

**Mark 14:12-26**  
**April 2, '17**

**MARCH IN MARK**  
**“THE FINAL FEAST”**

**THIS IS, OF COURSE, “THE FINAL FEAST”**  
**WEEKEND.**

**I SAY “OF COURSE” FACETIOUSLY BECAUSE**  
**THAT WOULD INDICATE THAT EVERYONE KNOWS**  
**THAT & HAS BEEN ANTICIPATING IT SINCE I**  
**SHARED THOSE WORDS FOR THIS SUNDAY IN THE**  
**NEWSLETTER MORE THAN A MONTH AGO.**

**THERE ARE SOME HERE TODAY WHO HAVE**  
**BEEN ANTICIPATING “THE FINAL *SOMETHING*”**  
**THIS WEEKEND FOR AT LEAST THAT LONG, IF NOT**  
**FAR LONGER.**

**FOR THOSE WHO DON'T HAVE A CLUE AS TO**  
**WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT, THIS IS “THE FINAL**

**FOUR” WEEKEND OF THE MEN’S & WOMEN’S  
COLLEGE BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP.**

**MY GUESS IS THAT MORE OF YOU HAVE BEEN  
LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS WEEKEND’S FINAL  
*FOUR* THAN THIS WEEKEND’S FINAL *FEAST*.**

**BUT I’M ALSO GUESSING THAT MANY OF YOU  
(CARDINAL, WILDCAT, BOILERMAKER FANS)  
HAVEN’T ENJOYED ITS ARRIVAL AS MUCH AS YOU  
HOPE YOU WOULD.**

**SO LET’S FORGET “THE FINAL FOUR” & FOCUS  
OUR ATTENTION ON “THE FINAL FEAST.”**

**WE’RE NEARING THE END OF OUR “MARCH IN  
MARK” AS WE’VE BEEN LOOKING AT THE EVENTS  
OF EACH DAY OF HOLY WEEK.**

**WE BEGAN WITH A FOCUS ON MONDAY, WHEN JESUS USED A BIT OF STREET THEATER IN HIS CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE.**

**ON TUESDAY, WE HEARD HIM ANSWER A QUESTION FROM A SYMPATHETIC SCRIBE REGARDING “THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT.”**

**IN HIS RESPONSE, JESUS OFFERED – NOT ONE – BUT TWO COMMANDMENTS THAT HE SUGGESTED WERE INSEPARABLE FROM ONE ANOTHER – LOVE OF GOD & LOVE OF NEIGHBOR.**

**ON WEDNESDAY, WE WATCHED AS AN UNNAMED WOMAN ANOINTED HIM WITH EXPENSIVE OIL WHILE THE RELIGIOUS AUTHORITIES SOUGHT TO ARREST HIM & JUDAS MADE PLANS TO BETRAY HIM.**

**AND NOW, WE COME TO THURSDAY –  
ARGUABLY THE MOST ACTION-PACKED DAY OF  
THE ENTIRE MOMENTOUS WEEK.**

**THERE ARE SO MANY PLACES WE MIGHT  
FOCUS SIMPLY FROM THE VERSES WE’VE READ  
THIS MORNING.**

**LET’S LOOK AT JUST A COUPLE OF THOSE  
PLACES & THEN TURN OUR ATTENTION TO ONE  
THAT MAY – QUITE SURPRISINGLY - BE THE MOST  
IMPORTANT OF ALL.**

**FIRST OF ALL, LOOK AT THE SETTING OF THIS  
PASSAGE.**

**IT BEGINS MUCH LIKE PALM SUNDAY DOES  
(AND WE’LL GO BACK TO PALM SUNDAY NEXT  
WEEK AS WE BEGIN OUR ACTUAL OBSERVANCE OF  
HOLY WEEK).**

**WE HAVE THE DISCIPLES ASKING JESUS ABOUT HIS PLANS FOR HIS OBSERVANCE OF PASSOVER.**

**HE GIVES THEM VERY SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS AS TO WHAT THEY SHOULD DO & IT'S OBVIOUSLY CLEAR FROM WHAT HE TELLS THEM, THAT HE'S THOUGHT THIS THROUGH VERY CAREFULLY.**

