

**Mark:
The Silence of the Lamb**

Mark 14:43-65

By [Dr. Derek Thomas](#)

February 12, 2006

Now turn with me once again to the Gospel of Mark, and we're in chapter 14, beginning at verse 43. Now, these past number of weeks we have been following our Lord and His disciples in the upper room and preparing for Passover, and now latterly, in the last two weeks, having celebrated the Lord's Supper together and predicted Peter's denial, we have followed our Savior into the Garden of Gethsemane. And last Lord's Day evening we followed the account of the wrestling in the mind and soul of our Lord as He prayed that incredible prayer, "Father, all things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet, not what I will, but what You will."

And tonight we come to the section of the arrest and the beginnings of the trial of Jesus, and before we read the passage together, let's come once again before God in prayer.

Our Father in heaven, we bow our hearts in Your presence, wanting once again to be still and to know that You are God. We come in the realization that by faith we have been brought into union and communion with Christ. This same Lord Jesus Christ who wrestled in the garden, who was arrested and tried in this mockery of a trial, who gave His life for us. And we pray now, Holy Spirit, that You would once again give us a measure of solemnity as we tread on holy ground. We are unworthy of the least of Your mercies. Hide Your word within our hearts, that we might now sin against You. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

Hear now the word of God:

Immediately while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, came up, accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs, who were from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. Now he who was betraying Him had given them a signal, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the one; seize Him, and lead Him away under guard." After coming, Judas immediately went to Him saying, "Rabbi!" and kissed Him. They laid hands on Him, and seized Him. But one of those who stood by drew his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest, and cut off his ear. And Jesus said

to them, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me, as you would against a robber? Every day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me; but this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures." And they all left Him and fled.

And a young man was following Him, wearing nothing but a linen sheet over his naked body; and they seized him. But he pulled free of the linen sheet, and escaped naked.

They led Jesus away to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes gathered together. And Peter had followed Him at a distance, right in to the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the officers, and warming himself at the fire. Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus to put Him to death; and they were not finding any. For many were giving false testimony against Him, and yet their testimony was not consistent. Some stood up and began to give false testimony against Him, saying, "We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.'" Not even in this respect was their testimony consistent. The high priest stood up and came forward and questioned Jesus, saying, "Do You not answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?" But He kept silent, and did not answer. Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" And Jesus said, "I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." Tearing his clothes, the high priest said, "What further need do we have of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy; how does it seem to you?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death. Some began to spit at Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him with their fists, and to say to Him, "Prophecy!" And the officers received Him with slaps in the face.

Amen. May God bless that word to our hearts.

Spurgeon says,

The narrative of our Lord's grief is harrowing in the extreme. One cannot think long of it without tears. In fact, I have personally known what it is to be compelled to leave my meditations upon it from excessive emotion. It is enough to make one's heart break fully to realize the suffering of such a One, so lovely in Himself, and so loving toward us.

What we have here tonight is the account of the arrest of Jesus and the trial of Jesus. Why would they come with clubs and swords? This is not just a rabble or a mob; this is an officially sanctioned party of the Sanhedrin council. Jesus will say later that they had had opportunity to arrest Him in the temple. Roman

soldiers didn't go into the temple. These are men employed as temple police by the Jewish authorities. This is religion, not the state, that is arresting Him here. What had Jesus ever done? What had He ever said, that they should come with clubs and swords to arrest Him? He had never preached insurrection; He had never led a rebel mob against the authorities; He didn't carry a sword; He never issued a *fatwah*, as Islamic imams do on a regular basis about almost anything. His kingdom was not of this world. He didn't lead a band of zealots in some kind of quasi-political revolution to overthrow the Roman authority. He'd never been in trouble with the state, but He is numbered with the transgressors. And there's the heart of it. There's a determination here on the part of providence, but on the part of Jesus, that He take up every aspect, every detail of the description of the Suffering Servant of the Lord.

They come (and Mark uses the word five times) — they come to *seize* Him; to lay hold of Him. It's not without significance that this is a garden, because it was in a garden where sin first entered into the world. It was in a garden where the first Adam fell. It was in a garden where sin gained his victory, and it will be in a garden now where the last Adam will undo what Satan did and gain victory over Satan, and death and hell, and the grave. It's not without significance that the end of our Bibles that we read a description of the new Jerusalem, which is a city, to be sure, but it's a garden city with trees lining on either side of the river bearing fruit every month like a celestial *Harry & David*[™] club.

