true that Christ Jesus, the one who is the reason for everything that is going on presently, He is so often overlooked, even shut out of Christmas.

Your Christmas dues at work, I don't know how many of you have them. The Christmas parties that we go to, the TV specials, how much is Christ focused on and lifted up in these events?

Does this mean that we should abolish Christmas? Does this mean that we should just wash our hands of the whole thing? No, I don't think it does. In fact, I'm certain it doesn't.

[14 : 06] Because this is a season where we have gospel opportunities that we don't have any other time of the year. So let's take them in our preparations for Christmas this year.

Let's not overlook, but rather fix our eyes upon Jesus. Meditate upon the wonder of the Christmas story. Take time to do that.

And go, as the children sang, as we all sang, go tell it on the mountains. This message that the world needs to hear, that Jesus Christ is born. So there's the preparation.

The first thing that we see here. The second thing that we see here, the second point, is the plan. And still, if we're looking at verses 12 through to 16, just note, as you glance through these verses, that nothing that was happening here was haphazard.

They come to Jesus asking about preparations and nothing about that question catches Jesus off guard.

[15 : 14] There was a plan. With every word that Jesus speaks, every direction that he gives, it's crystal clear that Jesus has and is following a plan.

Verse 12, Jesus' disciples asked him, where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover? And just note the precision of Jesus' answer. It's clear that all this is thought through.

He sent two of his disciples, verse 13, telling them, go into the city and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. Say to the owner of the house he enters, the teacher asks, where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?

He will show you a large upper room furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there. Disciples left, went into the city and find things just as Jesus had told them.

So they prepared the Passover. Just note the attention to detail here. See, Jesus knows at this point that he and his disciples were not safe. They couldn't just have this Passover meal in a place that was clear and was obvious because there was an army of people who were trying to kill Jesus now.

[16 : 32] So everywhere he went, there was danger. So this place that they were going to have the Passover meal needed to be a place of some privacy. And we see here that every aspect of this, from the preparations for the Passover meal to what Jesus would say during the Passover meal, to what Jesus would go on to do after the Passover meal, every aspect of this was planned.

Some people, even some off-track liberal commentators would make an argument that at this point in time, things were starting to unravel for Jesus.

His ministry was falling apart. The crowds were turning against him. The religious leaders were getting the upper hand. Everything was going wrong. Everything was spiraling out of control.

Some academics actually write that rubbish. Actually, the opposite is true. Everything was going exactly according to the plan that was made within the Trinity before the beginning of time.

The plan that was made for your salvation and mine. Sometimes we sometimes we worry, don't we?

[18 : 02] And some of the worries that keep us up at three o'clock in the morning are over the most trivial things. Things that never happen. You know, we worry in our lives that things are slipping out of control.

We worry that everything is falling apart in our workplace. that things are starting to unravel in different parts of our personal life and we start to get stressed out and anxious over it.

We shouldn't worry. It's one small part of application here. We shouldn't worry. If we can trust God with the eternal issues of our salvation, then surely, certainly, we can trust Him with the smaller details of our lives and time.

We see here that God is the master planner in terms of our eternity. Everything that Jesus stepped into time to do was planned precisely.

if we trust Him, the salvation that He was working towards here is gifted to us.

[19 : 25] And if we are people who have trusted Him and taken hold of that salvation and know these eternal blessings, why do we stress out over the smaller matters of time?

Preparation, plan, third point here. Prophecy. What is prophecy? Well, prophecy is being told beforehand what is going to happen in the future.

Sometimes we'll hear the word being used just in normal conversation. Somebody might predict the score of a football match or somebody might predict the coming together of two people in a romantic relationship and someone will say you spoke a word of prophecy three years ago.

Prophecy is being told beforehand what is going to happen in the future and here Jesus speaks a word of prophecy. This is a very sobering point.

word of prophecy is an echo of something that was said in Psalm 41.

[20 : 41] Psalm 41 in verse 9 it says, even my even my close friend whom I trusted he who shared my bread has lifted up his heel against me.

And David certainly knew that in his own experience as a man of that time. But David was pointing forward to the future. This was a prophecy of what would happen.