**HE GIVES THEM STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS.**

**I THINK IT'S INTERESTING THAT THE PALM SUNDAY PLANS WERE MADE TO GIVE HIM THE GREATEST EXPOSURE & THE PLAN FOR THE PASSOVER MEAL WERE MADE TO KEEP THE ENTIRE EVENT COMPLETELY SECRET.**

**BUT, AFTER THE DISCIPLES FOLLOW THROUGH ON EVERYTHING HE'S TOLD THEM TO DO, MARK SAYS – IN WORDS THAT ARE FILLED**

**WITH MEANING FOR OUR OWN LIVES – “...*THEY FOUND EVERYTHING AS HE HAD TOLD THEM.*”**

**THAT MAY BE SEEN AS A THROW-AWAY, INCIDENTAL COMMENT – ONE WITHOUT ANY DEEP, THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE.**

**AND YET, WHEN WE CONSIDER ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR OWN LIVES, IS THAT NOT WE FIND OURSELVES IN OUR OWN DEALINGS WITH JESUS – “...*WE FIND EVERYTHING AS HE HAS TOLD US.*”**

**HE TELLS US THAT WHEN WE LOSE OUR LIFE FOR HIS SAKE, WE WILL FIND IT – AND WE DISCOVER THAT’S TRUE.**

**IT’S JUST AS HE HAS TOLD US.**

**HE ISSUES THE PROMISE THAT “*I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU OR FORSAKE YOU*” AND IN THE MIDST**

**OF THE DARKEST MOMENTS OF LIFE, WE FIND  
THAT TO BE TRUE AS WELL.**

**IT'S JUST AS HE HAS TOLD US.**

**HE SAYS '*THOSE WHO LIVE BY THE SWORD WILL  
PERISH BY THE SWORD*' AND HISTORY HAS GIVE US  
OVERWHELMING VALIDATION OF THAT  
STATEMENT'S TRUTH.**

**IT'S JUST AS HE HAS TOLD US.**

**HE MAKES THE OUTRAGEOUS CLAIM THAT  
*"THOSE WHO HAVE SEEN ME HAVE SEEN THE  
FATHER"* AND, YET AGAIN, OUR EXPERIENCE WITH  
HIM, AFFIRMS THAT TRUTH.**

**IT'S JUST AS HE HAS TOLD US.**

**THAT'S ONE OF THE PLACES WE MIGHT  
PROFITABLY FOCUS OUR ATTENTION.**

**ANOTHER PLACE IS ON THE OWNER OF THE HOME WHERE JESUS & THE DISCIPLES WILL SHARE THE PASSEVER MEAL – THE PLACE WHERE THE LORD’S SUPPER WAS INSTITUTED – THAT UPPER ROOM THAT HAS BEEN SYMBOLICALLY VISITED BY BILLIONS UPON BILLIONS OF BELIEVERS ACROSS THE EARTH & THROUGHOUT THE AGES.**

**WHAT A GUY!**

**HE EXTENDS THE INVITATION TO JESUS TO BRING IN A BUNCH OF HIS FRIENDS FOR A PRIVATE MEAL & DOESN’T EVEN WEASEL HIS WAY INTO THE FESTIVITIES!**

**WHO WAS THIS MAN?**

**WE DON’T KNOW, DO WE?**



**LIKE THE WOMAN WE SAW LAST WEEK WHO  
POURED A FORTUNE'S WORTH OF OIL ON THE  
HEAD OF JESUS IN A SIGN OF LOVE & LOYALTY, WE  
DON'T EVEN KNOW THIS GUY'S NAME!**

**WE KNOW ABSOLUTELY NOTHING MORE  
ABOUT HIM.**

**NOR DO WE KNOW ANYTHING MORE ABOUT  
THAT UNNAMED WOMAN.**

**IT'S TRUE OF SO MANY IN SCRIPTURE.**

**WE DON'T KNOW THE NAME OF THAT SCRIBE  
WHO PUT AN END TO THE QUESTIONING OF THE  
OTHER RELIGIOUS LEADERS ON TUESDAY OF  
HOLY WEEK.**