All of this, as verse 49 reminds us in a very solemn way, all of this is in order that Scripture might be fulfilled. Jesus has yielded Himself to drink of the cup — the cup which hours before, minutes before, He had wrestled in the Garden of Gethsemane in His human consciousness as He come to term with the demands of the covenant of redemption: that He should drink of this cup and drink it to its last dregs. And He will drink it now, and He will drink it to the full, and He will do His Father's will. And He will endure the sufferings of the Lord's Servant in the place of sinners to accomplish all of the demands of the covenant. He will pay the ransom price to set us free.

Mark has his own way of telling this story, because he wants us, I think, to see particular things. He is not interested in the identity of the sword-wielding assailant — John will identify him as Peter, maybe because Peter is the one who is whispering in Mark's ear this Gospel of Mark, and out of respect, perhaps, he passes that little incident over. Nor does he identify the slave of the high priest whose ear was cut off, whom one of the Gospels identifies as Marcus.

No, it is Judas that is to the fore in Mark's Gospel, as though Mark is drawing this contrast of black and white between Judas and Jesus. What greater contrast could you ever draw? It is Judas, one of the twelve, one of the twelve, who betrays Him; who has plotted and schemed with the Sanhedrin for thirty pieces of silver, no less, to hand Him over with a signal: a kiss in the darkness of the Garden of Gethsemane, by night. It is Judas who has brought this band of temple

police and others into the garden.

I want to ask tonight, how can someone in Judas' position ever come to this? Is it possible that you or I could ever be brought to this? Could we ever sell out our Lord for thirty pieces of silver, to hand Him over with kind words and a patronizing gesture? You know, I doubt that six months before Judas would ever, ever, have believed that he would do what he is doing now. But when he was up in Galilee, when he was following our Lord, listening to Him preaching, watching the miracles that He performed, engaging in acts by the power of the Spirit in himself as a disciple, if you'd come to Judas and told him that six months from now he would hand over Jesus, betray Him to certain death, that his name would forever after become a byword for betrayal and perfidy and duplicity and treachery, that he would be known hereafter as the betrayer...I want to ask, how can this come about? We think of Judas in a negative way.

When John tells his version of the gospel, he tells us right up front when he's first introduced, 'He's the betrayer.' But how did it come about? It came about, I think, slowly, little by little. We understand that for months, perhaps for over a year, perhaps for two years, perhaps from the very beginning of his discipleship he dipped his hand into the bag. He was the person who kept the money, and little by little his conscience has become seared and dull, insensitive to the warnings of God, to the voice of conscience.

He was a believer. Yes. Don't let your theology get in the way here. He was a believer — in outward terms now...from a worldly point of view. From the point of view of the disciples, from the point of view of those who knew him, he was a believer. He was one of the twelve. He was one of the disciples. He was a professing child of God. He had obeyed the outward call of Jesus to follow Him. He had seemingly left all and followed after Jesus. He had tasted of the heavenly gift. He had shared in the Holy Spirit. He had tasted of the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the world to come. Yes. It is possible to be a Christian in the world's eyes, in the church's eyes, and still be a son of perdition. I think that is meant to scare us to death! I think that if we are bringing in the doctrine of eternal security to try and bring some comfort in here, we're bringing it in too soon, because as far as these disciples were concerned, Judas was one of them. He was a member of that visible church, in that period of redemptive history.

The doctrine of eternal security is that the elect of God will persevere to the end. But it's possible to be a believer in the eyes of the church and fall away. Do you understand what I'm saying? That you can give an outward profession of faith, you can pass the criterion of the seventy elders of First Presbyterian Church, you can even pass the criterion of your own conscience and still be a son of perdition. I think it's meant to scare us to death. I think it's meant to say to us, "Make your calling and election sure." Don't be too quick to rest on past experiences of grace. Are you trusting with all of your heart and soul in Jesus tonight? Are you repenting of your sins tonight?

What is now evident in this narrative is that Jesus is alone. They all forsake Him. There's a curious little story of (it's probably Mark himself) of a man who flees naked. I have no idea why he's only wearing this outer garment. I don't even want to think about it! But he flees. And the point of the narrative is that Jesus is alone. He is alone now. And you know why He's alone. You understand why He's alone here, that there is no one with Him. Peter is following close, but Peter will forsake Him, too. The rest of the disciples have run away, and you understand why: because there is no other good enough to pay the price of sin. It's not Peter and Jesus; it's not Jesus and John; it's Jesus only. It's Jesus only....

And so comes the trial. You know, Plato wrote — and of course, we're what? 400 years or so before Jesus — he wrote in his *Republic*...he imagines what would happen to a man, a just man, who came from outer space somewhere and into this world. What would happen to such a man, a just man who came into this world? And Plato says,

“A just man will be thrown into prison, scourged and racked, will have his eyes burnt out, and after every kind of torment, be impaled.”

