

A Reflection for Day 5 – Maundy Thursday

Mark 14: 32-42

Jesus arrested

Judas, the traitor, left the supper table and went out into the night to meet with the leaders who wanted to kill Jesus. They paid him 30 pieces of silver for his betrayal. Let's read what happened next.

³² They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I pray.' ³³ He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. ³⁴ 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,' he said to them. 'Stay here and keep watch.'

³⁵ Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. ³⁶ 'Abba,^[a] Father,' he said, 'everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.'

³⁷ Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. 'Simon,' he said to Peter, 'are you asleep? Couldn't you keep watch for one hour?' ³⁸ Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.'

³⁹ Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. ⁴⁰ When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him.

⁴¹ Returning the third time, he said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. ⁴² Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!'

Jesus went out into a quiet garden, called Gethsemane, and prayed that God would find some other way to help people come into a right relationship with their heavenly Father, and his, without him having to die. But Jesus did understand what was needed. He would have to die to take away the wrong in the world so that people who believed and trusted in him would be able to be God's children. They could be free of sin.

While Jesus was deep in prayer, his friends were fast asleep. They couldn't stay awake because they were exhausted. Suddenly the religious leaders came with some Roman soldiers who were brandishing swords, sticks and flaming torches. And there was Judas. He came forward, kissed Jesus on the cheek and said 'he is the one you want'. The soldiers arrested Jesus and took him away for trial. But the trial was unfair. Jesus' enemies were determined to kill him. The Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, seemed to understand who Jesus was – at least partly anyway – but he was scared of the religious leaders and the big crowds, and he was frightened that he'd lose his job. He allowed Jesus to be taken away to be nailed to a cross.

Jesus' friends ran away, scared for their lives. Even Jesus' close friend Peter denied that he was a friend of Jesus. He lied to keep out of trouble. But he was mortified at letting Jesus down. Are there times when we feel we let Jesus down and perhaps deny that we love him?