Even my close friend whom I trusted he who shared my bread has lifted up his heel against me. And Jesus knows as he sits in that upper room as everything that was planned is happening Jesus knows that all that was prophesied is now beginning to take place.

John tells us in John 13 he gives a parallel account of this and we have in John 13 in the upper room Jesus washing the disciples feet as Jesus washed the disciples feet as he washed Judas' feet Judas was lifting up his heel against his Lord although he wasn't his Lord at all.

It was all a pretense. Verse 17 When evening came Jesus arrived with the twelve. Try and sit with them in the room just now.

[22 : 13] Imagine being in that room. This is three years with Jesus and these twelve men so close together all through these years they were sharing their lives together.

Now the Passover meal has been prepared. They're sitting around in that place of safety in that room of fellowship worship. And Jesus starts to speak.

While they were declining at the table eating Jesus said I tell you the truth one of you will betray me.

One who is eating with me. what I find staggering and yet disturbing is that nobody suspected who it was.

Think about that. Judas has been with them all the time. 24-7 for these three years.

[23 : 28] He's the man who's trusted enough to hold the money. And yet when Jesus says one of you will betray me no one points the finger at Judas.

When Jesus spoke this word of prophecy how did he respond? Well he didn't respond by looking around the room to see who's the suspect here. they didn't look at anyone else.

They looked at themselves. Verse 19 they were saddened and one by one they said to him surely not I.

And that's actually an echo of the psalm that we sung. Search me oh God God and know my heart test me and know my anxious thoughts see if there is any offensive way in me.

That's what the disciples were saying to Jesus. Search me oh God. And this is actually something that you and I need to learn from the disciples.

[24 : 48] We're very quick to search each other. we often look suspiciously in the direction of those who are around us but the disciples teach us to examine our own hearts.

As did the Apostle Paul 1 Corinthians 11 28 let a man examine himself not anyone else.

but himself. Why? Well Jeremiah 17 9 tells us the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

Who can know it? And the answer to that question is Jesus can know it. And that's why it was a wise thing to say to Jesus surely not I is it me?

Robert Murray McShane said the seed of every known sin lies within each one of our hearts.

[26 : 01] And the disciples seemed to grasp that. The disciples seemed to realize they were capable of this. So when Jesus speaks a word of prophecy they don't recoil in horror.

They don't say how dare you say that to us. They don't dismiss it. They don't contest us. They listen. Verse 20 Jesus replies it is one of the twelve.

One who dips bread into the bowl with me. The son of man will go just as it is written about him but woe to that man who betrays the son of man.

it would be better for him if he had not been born. These are strong words. These are strong words of warning.

It's better not to be born than to betray Jesus. Why is that? well the reason for what Jesus says here is because to betray Jesus and not trust Jesus when we are given the opportunity to trust Jesus comes with consequences.

[27 : 34] Eternal consequences. It comes with the very clear and direct warning of scripture that those who betray Christ, those who do not trust Christ, those who turn away from Christ will not go to heaven, they will go to hell.

And you might be thinking, you know, it's the 15th of December. This is not the kind of thing we should be hearing about at Christmas. We want to be hearing about starry skies and cozy shepherds and all the kind of lovely fluffy things that we like to go over at Christmas.

But you know what? This is exactly what we need to be hearing at Christmas. Because this is the reason for Christmas. Our sin, your sin, and mine, whether it manifests itself in a Judas-like brazen betrayal of Jesus, or whether it manifests itself in a polite ignoring of Jesus, or a week-by-week procrastination where we say, not today, Jesus, our sin sets us on the road to hell.

And hell is a place of torment. And hell is a place of isolation. Hell is a place of separation.

Separation from God. And separation from each other. People who die out of Christ, they're not drinking drams in some dark caleigh.

[29 : 09] People who die out of Christ go to a place which is more fearful than any of the words and pictures that we are given in Scripture. And it would have been better for us not to have been born than to be born to die eternally in hell.

And yet, it's because of that great danger. It's in order to save us from that great danger that Jesus came. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish, shall not see him, but shall have eternal life.