Well, he may well have been writing about Jesus.

Everything about what goes on in this trial is contrary to Jewish law, the law of the Sanhedrin. This Sanhedrin council consisted of 71 members, and the Jews of course refused to honor the Roman occupiers in legal matters, and the Romans were savvy enough to recognize that and to grant them certain powers in matters of religion and even in some matters of politics. In capital cases like this one, they were never to meet at night. Witnesses were to be warned about hearsay and rumor. They would meet in a certain part of the temple, and not in the upper room of the high priest's house. There is contrivance here. There is conspiracy here. Three times Mark says in verses 55 and 56 and 57 — it's like a ringing bell! — they were trying to find evidence against Him. They weren't just trying Him; they were trying to find Him guilty, and they have to resort to false testimony. And even the false testimony doesn't agree. Everything is orchestrated, and there is bribery and there is corruption.

C.S. Lewis once said that the ancient man approached God as the accused person approaches his judge, but the modern man, the roles are reversed. He is the judge; God is in the dock. And that's precisely what's happened here. The only charge that carries any weight at all is the one that Jesus had made about destroying the temple and in three days building it again (referring to the resurrection). It was a statement that alluded to II Samuel 7, where David's Son would build a temple in God's name, and this Son receives the promise, “I will be His Father, and He will be My Son.”

But Jesus is silent. “As a sheep before its shearers is dumb, so He opened not

His mouth.” There was no point in trying to convince this rabble, this mockery of a trial. Even the spitting, and the blindfolding that follows, and the beating is a reminder of Isaiah:

“I gave My back to those who strike, and My cheeks to those who pull out the beard. I hid not My face from disgrace and spitting.”

And then the high priest stands up and asks Him, “Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?” And all of a sudden, Jesus speaks. In all of the otherwise silence of Jesus, He suddenly utters the words, “I am.” And not all commentators are agreed, but it seems to me at least that Jesus in uttering those words would have been reminding His hearers of the name of God Himself: “I Am that I Am.” And He says, “You will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power.” Not only is He Messiah, but He is that Daniel figure of the Son of Man sitting in power and glory.

Alexander McClaren says:

There was for a moment a little rending of the veil, the veil of His flesh; and a remission of some flash of brightness that always tabernacled within Him, the one stray beam of manifest divinity that shot through the crevice, as it were, for an instant, was enough to prostrate with a strange awe even those rude and insensitive men.

It was a clear declaration from Jesus of His identity as the Son of Man, as the Lord of glory Himself, as the Son of God incarnate.

Jesus, you see, is in charge here. He's not just some victim. He's marching forward here to meet Satan on his own ground and defeat him and destroy him.

And they slapped Him. They slapped Him on His face, blindfolding Him and saying, 'Prophesy who did this.'

In Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* there's a very telling point at this point in the narrative of the Gospel as Bach put it to music. “Who is it that hit You?” the choir sings. And do you know the response? “I, I and my sins.” That's what Bach would say. “Who is it that hit You?” Who is it that took his hand and slapped Jesus in the face? And Bach says, “It was I, and my sins did that. My wicked, evil sins did that to Jesus, the altogether lovely one, and fairer than 10,000.

Oh, my friends! Behold Him! Behold Him as He gives Himself for sinners like you and me.

Let's pray together.

Our Father, once again on these Sunday evenings we, having reminded afresh

of the love of our Savior... 'Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown?' We thank You, Lord, for every glimpse and every revelation of the way in which Jesus gave Himself for us. Help us tonight to respond with gratitude, with thanksgiving, with a heart that pours itself out in love to You. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

Please stand; receive the Lord's benediction. — *Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

©2013 First Presbyterian Church.

This transcribed message has been lightly edited and formatted for the Web site. No attempt has been made, however, to alter the basic extemporaneous delivery style, or to produce a grammatically accurate, publication-ready manuscript conforming to an established style template.

Should there be questions regarding grammar or theological content, the reader should presume any website error to be with the webmaster/transcriber/editor rather than with the original speaker. For full copyright, reproduction and permission information, please visit the First Presbyterian Church Copyright, Reproduction & Permission statement.

This article is provided as a ministry of [Third Millennium Ministries](#) (Thirdmill). If you have a question about this article, please [email](#) our *Theological Editor*.

Subscribe to *Biblical Perspectives Magazine*

BPM subscribers receive an email notification each time a new issue is published. Notifications include the title, author, and description of each article in the issue, as well as links directly to the articles. Like BPM itself, *subscriptions are free*. To subscribe to [BPM](#), please select this [link](#).