**WE DON'T KNOW THE NAME OF THE  
CENTURION AT THE CRUCIFIXION THREE DAYS  
LATER, WHO SAID, *"TRULY, THIS WAS THE SON OF***

**GOD” IN A BOLD & COURAGEOUS STATEMENT OF  
FAITH THAT RINGS ACROSS THE AGES.**

**THE LOYAL, GENEROUS WOMAN, THE  
GRACIOUS UPPER ROOM HOMEOWNER, THE  
INQUISITIVE & FAITHFUL SCRIBE, THE BOLD &  
COURAGEOUS CENTURION ALL GO BY THE SAME  
NAME – ANONYMOUS.**

**AND ISN'T THAT SO OFTEN TRUE OF THOSE  
WHO HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE WORLD & AN  
IMPACT ON OUR LIVES?**

**THEY'RE NOT KNOWN TO HISTORY.**

**THEY DO THINGS, NOT FOR FAME OR  
ACCLAIM, BUT SIMPLY BECAUSE OF A  
COMMITMENT TO A CAUSE.**

**FLIP THROUGH OUR HYMNAL & YOU'LL FIND  
THAT ONE OF THE MOST PROLIFIC HYMN WRITERS  
GOES BY THE NAME "ANONYMOUS."**

***"O, HOW I LOVE JESUS,"***

***"COME, THOU ALMIGHTY KING,"***

***"I HAVE DECIDED TO FOLLOW JESUS,"***

***"JUST A CLOSER WALK WITH THEE,"* – EVERY  
ONE OF THEM WRITTEN BY THAT SAINT OF THE  
AGES – ANONYMOUS.**

**AND AREN'T THOSE THE ONES WHO REALLY  
MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD – THE ONES  
WHO PUT EGO ASIDE & DON'T GIVE A FLEETING  
THOUGHT TO FAME OR ACCLAIM, BUT SIMPLY DO  
THINGS FOR THE WELL-BEING OF OTHERS IN  
RESPONSE TO THE CLAIM OF JESUS CHRIST UPON  
THEIR LIVES?**

**SO THOSE ARE TWO PLACES ON WHICH WE MIGHT FOCUS OUR ATTENTION WITH REGARD TO THIS PASSAGE – THE ASSURANCE THAT WITH JESUS WE FIND “EVERYTHING AS HE HAS TOLD US” AND THE LESSON OF THIS UPPER ROOM OWNER WHO WAS SO VOID OF EGO THAT HE DIDN’T EVEN CARE TO BE IDENTIFIED BY NAME.**

**BUT LET ME SUGGEST AN EVEN MORE POWERFUL LESSON TO BE LEARNED FROM THIS PASSAGE – ONE THAT SEEMS, ON FIRST GLANCE, TO BE PURELY INFORMATIONAL.**

**THE LAST VERSE READS, “*WHEN THEY HAD SUNG A HYMN, THEY WENT OUT...*”**

**THINK ABOUT THIS.**

**THINK OF ALL THEY HAD JUST EXPERIENCED.**

**THEY WERE TOLD THERE WAS A BETRAYER IN  
THEIR MIDST.**

**THEY HAD BEEN TOLD BY JESUS THAT HIS  
BODY WOULD BE BROKEN.**

**THEY HAD BEEN TOLD THAT HIS BLOOD  
WOULD BE SHED.**

**THEY WERE KEENLY AWARE OF THE DANGERS  
THAT LURKED AROUND EVERY CORNER WITH THE  
AUTHORITIES OUT TO ARREST JESUS & PUT AN  
END TO THE ENTIRE GOSPEL MOVEMENT.**

**AND YET WHAT WAS THEIR RESPONSE TO ALL  
OF THIS?**

***“WHEN THEY HAD SUNG A HYMN, THEY WENT  
OUT...”***

**THINK OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF THAT  
STATEMENT FOR OUR OWN LIVES AND FOR OUR  
WORSHIP.**

