



We've been walking through the gospel of Mark since October, and today, we get to the climax of the story. Jesus is about to be crucified. The mission for which He was sent is about to be fulfilled. What does Jesus do before this critical moment in history? He stops and has a moment with His closest disciples. In this moment, He connects the dots to why He came in the first place. Christmas is often a time when we think about the incarnation of Jesus, the moment when He was born as a baby into the world. What we frequently fail to remember at Christmas is that this baby had a mission, and that was to live the perfect life we could never have lived and die in a sacrifice so unreasonable that it could only be described by one word, GRACE. Today, we will talk about the "Unreasonable Sacrifice" of Jesus.

Key Passage: Mark 14:12-25

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the connection between Christmas and Jesus' mission?

While Christmas celebrates Jesus' incarnation, His ultimate mission was to live a sinless life and die as a sacrifice for humanity's sins. This purpose is often overlooked during the holiday.

2. What does the Passover commemorate? What is the meaning of substitutionary atonement? What is the significance of Jesus celebrating the Passover with His disciples in this passage?

The Passover commemorates God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt, highlighting the lamb's blood that saved the Israelites from death. Substitutionary atonement means Jesus took the place of sinners, bearing their sins on the cross, to reconcile them to God by paying the price for their transgressions. In today's passage, Jesus uses this Passover meal to reveal He is the ultimate Passover Lamb, whose blood will save humanity from sin and death. Jesus used this moment with the disciples to connect the dots about His mission, symbolically linking His coming death to the Passover lamb and explaining the significance of His body and blood.

3. What does the disciples' fearful response to Jesus' announcement of betrayal—where each one asks, "Is it I?"—reveal about their hearts and understanding? What do you think we can learn from their reaction, especially in terms of our own faithfulness and self-awareness?

The disciples' fearful response reveals their deep concern about their potential for betrayal. Despite being close to Jesus, they each question themselves, indicating a sense of vulnerability and awareness of their weaknesses. This moment shows their uncertainty, recognizing that they, too, can fail or fall short. It highlights their struggle, even as they express their loyalty and desire to remain faithful.

4. The Bible tells us that Jesus is able to sympathize with our weaknesses – this is true in that He also knows what it's like to be betrayed. How does Jesus' experience with betrayal provide comfort to those who have been betrayed?

There may be no worse feeling in the world than being betrayed. It's devastating when you open your heart and life to someone you felt you could trust, only to have that trust shattered. Jesus, having been betrayed by Judas, sympathizes with the pain of betrayal. His experience offers comfort, as He understands this hurt and meets people in their brokenness. There's something about betrayal that gets highlighted during the holidays. We may be reminded about someone in our family who did the unthinkable and every Christmas, there is a sense of having to pick up the pieces. Betrayal is the reason many people are unable to have healthy relationships. They were hurt at some point in their life and were never able to recover. That said, betrayal can take hold of your life and cause cynicism, bitterness, and anger to take root – we may even feel justified in our pain and actions toward others. The message of Christmas for weary souls is that Jesus knows what it's like to be betrayed. He understands your pain and can meet you at that place. Don't let the pain of betrayal take control of your family this Christmas

5. Why does Jesus command believers to regularly commemorate His death through the Lord's Supper?

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of remembrance, reminding us of Jesus' sacrifice, broken body, and shed blood. It's a moment of thoughtful celebration regarding His substitutionary atonement and our hope due to His promised return.

6. Take a few moments to reflect on the past year as a group. Share some things you are thankful for, remembering how Jesus has shown His grace and carried you through challenging times.