That's why Jesus came. Yes, there's the cradle. Yes, there's the shepherds. Yes, there's the wise men and there's the angels singing and there's all these wonderful pictures that were given, but never forget that Jesus was born to go from the cradle to the cross to die for your sin and mine so that we would not eternally have to die for our sin.

The word of prophecy that Jesus speaks is a sobering one. The next point that we come to hear is the provision.

The provision that Jesus points them to. And again, I think we need to just pause for a second to take in the impact of this. Every year, you know, we have our Christmas traditions and our New Year traditions.

[30 : 57] Every family has. And so every year, when the time comes around, there's certain things, and we just know they're going to happen. Certain meals that we're going to have, there's certain events that we go to, there's these traditions, there's these sort of family things that we come to expect they're familiar.

And the Passover was familiar. Passover festival was something that was so familiar to these people.

Every year, the same thing was done. The same words were said. The same psalms were sung. The same things were written.

It's very familiar. familiar. And everything is familiar up until the point when Jesus stands up. And he takes the elements of bread and wine.

And he uses them not to look back, but to look forward. He takes the bread.

[32 : 06] He takes the wine. And he points them to himself. And when he did that, you would have been able to hear a pin drop.

While they were eating, verse 22, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, take it. This is my body.

then he took the cup, gave thanks, and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many, he said to them.

I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God. everything that Jesus is doing here, he's speaking about God's provision.

The Passover meal, they knew it reminded them of God's provision for them in the past. When they were in a fix, when they were in a corner, when there was no means of escape, when there was no means of salvation, God himself provided salvation.

[33 : 19] salvation. They meant to remember that and to give thanks for that, but now Jesus was saying to them and showing them that all that they needed for eternal salvation, God was providing in Christ.

He would go to a cross, as he had promised, his body would be broken, his blood would be shed, and through that, salvation would be provided for all who would believe.

Spurgeon illustrates this really powerfully in a wee anecdote. Let me just read it for you here. There's a place in England, says Spurgeon, where a loaf of bread was served to every passerby who chose to ask for it.

Whoever the traveler was, he only had to knock at the door of St. Cross Hospital, and a loaf of bread was his to enjoy. Jesus Christ loves sinners so much that he has built a St.

Cross Hospital, so that whenever a sinner is hungry, he only has to knock and have his needs supplied. He actually has done better. He is attached to this hospital of the cross a bath.

[34 : 46] And whenever a soul is marred and filthy, it may go to his effective fountain and be cleansed. No sinner ever went in to it and found that it could not wash away his stains.

Sins which were scarlet and crimson have all disappeared, and the sinner has been made whiter than snow. a picture of the gospel.

God's provision is Christ. Everything needed for our salvation has been provided in Christ.

And how do we receive it? We knock the door. we ask.

We can't buy it. We can't earn it to our religion, even though some of us here might be trying to. We are given this gift.

[35 : 57] God has provided his son. His body was broken. His blood was shed so that we can be saved.

And all we have to do is come and ask. Have you done that yet?

Are you saved? Or are you like a starving, impoverished, hungry man who passes by the door of St.

Cross's Hospital and wanders on to his death when the whole time the provision has been made for those who will simply ask?

Jesus came to be to be the provision that we need for salvation. And if we have never received that, don't hesitate one more moment.

[37 : 13] Come today and receive Jesus. And if we are those who have received Jesus, what should we do? Praise him.

when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. They praised him and they went out.

Are you a Christian here today? And your life and mine is a life that should be devoted to praising God for what he has done for us and then going out to tell others about what God has done for them.

May God enable us to be these people. Let's pray. Our heavenly father, we thank you for your word to us. We thank you for the richness of the provision that is made for us in Christ through the gospel.

And we pray that you would open our eyes to see and hear and that you would give us the faith that each one of us would come and knock at the door and receive all that we need for salvation.

[38 : 31] And Lord, for those of us who are Christians, for those of us who have received Jesus, we pray that we would not be like those who have received such blessings and who sit with great lethargy and with great inactivity, but enable us to be those who, having received, go out to others who are still lost, in order that they too will hear about Jesus and come in faith to him.

Hear us in our prayers and help us, Lord, to trust you and to live for your glory. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.