

Marked for Betrayal, Injustice, and Denial
Message 3 of 5 in the series: "Marked"

A. Immediately following the Last Supper, Jesus informed the disciples that in a few hours they would all desert him and that Peter would deny even knowing Him.

"You will all fall away,' Jesus told them, 'for it is written: "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered." But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.' Peter declared, 'Even if all fall away, I will not.' 'Truly I tell you,' Jesus answered, 'today—yes, tonight—before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times.' **But Peter insisted emphatically, 'Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.' And all the others said the same.**" Mark 14:27-31 (NIV) (see Zechariah 13:7)

IMPORTANT! Courage is more than a feeling. It's a character quality that God develops in us as He walks with us through difficulties and frightening situations. "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. **Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.**" James 1:2-4 (NIV) "For God is working in you, **giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.**" Philippians 2:13 (NLT)

B. Jesus spent the next few hours praying alone in the Garden of Gethsemane. His disciples spent the next few hours sleeping.

"They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I pray.' He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,' he said to them. 'Stay here and keep watch.' Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. **'Abba, Father,' he said, 'everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.'** 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? **Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.**' Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him. 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. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!" Mark 14:32-42 (NIV)

1. "Not what I will, but what you will." "Gethsemane" means "olive press." At the place where olives are crushed to produce olive oil, Jesus surrendered to bearing the crushing burden of all our sins on the cross. **"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us,** so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." 2 Corinthians 5:21 (NIV) "All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. **Yet the Lord laid on him the sins of us all.**" Isaiah 53:6 (NLT)
2. "Abba, Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me." It was NOT possible for Jesus to avoid drinking the bitter cup of suffering on the cross because there was no other way to save filthy, rotten sinners like us from God's wrath. This is also why we must surrender our lives to Jesus to be saved. No one else can take our place. **"There is salvation in no one else!** God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved." Acts 4:12 (NLT)
3. "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." We must watch and pray so that we're following the desires of the Holy Spirit, NOT the desires of our flesh. "So I say, **let the Holy Spirit guide your lives.** Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions." Galatians 5:16-17 (NLT) **"Stay alert!** Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour." 1 Peter 5:8 (NLT)

C. As soon as Jesus finished praying, He was betrayed by Judas and arrested.

"And immediately, even as Jesus said this, Judas, one of the twelve disciples, arrived with a crowd of men armed with swords and clubs. They had been sent by the leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and the elders. The traitor, Judas, had given them a prearranged signal: 'You will know which one to arrest when I greet him with a kiss. Then you can take him away under guard.' **As soon as they arrived, Judas walked up to Jesus. 'Rabbi!' he exclaimed, and gave him the kiss.** Then the others grabbed Jesus and arrested him. But one of the men with Jesus pulled out his sword and struck the high priest's slave, slashing off his

ear. Jesus asked them, **'Am I some dangerous revolutionary, that you come with swords and clubs to arrest me? Why didn't you arrest me in the Temple? I was there among you teaching every day. But these things are happening to fulfill what the Scriptures say about me.'** Then all his disciples deserted him and ran away. One young man following behind was clothed only in a long linen shirt. When the mob tried to grab him, he slipped out of his shirt and ran away naked." Mark 14:43-52 (NLT)

1. Religious hypocrisy is ugly. "You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote, **'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship is a farce, for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.'**" Matthew 15:7-9 (NLT) (*Isaiah 29:13*)
2. Jesus didn't need His disciples' protection. He was not a victim. The ONLY reason the mob was able to arrest Jesus was because He allowed it. "Put your sword back in its place,' Jesus said to him, 'for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? **But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?'**" Matthew 26:52-54 (NIV)

D. After Jesus was arrested, He was taken to the home of the High Priest where an illegal trial was held by the Sanhedrin. Their predetermined goal was to find Jesus guilty of a crime punishable by death.

