

Gospel of Mark Chapter 14B

Most of us have started a simple project that became more complex as it evolved.

- Building a roof over my porch??? Made a simple drawing, took it in for a permit: I need to consider: Pier depth, Weight distribution, Calculate the Span strength of the headers. Say what??? I thought this was a simple project.

The Scripture text that Jason read for us this morning is a very simple story. We all know it well. We have heard it time and time again since we were children.

- Jesus is gathering his disciples together for the Last Supper.
- But when we dig into the narrative we discover two spiritual truths that point us to the sovereign power of God and the responsibility of man.

Here is our outline this morning:

1. Simple Story
2. Sovereign Plan
3. Spiritual Responsibility

1. Simple Story

We are quickly approaching the feast of unleavened bread. This is the day when the Passover meal will be served.

- The disciples look to Jesus for direction as to where they should celebrate the Passover. After all he is their Lord, their Master and they have learned to look to him for guidance even in the smallest things. **“Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?”**
- The Lord Jesus provided them with clear instructions. If they follow his directions they will experience his provision.
- In the sovereign plan of God this was the night that Jesus would be betrayed, arrested and later die as God’s Passover Lamb. God ordained the plan and the timing, the events were under His sovereign control and yet the scoundrel who betrayed him will be held responsible for his act of treachery.

The last Supper and the betrayal of Judas is a simple story but when we begin to unpack the details of the story we see two underlying theological truths:

- God is sovereign over all things
- Man is responsible for his actions.

The setting of Mark’s narrative is the celebration of the Passover. This will be the last time that Jesus will celebrate this annual feast with his Disciples.

- A careful study of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Passover Meal which initiated the feast uncovers a dual purpose for the celebration:

- First is Historic - The Passover was an annual reminder of the great deliverance of Israel from the bondage of slavery in Egypt. By the blood of a spotless lamb the angel of death passed over the homes of God's chosen people.
- Prophetic - The sacrifice of the Lamb @ Passover looked ahead to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. By faith in his sacrificial atonement the sin of God's chosen people would be removed, they would be set free from slavery to sin and released to a life of pilgrimage moving toward the dwelling place of God.
- Listen to Peters' words:

1 Peter 1: 18 knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. 20 He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for your sake,

- The Passover Lamb foreshadowed Jesus Christ; As John the Baptist said: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world."
- A careful reading of Peter's Epistle reveals the fact that the Lamb of God was "Foreknown," That doesn't mean that God simply saw Him ahead of time, it speaks of a preincarnate LOVE relationship shared between the Father and Son. (root word - to know - intimacy)
- From our study of Scripture we also know that the saving WORK of the Lamb was decreed by God long before it happened.

Revelation 13 speaks of Jesus as, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

- When I say that the saving work of the Lamb of God was decreed I mean that Salvation by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ did not come as a REACTION to man's sinful dilemma, it was carefully planned by God, meticulously arranged to display God's glory before the first man took his first breath.
 - Nothing ever catches God off guard. Because he is THE all-knowing, all powerful sovereign ruler over all things R.C. Sproul says: "there is not one maverick molecule in all of creation."
 - If there was then God wouldn't be sovereign.

As we open the Gospel of Mark in chapter 14 we see the sovereign hand of God clearly revealed in the events leading up to the cross. God, in his grace has ordained both the END and the MEANS of man's salvation:

- The END has been decreed: God will dwell with man, glorified man in perfect unbroken communion throughout the eternal ages. Holy City / New Jerusalem
- The MEANS have also been decreed: He will accomplish this through his sacrificial work as the Lamb of God shedding his blood for the sins of the believing ones, sending the Holy Spirit to sanctify every one of them.

The cross was no accident it was decreed by God the Father before the creation of the world.

- You may ask, “What do you mean ‘decreed by God?’”
 - Get your hip boots on because we are wading out into the deep water today.

Wayne Grudem: *“The decrees of God are the eternal plans of God whereby, before the creation of the world, he determined to bring about everything that happens.”*

- Peter speaks of God’s decrees concerning the death of Jesus in Acts chapter 2:

Acts 2: 22 **“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know 23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.**

- Jesus was delivered up to death in accordance with the definite plan and foreknowledge of God. (His Eternal Decrees)

Let me illustrate: I have often used the image of a drama: “The Drama of Redemption.”

In the book of Genesis we read all about the glorious set design that God created for the drama to take place.

- He spoke and the lights came on.
- He brought forth the stage, the dry land from amidst the raging seas.
- With his own hands he formed the cast members, male and female he created them.
- Every chapter of the drama was written (decreed) before the set was designed. The highs and lows of this drama are played out over thousands of years.
 - This is not some improvisational skit. It is the clear and concise revelation of God’s glory.
- The key moment in the drama occurs when God humbly and magnificently enters the set. He takes on flesh and becomes part of his own creation.
- In the grand crescendo of the drama Jesus boldly, powerfully gives himself to death in order to ransom his beloved bride from eternal destruction.
- The eternal decrees of God have determined the end of the drama.

Revelation 21:3 **And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.**

4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

As I said earlier, God has not only decreed the end he has also decreed the means to that end.

