



Security in Christ

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Mark 14:12-21

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¹² And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, "Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?" ¹³ And he sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him, ¹⁴ and wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' ¹⁵ And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; there prepare for us." ¹⁶ And the disciples set out and went to the city and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.

¹⁷ And when it was evening, he came with the twelve. ¹⁸ And as they were reclining at table and eating, Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me." ¹⁹ They began to be sorrowful and to say to him one after another, "Is it I?" ²⁰ He said to them, "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the dish with me. ²¹ For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born."

(Pastor Prays)

William Borden was a rich kid. He grew up with luxury and privilege. His father became rich working the silver mines out in Colorado. And although he was incredibly rich and his family was really well-off and well-known, his mother was a born-again Christian. She pointed him to Christ. In fact, she took him to church every Sunday. She took him to the Moody Church in Chicago. Moody Church was where Dwight L. Moody preached, and when he died, they renamed the church after him. Don't do that. But it became the Moody Memorial Church. I don't think it's good to name a church after a person. But anyway, his mother took him Moody

Church, and there he heard the fiery preacher named R.A.Tory preach the gospel that gripped his heart. As a teenager, he gave his life to Christ. When he graduated from high school, his mom and dad sent him on an around-the-world trip called the Grand Tour. That's what all the rich kids did back in the day. And it was on that trip, when he was touring the world, that he came face-to-face with suffering for the very first time. And seeing humans suffer was something that God used to call him into missions. He came home after that trip, and his mom and dad wanted him to be a successful businessman like his dad. They sent him off to Yale University. There at Yale, he started Bible studies, and was part of ministries and gave his life to ministry. With that desire still burning, he played football, was charismatic, good looking, and he was rich in anybody's book. He would one day be a successful person, yet God had called him to missions. When he graduated from Yale, the only Presbyterian school that we had by way of a seminary was Princeton Seminary. William went to Princeton at the turn of the century when B.B. Warfield, the great theologian, and Jay Gracian Machan were there teaching the gospel and how to deal with the Bible. His faith was solidified, and he graduated from seminary. But he remembered the Muslim people in China. God had given him a heart for the Muslims in China. But to reach Muslims, he needed to learn how to speak Arabic. So he went off to Cairo, Egypt, and it was in Cairo, Egypt, while he was learning the language, that one morning he woke up with a headache. The headache grew worse, and the symptoms became bad, and he was diagnosed with cerebral meningitis. One hundred twenty years ago, medicine was not what it is today, and all they could do was make him feel comfortable and hope he would survive. He fought and fought. He called for his mom and dad to come, but they didn't get there on time. Three weeks into his sickness, William Borden, at the age of 25, died, the heir to the Borden fortune.

A lot of people in the newspaper during that day and time, all across the world and especially here in the United States, would talk about how this young man's life was wasted. After the funeral, his mom did what moms will sometimes do: she went and found his Bible and flipped through it, thinking about her child. And there, on the inside cover of the Bible, he had written down three phrases: "No reserve. No retreat. No regret."

I want to live like that. How can I? How can you, from this day forward, live your life with no reserve, no retreat, and no regret?

I think this passage right here in front of us helps get us there. Let's pick up some context here. We are in Mark chapter 13. Mark 13 provides the longest teaching in the entire Gospel of Mark. It's the longest teaching Jesus ever gave. It's called the Olivet Discourse because Jesus, with four disciples, was sitting on the Mount of Olives, looking over Jerusalem and especially the temple. And as they looked over, the disciples were asking Him questions because, at the very beginning of Mark 13, Jesus has predicted the destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem. And back in verse four, the four disciples asked Him, "When will these things happen?" Today, in this passage, Jesus gives us part of the answer. In these few verses, He gives us instructions on how to live our lives with no reserve, no retreat, and no regret. How do we do it?

Live for Christ, No Matter the Cost

Regardless of your age, I want to challenge you to live your life for Jesus, no matter the cost. Let's go to the passage and find out what it means. If we're going to live our lives for Christ, no matter the cost, how do we live? Here's the first point, number one:

Live as a Learner

Join me down there in verse 28. Notice what Jesus says from the fig tree lesson. That word *lesson* is the word *parable*. It means to teach. The fig tree is the only tree in Palestine that went through the cycles like we have out here in our oak trees. When the fall comes around and the leaves start to turn, you know that fall is here. Winter is on the way when the leaves start to drop off, and the trees look dormant. But there comes a time when you see the little buds coming out, and you know that spring is on the way. That's what Jesus is saying here: look at the fig tree. You know the cycle. You know natural law. Typically, this is how we learn.

