

Sermon for August 30, 2009

Boscobel & Mt. Zion UMCs

Text: Mark 14:32-52

Title: "The Olive Grove"

Introduction: Just the other day ... and when I say, "Just the other day..." please understand that I mean, "This happens all of the time!" The other day, Sarah was attempting, as parents often do, to communicate with me what was going to be happening the next day with the schedules of our daughters. When Sarah started talking about said daughter, my mind went to where I thought she was going with the conversation. I jumped to the conclusion that I was supposed to attend one of our daughter's events, not understanding that Sarah was going to be there as well. So, imagine my surprise when I was getting ready to head out the door and Sarah looked at me like I hadn't been listening to her carefully; because I hadn't been listening to her carefully.

Do you ever do that? Do you ever jump ahead of what someone is saying with your own assumptions as to what was going to actually happen? You kind of have an idea in your head how it's going to go and then you miss how it's REALLY going to go? When we make these assumptions, it affects how we do everything. It affects what we say and how we communicate. It affects how we act and our expectations of the people around us.

Today, we continue our tour of Israel and, like last week, we are in the Jerusalem area. The first four weeks we spent along the Mediterranean coast and in the region of Galilee. Now, for the final four weeks of our series we will be spending time in and around the city of Jerusalem and studying parts of the last week of Jesus' life here on earth.

Last week, you will recall, we were at the Temple, where Jesus cleared out the money-changers and the sacrifice sellers and on the Mt. of Olives where Jesus taught the disciples about faith, prayer and grudges. Oh, and Jesus killed off a fig tree that didn't bear fruit. We also learned that, according to the scripture in Mark 11, that if anyone is in the process of holding a grudge, they are of no use to the Kingdom of God. These events happened on Monday and Tuesday of Jesus' final week as a human being.

Right now, I invite you to take the insert out of your passport. On one side you will find our scriptures for today and on the other you will see an outline of how we are going to look at the scriptures. You will see fill-in-the-blanks that we hope you will take time to fill in. For most people, writing down what you hear and see helps it stick with us a little better. So, fill the blank spaces in as they appear on the screens and then write down whatever else you feel is important for you and your faith journey. When you get home, please refrigerate. For those of you listening on line, pause the audio here and download our passport/program so you also can follow along and fill in those blanks.

Before we go any further ... LET'S PRAY!

Fast forward this week to Thursday evening. Jesus and his disciples celebrate the Passover meal in the Upper Room (picture). This is historically where many believe that Jesus and his disciples would have met for this special celebration and worship meal. At supper Jesus gives new meaning to the bread and the cup, offering himself as the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of the world. Jesus then reveals that one of his disciples will betray him and that he must die.

- I. Jesus' Prediction and Peter's Denial (vs. 27-31)
- A. As Jesus and the disciples leave the Upper Room and the city, Jesus shares some Scripture with them from the Book of Zechariah.
1. The Scripture says that God will strike the Shepherd and the sheep will scatter...
  2. Two schools of thought here: 1) Jesus was predicting the future and letting the disciples know that they were about to be really scared and they would not be able to live up to their upcoming claims (wait for it); or, 2) Jesus was encouraging them to run away when He was arrested, so that none of them would get arrested.
- B. He also shares a follow-up statement: "But after I am raised from the dead, I will go ahead of you to Galilee and meet you there."
1. This is the 5<sup>th</sup> time, according to Mark, that Jesus has announced to his disciples that He is going to be crucified, but then raised from the dead.
  2. I wonder if the disciples actually heard Jesus...
- C. Do you all remember what the disciples had as an assumption for why they were going to Jerusalem?
1. The way the disciples read their Scriptures, the Messiah or 'the anointed One' of God, would be a great warrior who would conquer all of the Israelite nations enemies and oppressors and set Israel free.
  2. Remember that Peter had answered Jesus in Caesarea Philippi that Jesus was the Messiah. And, of course, Jesus told them not to tell anyone else.
  3. Ever since that moment, the disciples have a plan in their heads that they are going to Jerusalem to take over the nation and start conquering enemies and setting the Jewish people free!
  4. They caught a glimpse of what it was going to be like on Palm Sunday ... parade, shouts of praise to Jesus as the Son of God, etc.
  5. The disciple's actions and words reflected this assumption about Jesus the king of the Jews...
- D. That's why Peter replies to Jesus prediction that all the disciples will scatter when Jesus is arrested with, "Even if everyone else deserts you, I never will."
1. Peter wasn't listening to what Jesus was telling him, Peter was thinking in terms of Jesus and his disciples being political leaders in the country.
  2. There was no room in Peter's thinking for Jesus to die!
- E. Then, Jesus tells Peter that he will deny Jesus three times before the rooster crows twice!

1. Again, Peter's response is from his human will ... "Not even if I have to die with you! I will never deny you!"
2. The other disciples vowed the same ... why? Because there is no way that the future King of Israel is going to be arrested and certainly not crucified!
3. I'm sure Jesus just shook his head...