IN order to redeem man from the slavery of sin, and restore a right relationship between God and man, the justice of God must be fully satisfied through the sacrifice of God's spotless Lamb, Jesus Christ.

In perfect obedience to the decrees of His Father, Jesus arranges all of the details of his final night with his disciples.

Mark 14:12 **And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, "Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?"** 13 **And he sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him,** 14 **and wherever he enters, say to the master of the house,'** 15 **And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; there prepare for us."** 16 **And the disciples set out and went to the city and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.**

This description of the Passover preparation reminds us of the preparations that were made for Jesus' triumphal entry in to the city of Jerusalem (Palm Sunday).

- In both passages Jesus sends 2 disciples on a covert mission that must be completed if the events are going to proceed. (1 - obtaining a donkey – Zech. 9:9, 2 - obtaining a room where the New Covenant will be instituted Jeremiah 31:31)
- Both errands entail mysterious meetings that are foretold with precision and take place exactly as Jesus and the prophets predicted.
- Both actions reveal the Lord's knowledge and complete governance of events leading up to his death.

While they are in Bethany (2 miles from Jerusalem) Jesus tells Peter and John (Luke 22:8) to go into the city where they will be met by a man carrying a jar of water.

- Now remember this is the Passover, the population of Jerusalem has swelled to hundreds of thousands and in this crowd they need to find a specific man carrying a jar of water.

They must follow that man, the man with the jar carefully observing which house he enters. Then they are to say to the owner of the house. **'The Teacher says, where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'**

- Now Ladies I want you to notice that in this story there are two men who receive clear directions from the Lord Jesus. These men actually follow those directions to a "T".
 - That fact ALONE tells you that this is an act of divine intervention.

17 **And when it was evening, he came with the twelve.** 18 **And as they were reclining at table and eating, Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me."**

19 They began to be sorrowful and to say to him one after another, "Is it I?"
20 He said to them, "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the dish with me. 21 For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born."

The sovereign plan of God included a betrayer, a close friend of the Lord Jesus who turns against him, assuring that Jesus' arrest and crucifixion takes place during the Passover.

- Remember from last week:

Mark 14: 1 It was now two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest him by stealth and kill him, 2 for they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar from the people."

- The Sanhedrin agreed that they would not arrest and kill Jesus during the feast, but in the sovereign plan of God he was the Passover Lamb. He needed to die today!
- Enter Judas Iscariot. In the drama of redemption He played the role of the betrayer.

Psalm 41:9 Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.

A careful study of the Bible reveals a set of parallel truths that seem to be contradictory.

1. The absolute sovereignty of God
2. The responsibility of man.

Our study in Mark 14 has helped us see the sovereignty of God in the sacrifice of Jesus; and yet verse 21 tells us that God will hold Judas responsible for his betrayal.

Mark 14:21 For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born."

- The sovereignty of God does not negate or remove the responsibility of man.

Spurgeon:

God's system of truth is not one straight line, but two. No man will ever get a right view of the gospel until he knows how to look at the two lines at once. I am taught in one book to believe that what I sow I shall reap: (That is human responsibility) I am taught in another place, that "it is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." (That is sovereignty)

I see in one place, God presiding over all in providence; and yet I see, and I cannot help seeing, that man acts as he pleases, and that God has left his actions to his own will, in a great measure.

That God predestines, and that man is responsible, are two things that few can see. They are believed to be inconsistent and contradictory; but they are not. It is just the fault of our weak judgment. Two truths cannot be contradictory to each other. If, then, I find taught in one place that everything is fore-ordained, *that is true*; and if I find in another place that man is responsible for all his actions, *that is true*; and it is my folly that leads me to imagine that two truths can ever contradict each other.

Practical Application:

We Rejoice and we take great comfort in the sovereignty of God!

- We can sleep at night! We can live with confidence every day knowing that He is the sovereign God of the universe.
- Even when we face trials and tragedies God remains on the throne.

Because God is sovereign, because he is all knowing and all powerful, he is able to bring our salvation to completion in spite of the opposition of sinful man.

Romans 8: 28 *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

29 *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*

30 *And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*

- The sovereign work of God on behalf of those he foreknew, predestined, called and justified is so sure, so fixed and complete that he can speak of them as already being glorified.
- What wonderful comfort we find in the gracious decrees of God.

God is Almighty, He can do all things; he will accomplish all that he has decreed.

Nothing is too difficult for Him, and He orchestrates everything in order that His will is accomplished

Jeremiah 32:17*Ah, Lord GOD! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you.*

What is OUR Responsibility? Very simply we must BELIEVE.....

- Believe the simple Story
- Trust his sovereign plan
- Take serious our responsibility to Believe

Judas lived among the Disciples of Christ for 3 years, he saw the miracles, heard the teachings and yet somehow He remained in UNBELIEF.

- The Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans Saying:

Romans 10: 9 *if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.*

The Philippian Jailer asked Paul and Silas

Acts 16: 30 “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” 31 And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”

The world around us, the enemy, Satan who is aligned against us will seek to trip us up with all kinds of lies and accusations.

- He will slander God and tell you that the world is out of control.
- BUT As we study the Bible together we see that everything is happening exactly the way that God decreed.
- We are called to believe the simple story and trust in our sovereign God.