

## Life Group Notes 16 February 2025 - The Naked Man

Preached by Jem <https://www.npbc.org.nz/sermons/the-naked-man/>

Today we continue the series through the gospel of Mark, something that was started at church toward the end of last year and we have taken a break from it through the Christmas period. Now we continue in Mark 14, with some intriguing stories around the final days of Jesus ministry before he is arrested and tried.

At times in life we feel let down by people. Maybe someone didn't keep a promise, failed to follow through on a commitment or didn't arrive when they said they would. Sometimes, there can be valid reasons for these things, but many times it's simply because priorities are wrong. Didn't have the time, didn't want to spend the money, too tired or just too much effort – we have all heard these sorts of excuses.

**Q: Can you share one of your big “let downs” that you have experienced in life? Why do you think the other person didn't keep their commitment?**

(can be a work situation, a family situation, maybe even when you didn't keep your own commitment)

**Read: Mark 14:32-52 (may be good to give some verses to a few people in the group, it's a long one)**

**Q: What seems odd about the last 2 verses? Why did you think the man reacted this way?**

**Q: Often we break promises for small things that are largely inconsequential, how do you think you may have reacted if you were in this more serious situation?**

These two verses highlight the fallen human condition- every person for themselves. Something deep within us will always fight for our survival and even the most devoted followers of Christ can flee when the going gets tough.

**Q: Can you recall times when the disciples swore their devotion to Jesus, saying that they would never leave Him? (Read Mark 14:27-29 What did Peter say?)**

Like Peter, we can also make BIG pledges to Jesus Christ, then when the going gets tough, we turn and flee. We might not be running from death like the disciples, but we definitely have our own obstacles that we turn and flee from. Our promises can in some ways be like that man – naked and empty if we don't follow through.

We declare that Jesus is Lord and that we will do anything for Him, but then when it comes to things like... wealth, greed, sex and sexuality, human slavery, forgiveness, anger, generosity, service, and pride – we can often flee from what God wants. It's everyone for themselves!

When we flee from obedience found in God's Word, we are no different to the disciples fleeing Jesus on the night that Jesus needed their support.

3 Areas of Weakness:

- 1) The danger of SLEEP
- 2) The danger of FIGHTING
- 3) The danger of RUNNING

1) The danger of SLEEP

**Scan over verses 32-42 again – What did Jesus ask His disciples to do? What happened?**

Jesus takes the disciples to Gethsemane, then Jesus asks Peter, James and John to keep watch and pray while he himself prays over what is about to take place.

**Q: What is Jesus' rebuke to Peter in v38?**

**Q: What do you think the temptation is that Peter (or us for that matter) may fall into? What does he mean when he says the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak?**

**Q: Do you think the actual issue in this passage is sleeping or is Jesus speaking about something spiritual?**

Sleep is a normal natural thing that has been created by God as part of our daily rhythms – so why is Jesus so upset that the disciples are asleep? Because things like sleep are not sinful in and of themselves – they are only sinful when they are getting in the way of God.

**Q: Do you find it hard to get up a little earlier and do a morning devotional with God? Can you share any wisdom with the group on how to get this right?**

Our flesh is weak and our flesh will continually tempt us to take the easy way out. But will never grow in the Lord if we can't dedicate regular time to just being and sitting in His presence.

2) The danger of fighting

**Read: Mark 14: 44-47**

It's so easy to look at things through our human understanding rather than looking at things from a Kingdom of God perspective. Jesus has explicitly told the disciples that he is going to suffer, that he is going to be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, that he will be killed and then on the third day he will rise again. None of what is happening should surprise the disciples. Yet, one of them fights back and tries to stop what God has ordained.

**Q: Are we any different today when it comes to the commands of God and what he has ordained for his followers?**

**What are some of the kingdom principals that we struggle with today? Discuss**

Examples:

Do you love your enemies? Do you forgive?

Do we worry about tomorrow when God says he will provide

What about judging others? Greed? Lust? Divorce?

3) The danger of running

**Read: Mark 14:48-50**

The moment that Jesus needed his followers the most; they ran for the hills. The danger for us, would be to also think that we would never run away as devoted followers. But maybe we do this in other ways...

**Q: Have you ever hid or avoided telling someone you were a Christian? Can you share?**

When you are at work telling people about your weekend, do you mention church or do you carefully leave that one out because you don't want to upset people? When you're talking to your non-Christian friends about life; do you talk to them about the way God is leading and guiding you or do you leave that part out?

**Conclusion:**

In a way, we are just like the disciples. We have made big promises and declarations to our and saviour Jesus Christ yet we sleep, we fight, and we run to satisfy our own wants and desires and our promises to God are often naked and empty. But Jesus provides us the answer to how we break this mentality – read v 32-36. What did Jesus do when he was confronted with a willing spirit but weak flesh?

Jesus prays this prayer: **Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me.**

Jesus asked God if there might be another way, so that he does not have to go through the brutal suffering and death that he is about to endure. It also shows that even Jesus struggled with a willing spirit but a weak flesh.

However, in the very next breath, Jesus also provides us the answer that breaks the everyone for themselves mentality - **Yet not what I will, but what you will.**

It is only when we seek God and his will that we can break the “everyone for themselves” mentality. We need to keep watch spending time in his presence, read God's word and submit to his ways.

We also need to stand up for him and make him known.

Keep praying “yet not what I will, but what you will.”