

## Disappointed, Betrayed, and Denied

“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.’” (Mark 14:32-34 NIV)

(The events of this day during Holy Week are recorded in Matthew 26:17-75, Mark 14:12-72, Luke 22:7-62, and John 13:1-38.) Maundy Thursday (the Thursday before Easter) commemorates the washing of the feet and the Last Supper. It is the point in Holy Week that marks a somber turn.

On this day, we see Jesus disappointed, betrayed, and denied.

These are emotions we all can relate to in our own lives. I don't have to reflect too far in the past to identify a specific time I felt disappointed. Let down by someone I thought was there to support me.

A promise broken. An expectation unfulfilled. A dream derailed.

Jesus felt deep disappointment on that Thursday before the crucifixion. As recorded in today's scripture, He simply asked His disciples, His closest followers, the men with whom He shared the Last Supper to stay and keep watch. If you continue reading in the scriptures, you find that the disciples couldn't stay awake for just one hour while Jesus prayed – so much for keeping watch, right?

When I read this, I am quick to shake my head and harshly judge those disciples. I thought they were the faithful. Then, I thought of the times I've disappointed Jesus. Over and over again. Jesus went back to check on the disciples three times that night with the same result and He comes back to me far more times than that with similar results – disappointment.

Disappointment can be unintentional. Betrayal is deliberate.

Betrayed. I have felt this too. When someone close to me says one thing to my face and then says the opposite to someone else. When a person sits silently in front of me and later posts their angst for all to see and comment about. As hurtful and discouraging as this is there is no comparison to the betrayal of Jesus.

“Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: ‘The one I kiss is

the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.’ Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, ‘Rabbi!’ and kissed him. The men seized Jesus and arrested him.” (Mark 14:44)

Betrayed with a kiss. Prophesied in advance and carried out in the Garden of Gethsemane. Shackled and led away like a criminal in front of the disciples. Remember the disciples? The faithful. They saw it all. The teaching. The preaching. The loving. The miracles. Certainly, they would stand by His side during this time of judgement ...

Then came the denial.

I have been denied things in my life, but I have never known the denial Christ experienced – to have a relationship unacknowledged, disowned, erased.

“ ‘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 14:30,31)

“... ‘You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus,’ she said. But he denied it. ‘I don’t know or understand what you’re talking about,’ he said, and went out into the entryway.” (Mark 14:67,68)

I have denied Jesus too. Have you? Maybe not vocally, but in my silence. There have been times when things are said or done in my presence that I know are wrong and against God’s teaching. Yet, I did not speak up for what was right. This is still denial. I am no better than Peter.

On that Thursday so long ago Jesus was disappointed, betrayed, and denied.

Today, across our city, state, country, and the world He continues to be disappointed, betrayed, and denied. You can see it clearly when you read or watch the news. However, He comes back to us time and again - giving us chance after chance.

Tomorrow – and each day after – let’s change that. Let’s do our best and intentionally make Him proud, included, and lauded by the way we live our lives.

We can stay here and keep watch.

No more disappointment.

No more betrayal.

No more denial.

That can stop with me and with you.

Dear Lord,

I acknowledge that fact that as a Christian I have often unintentionally disappointed you. I have betrayed you through my intentional choices. I have denied you in my silence. Please help me be more focused on my thoughts, words, and actions to deliberately bring you the praise, honor, and glory you so richly deserve.

Amen.