There are really three ways that we learn. The first way is we learn by experience. Some of you in this room are so hard-headed you never have learned an easy lesson. All your lessons are the hard way. That's learning by experience. Somebody tells you that that stove is hot, and although it is glowing, you don't believe that stove is hot, and you reach up and touch it and get

burnt. Now, you have learned for yourself by experience. “You know what, that stove is hot, I'm not doing that again.” So we learn by experience.

We also learn by something called natural law. That's what Jesus is using right here with the fig tree. He's saying that there are certain laws of nature that God has put in place, and He's given us those laws so that we might learn. Paul talks about this in Romans chapter one when he says to look at creation. There are things you can learn by looking at creation. For instance, you don't have to be a Christian to know that murder—killing somebody—is wrong. You don't have to be a Christian. You know that's wrong just by natural law. You don't have to be a Christian to know that stealing private property is wrong. Natural law teaches you that. Or let's bring it to the headlines of our day and time. When you flip on the television and you're watching ESPN, you might happen to come up on a swim meet. It's a women's swim meet, and you're watching it. As you're looking there, you see a man in a woman's bathing suit competing in a woman's swim meet. You don't have to be a Christian to think there's something wrong there. That is natural law.

We learn by experience. We learn by natural law. We also learn by God's law. Natural law points us to God's law. That's what Romans chapter one is; Paul says that when you look at creation, you find out there is a Creator, who is God. And then God's law is given to us in the Old Testament. More specifically, God's law is given to us in the 10 Commandments. Go through them, and you'll see what the 10 Commandments do. Not only do they tell us the holiness of God or how to live, but the 10 Commandments are there to show us our need for the gospel. Here's what I mean. Have you ever broken any one of the 10 Commandments? Have you ever coveted anything? Look, if I see a 1965 Pontiac GTO going down the road, if I could see out those windows and saw one, I could covet it while I'm preaching. That's how sinful we are. I have broken the 10 Commandments and am breaking the 10 Commandments. God's law shows me that I am not perfect, and I am under condemnation from God. I need help, and that situation takes me to the gospel. The law of God is there to show us that we need the Son of God. The law of God points us to the gospel of God.

What is the gospel of God? The gospel goes like this. Our good God created all we see. He

created all of us in His image, man and woman. That's why we believe that people are to have dignity, and that fuels our view on pro-life. That's why we believe every embryo has dignity because God created it in the image of God. But that image of God in us has been disfigured. It's stained. It's marred by our own sin. So much so that we are not really children of God when we are born into this world; we are born under the law. The law has pointed out we are sinners, and we are alienated from God. We have broken the law of God, and we are under condemnation. That's why it's important when you talk about the gospel; it's not therapy for your soul. It's not something that is gonna make you happy or healthy or wise or kind or make you better. All of those things might happen, but that's not our big issue. Our issue is that we are sinners under the condemnation of God. We are on our way to hell. We are justly condemned to hell because we are sinners. And the gospel says that God, in His goodness, reached out to us in Christ. Man is a sinner. Christ Jesus, who is the perfect Son of God, lived a perfect life. He kept the 10 Commandments because we break them. He kept all the laws and earned full righteousness. Not only that, He goes to the cross, and at the cross, He goes from keeping the law of God to actually being the convict and taking the punishment as our substitute. That's what the cross is about. All of the punishment and judgment of God has fallen on Jesus, and He's given us His righteousness. So the gospel says that if you trust that Jesus did that for you, then you are safe. You understand that it is not just our experience. It is not just natural law. It's God's law that takes us to Christ. We need Christ. We live as learners. There's something else I want to point out to you in this passage. Number two:

Live Now in Light of Then

We live in this moment in light of what's coming in the future. We don't live in the future. We live now, but we do so in light of then. Let me show you where I get that in verses 29 and 30. You have to read it on two levels. Stay with me here. You have to look through it like if you walked up to your desk and there's a giant pair of binoculars sitting on your desk, you would look at them. Look at the binoculars. But after looking at the binoculars, you would raise them up and look through and see way into the future. Join me there in verse 29: *So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates.* What are the things He's talking about? To get that, Jesus is answering a question all the way back from verse four. So turn the page back to verse four: *"Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the*

sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?" What things have Jesus just predicted? The fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple. So when will these things happen? Verse 29 says that when you see the destruction of the temple, the destruction of Jerusalem when you see that, you know that He is near. Now notice, this is something it says in verse 30. It's important down in verse 30: *Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.* A generation is 40 years. This generation will not pass away until all these things have happened. How do we interpret them? Jesus is saying to His disciples that there are people here who will live to see the destruction of the temple that will happen in 70 AD a generation 40 years later. Jesus says that when you see these things happen, you know He's near. Take those binoculars, and you put them up to your eyes and you look into the future because the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem is a foreshadowing of the coming great tribulation that will accompany the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. So we live now in light of then.