Well, that's where we pick up our Scripture for today ... Jesus and the disciples are leaving the city of Jerusalem after their Passover meal. Here's what it says:

### **READ MARK 14:32-42 NOW!**

- II. Gethsemane = oil press (vs. 32-42)
- A. This is preparation time in Gethsemane (oil press ... probably a place where the olives from the Mt. of Olives were pressed into oil). Jesus knows that he is in for a long night, so he goes to his Father in prayer.
  - B. First, he leaves most of the disciples at the garden gate and takes Peter, James and John (his inner circle) with him further into the garden. He invites his closest buddies to stay near him and watch.
    1. Scriptures tell us to watch when we pray ... that doesn't mean to keep your eyes open to pray.
    2. It does mean for us to stay alert spiritually to how we are doing and what God is trying to teach or show us!
  - C. Here Jesus gives us a great formula for following God's will ... 3 times Jesus pleads with his "Daddy" or "Papa" (Abba Father) to take away this cup of suffering, but always finishes with, "but, Your will be done."
  - D. Now, chances are we won't face execution for our faith, but we do face problems... people who rub us the wrong way, difficulty connecting others to God, challenges in our own faith journey, like falling back into the things we used to do, etc.
  - E. Here's Jesus formula for staying on track with God as shown in the Garden of Gethsemane:
    1. **Keep Watch** (v.34) = stay awake and aware of moral attacks ... be full of integrity no matter what!
    2. **Pray to God** (v.35) = This gives us strength to stay full of integrity and to be like Christ.
    3. **Seek Support of Friends and Loved Ones** (vs. 33, 37, 40, 41) = We need a support group with a similar faith ... we need someone to be strong when we are weak ... accountability!
    4. **Focus on the Purpose God has Given You** (v.36) = Helps us do God's will and not our own!
  - F. All of this time in the garden is preparation time for what is to come, but again, all of the disciples are working with their assumption in mind...

**READ MARK 14:43-52 NOW!**

- III. A Kiss and a Sword (vs. 43-52)
- A. Did you hear that? Judas, one of the disciples ... one of the disciples that was in Caesarea Philippi just a few weeks earlier who stood in the shadow of the Temple for Caesar Augustus, the shrines to Pan and the history of Baal worship and heard Peter proclaim and Jesus not deny that Jesus was the Messiah/Christ/Anointed One; and had the conversations with the other disciples about how their scriptures told of the Messiah being the One who would set their people free ... brought with him to the Garden of Gethsemane “a mob that was armed with swords and clubs”.
1. Why? Because Judas was acting and living on an assumption of what and Who Jesus was.
  2. Judas had expectations of what Jesus was going to do ... if Jesus was going to conquer all of their nation’s enemies, Jesus would have to have some military might/physical power!
  3. In order to arrest Jesus, Judas had to bring some power of his own.
  4. But, the disciples didn’t carry weapons, right!?
- B. Then, how did Peter (according to Luke) lop off the ear of the high priest’s servant!?
1. Any chance that the other 11 disciples had started living their lives out of the assumption of Who Jesus was?
  2. They might have started thinking that in order for them to do their part in Jesus taking over their country and conquering their enemies and bringing freedom; they had better start arming themselves.
  3. Peter was carrying a sword. I wonder if the other disciples were armed as well...
- C. Jesus response to Judas’ kiss and his mob armed with swords and clubs was: “Am I some dangerous criminal, that you come armed with swords and clubs to arrest me?” I was in the Temple every day. Why didn’t you just arrest me there?
- D. All of these followers
- E. All of these followers of Jesus were acting on their assumption about who Jesus was, what He would/could or wouldn’t/couldn’t do and what they expected of him... they were all wrong! They were not awake Spiritually!
- IV. Are You Awake?
- A. I wonder what all we have in our heads as assumptions about Jesus?
- B. I wonder how many times we think or say that Jesus can’t do this or that because we’ve never seen it done before. We assume something else...

- C. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus asked his closest friends to watch and pray with him. They couldn't do it. If they had stayed awake and heard Jesus' prayer:
  - 1. They would have heard that Jesus was ready to die and do the will of His Father.
  - 2. They would have caught the insight they needed that this Kingdom that Jesus was talking about was not the same as the kingdom they were talking about.
  - 3. If they would have stayed awake, maybe they would have been on the same page or wavelength as Jesus.
- D. Are we? Are we awake with our eyes of faith? Are our eyes wide open to what Jesus wants to do next? Are we on the same page as Jesus even if Jesus decides to do something we've never seen before?
- E. I really don't want to hear Jesus say to us, "Could you not stay awake with me for even an hour?"
- F. I believe that Jesus has great plans for BMZ Church to serve the Kingdom of God ... I hope and pray that our assumptions about who Jesus is and what Jesus can and can't do don't hinder us from being all that God wants us to be!!

Next Week we are back within the city walls of Jerusalem as we pick up where we left off today...

Let's Pray!