**WE WORSHIP TOGETHER, WE SING TOGETHER  
& THEN WE GO OUT TO FACE THE WORLD –  
SEPARATELY & YET STILL TOGETHER.**

**WE FIND THREE POWERFUL LESSONS IN THIS  
PASSAGE.**

**AS WE WANDER THROUGH LIFE, OUR FAITH IN  
JESUS CHRIST ASSURES US THAT WE WILL ALWAYS  
FIND EVERYTHING *“JUST AS HE HAS TOLD US.”***

**WHEN WE PUT OUR EGO ASIDE, WE CAN DO  
GREAT THINGS IN THE NAME OF CHRIST.**

**AND, FINALLY, WE FIND STRENGTH TO FACE  
ALL OF LIFE’S DIFFICULTIES WHEN WE WORSHIP**

**TOGETHER & GO INTO THE WORLD WITH THE  
ASSURANCE THAT WE'RE NEVER ALONE. AMEN.**

**(COMMUNION)**

**(After communion)**

**IN 1889, THE FINNISH COMPOSER, JEAN SIBELIUS, WROTE A PIECE OF MUSIC TO BE PERFORMED AT A RALLY PROTESTING CENSORSHIP BY THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE, OF WHICH FINLAND WAS A PART.**

**WITHIN A FAIRLY TURBULENT AND ROUSING STRING OF MOVEMENTS, HE EMBEDDED A QUIET HYMN-LIKE MOMENT.**

**IT WAS, IN FACT, TURNED INTO A HYMN – A HYMN THAT WAS THE FAVORITE OF ERIC LIDDELL, THE HERO OF THE MOVIE “CHARIOTS OF FIRE.”**

**IT WAS A HYMN THAT LIDDELL TAUGHT FELLOW PRISONERS IN A JAPANESE DETAINMENT CAMP DURING WORLD WAR II.**



**AS LIDDELL LAY DYING AT THAT CAMP, HE  
ASKED THE BAND HE HAD FORMED TO PLAY HIS  
FAVORITE HYMN SO THAT HE MIGHT BE  
STRENGTHENED BY THE POWER OF ITS LYRICS &  
THE JOINING TOGETHER OF FAITHFUL VOICES.**

*“BE STILL, MY SOUL, THE LORD IS ON THY SIDE,  
BEAR PATIENTLY THE CROSS OF GRIEF OR PAIN.  
LEAVE TO THY GOD TO ORDER AND PROVIDE;  
IN EVERY CHANGE, HE FAITHFUL WILL REMAIN.  
BE STILL, MY SOUL: THY BEST, THY HEAV’NLY  
FRIEND*

*THROUGH THORNY WAYS LEADS TO A JOYFUL  
END.”*

**THAT HYMN DOESN’T SOFT-PEDAL THE  
DIFFICULTIES OF LIFE.**

**IT DOESN'T DENY THE EXISTENCE OF GRIEF  
OR PAIN.**

**IT IS SIMPLY A STATEMENT OF FAITH THAT,  
EVEN IN THE MIDST OF THE AGONIES OF LIFE, GOD  
IS WITH US.**

**LIKE THE DISCIPLES IN THAT UPPER ROOM,  
THERE ARE REAL PROBLEMS THAT AWAIT US IN  
THE WORLD.**

**THERE ARE THREATS TO OUR OWN WELL-  
BEING & THE WELL-BEING OF OUR LOVED ONES.**

**BUT OUR SOUL CAN BE STILL IN THE  
ASSURANCE THAT WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER &  
THAT GOD IS IN CHARGE OF OUR LIVES AND THE  
WORLD.**

**AS WE CONSIDER ALL THAT LIES AHEAD, LET  
IT BE SAID OF US, “*WHEN THEY HAD SUNG A HYMN,  
THEY WENT OUT...*”**

**HAVING BEEN FED, NOURISHED &  
STRENGTHENED, LET US GO OUT TO FACE THE  
WORLD, KNOWING THAT “*THROUGH THE THORNY  
WAYS, WE WILL BE LED TO A JOYFUL END.*” AMEN.**

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