How do we live now in light of then? I'd like to offer up a couple of suggestions. I think we need to live with urgency. If there is something to be said, say it. If there's a reconciliation to be made, make it. If there is a brother that you've been alienated from and you feel that conviction, go to them. Make things right. If there is a wrong that has been committed, go today and make it right. We live now in light of then. Live with urgency.

I think we live pursuing personal holiness, that you actually take what you believe seriously. That there is a transformation, and you want to live your life for Christ from this day forward, that you actually do want to be a man of conviction, knowing the Bible and living and loving the people around you in the name of Jesus. We live with personal holiness.

I think we need to live with intense discipleship. That you actually do become part of the fabric of this congregation. That you're are finding a couple of people that you can pour into, and they pour into you. That you are growing in the Word, growing in strength, growing in prayer. That you are learning.

I'll give you another one. I think we need to live sharing the gospel. You hear it every single week. God, man, Christ, response. God is holy; man is a sinner. Jesus Christ saves, and it happens by grace through faith. You ought to be able to share that. Let's just say you're not

comfortable. You can invite your neighbor to come to church at Hickory Grove. Because when you invite them, they hear the gospel. We live sharing the gospel.

Let me give you another thing. If we live now in light of then, you need to get used to being an oddball. Just get used to it. People who are not believers or people who are not believers with this conviction in the Bible are not going to understand your way of life. It doesn't make sense that you won't let your children go to a certain event. It doesn't make sense that you think that there are two genders by God's good design, male and female. And doesn't make sense that you think sex is reserved for marriage. Or just pick a couple of things from the Bible. If you live according to the Bible, it's not going to make sense to the people around you. Just get used to being an oddball.

I'll give you one more, and then I'll move on to the next. We need to rejoice in the persecution. Remember what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount? Do you know the Sermon on the Mount? It's in Matthew chapters five through seven. You should memorize the Sermon on the Mount. Just do it, only two or three verses a week. Memorize what Jesus has taught in Matthew 5:11-12. Jesus said, *"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."* Look, we live for Christ, no matter the cost. Live as a learner. Live now in light of then. Live now, thinking about the future of Christ's coming. I'll give you one last one, number three:

Live for What Matters

I want you to live for what matters. You'll find that over in verse 31. Let me just read verse 31 and give you three admonitions out of verse 31. Let me read it, verse 31, Jesus said, *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."* There's a new Heaven and a new earth coming. These others will be destroyed. They will pass away. But my Words will not pass away. So what do we learn? There are three things. Here's the first one: beware of the temporary, what doesn't last. Heaven and earth will pass away. It will be gone. If you grew up in Charlotte, or you moved away for 30 years and you have come back to Charlotte, all you can say is that it's changed. Everything's changed. Last night, I was binge-watching a documentary on how the Romans built all the roads through occupied Britain in the third and fourth

centuries. It's fascinating stuff, right? I'm watching that, and so much of what they did they thought would last forever, but now we're having to dig it out of the ground to find it. Find out what's permanent. What is lasting? What can I build my life on? What can I give my money to? Can I put my children in the right direction? What should I do with them? What can I stake my life on? What does the old song say? On Christ, the solid rock I stand, all other ground is what? Sinking sand. Look, don't fritter your life away on the temporary. Beware of the temporary.

I'll give you another admonition from this passage. Be strong in the Word. What does Jesus say in verse 31? Heaven and earth will pass away. My Word will not pass away. Look, we say it every Sunday: the grass withers and the flowers fade, but the Word of our God stands forever. You've at least memorized one verse in your life. What do we believe about the Word? That the Word is the Word of God. It is a foundation to stand on. The Word of God is food for my soul. The Word of God is water to quench my thirst. The Word of God is the tutor. It teaches me the way in life. The Word of God is a coach that spurs me on. The Word of God is laid out like a map, and it leads me to Christ. The Word of God is a sword in my hand for my defense. The Word of God is a shield in front of me that protects me from sin. I've hidden the Word of God in my heart. Why? That I might not sin against Him. I would just challenge you to be strong in the Word. Commit yourself to reading the Word, to memorizing the Word, to meditating on the Word. Beware of the temporary. Be strong in the Word. And I'll just give you this last admonition from verse 31: Be centered on Christ. What does He say? It's an astounding thing here in verse 31. Jesus makes a fantastic claim. That Heaven and earth, all that's gonna pass away. He says, "But I am God, my Word will not pass away. My Word is more enduring than creation. My Word is more solid than the Romans' marble. My Word is more reliable than steel." Hear Him say it. "If any man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, from his inmost being, shall flow rivers of living water." Look, we live for Christ, no matter what. Live as a learner, learning what He teaches us. We live now, thinking about the second coming. We live in light of then. And we live our lives for what matters: Jesus Christ and all of eternity. What do you live your life for? Christ. Live now in light of eternity.

(Pastor prays)