"They took Jesus to the high priest's home where the leading priests, the elders, and the teachers of religious law had gathered. Meanwhile, Peter followed him at a distance and went right into the high priest's courtyard. There he sat with the guards, warming himself by the fire. Inside, the leading priests and the entire high council were trying to find evidence against Jesus, so they could put him to death. But they couldn't find any. **Many false witnesses spoke against him, but they contradicted each other. Finally, some men stood up and gave this false testimony: 'We heard him say, "I will destroy this Temple made with human hands, and in three days I will build another, made without human hands.'**" But even then they didn't get their stories straight! Then the high priest stood up before the others and asked Jesus, 'Well, aren't you going to answer these charges? What do you have to say for yourself?' But Jesus was silent and made no reply. Then the high priest asked him, 'Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?' Jesus said, **'I am. And you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God's right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven.'** Then the high priest tore his clothing to show his horror and said, 'Why do we need other witnesses? You have all heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?' 'Guilty!' they all cried. 'He deserves to die!' Then some of them began to spit at him, and they blindfolded him and beat him with their fists. 'Prophecy to us,' they jeered. And the guards slapped him as they took him away." Mark 14:53-65 (NLT)

1. It was assumed that the Sanhedrin, the High Court of the Jews, was just and fair. Sadly, these leaders broke the very laws they were supposed to uphold because they were much more concerned about maintaining positions of power and prestige than determining whether Jesus really was the Messiah. "You must not convict anyone of a crime on the testimony of only one witness. The facts of the case must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses... The judges must investigate the case thoroughly. **If the accuser has brought false charges against his fellow Israelite, you must impose on the accuser the sentence he intended for the other person. In this way, you will purge such evil from among you.**" Deuteronomy 19:15 & 18-19 (NLT)
2. Jesus' answer to the High Priest's question horrified the High Priest and made the Sanhedrin lose their minds because Jesus rightly referred to Himself using the divine name God gave Moses at the burning bush. "Moses said to God, 'Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you," and they ask me, "What is his name?" Then what shall I tell them?' God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: "I AM has sent me to you.'"**"** Exodus 3:13-14 (NIV) The Sanhedrin had no idea who they were talking to.

E. While Jesus was on trial at the High Priest's home, Peter denied even knowing Jesus three times, just as Jesus predicted.

"Meanwhile, Peter was in the courtyard below. One of the servant girls who worked for the high priest came by and noticed Peter warming himself at the fire. She looked at him closely and said, 'You were one of those with Jesus of Nazareth.' But Peter denied it. 'I don't know what you're talking about,' he said, and he went out into the entryway. Just then, a rooster crowed. When the servant girl saw him standing there, she began telling the others, 'This man is definitely one of them!' But Peter denied it again. A little later some of the other bystanders confronted Peter and said, 'You must be one of them, because you are a Galilean.' Peter swore, 'A curse on me if I'm lying—I don't know this man you're talking about!' And immediately the rooster

crowed the second time. Suddenly, Jesus' words flashed through Peter's mind: 'Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny three times that you even know me.' And he broke down and wept."

Mark 14:66-72 (NLT)

1. We must never be prideful or confident in our own strength to resist temptation. "Therefore **let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.**" 1 Corinthians 10:12 (NKJV)
2. We can be very confident the Holy Spirit will empower us to be bold witnesses for Jesus. "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, **but of power and of love and of a sound mind.**" 2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV)
"The members of the council were **amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John**, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus." Acts 4:13 (NLT)

John Schmidt • 03-22-26 • john@centeringlives.com

Connect Group Questions:

1. Read Mark 14:27-31 & 66-72 and Zechariah 13:7. Since Peter believed that Jesus really was God in the flesh, why did he have such a hard time believing what Jesus told him about his immediate future? How would you have responded if you had been in Peter's place?
2. Why are we warned to not trust in our own strength/ability to resist temptation? (1 Corinthians 10:12) What/who should we trust instead? (2 Timothy 1:7, Philippians 2:13, Acts 1:8)
3. Read Mark 14:32-42. What did Jesus mean when He said, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Galatians 5:16-17) Why is it necessary for us to watch and pray to combat the desires of our flesh? (1 Peter 5:9-10)
4. What did Jesus mean when He said, "Abba, Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."? (Isaiah 53:6, 2 Corinthians 5:21) What do you think caused Jesus to be in such anguish while He was praying?
5. Read Mark 14:43-52. Share a time in your life when you were betrayed by a close friend. How did it make you feel? Why did Jesus allow Judas to hand Him over to be arrested? Why didn't He allow the disciples to defend Him? (Matthew 26:52-54)
6. Read Mark 14:53-65, Deuteronomy 19:15-19, and Exodus 3:13-14. What drove the Sanhedrin to break their own laws and violate their own codes of conduct by holding a kangaroo court in the middle of the night? What did Jesus say that caused them to lose their minds and condemn Him to death?
7. Read Acts 4:12 and John 14:6. On the basis of your discussion today, why is it necessary to place our faith only in Jesus as our Lord and Savior? What's wrong with believing there are many ways to God as long as someone is sincere about what they believe?