

JESUS: THE SERVANT AT WORK

VOLUME THREE

STUDY TEN

Simple Meal . . . Shocking Prediction

Mark 14:22–31

How fickle and vacillating we are in our flesh.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

WE raise our eyebrows when we hear that a strong Christian, a devout missionary, or a pastor has engaged in conduct that he or she knew was improper. We wonder, *How could this person fall so far away from the Savior?* Then we remember how weak the flesh is. Just as the limbs of a mighty oak can crack in a hurricane, our convictions can break depending on where we are, the situation we're in, and the pressures we face.

As Jesus moved closer to His crucifixion, Mark pulled back the curtain to allow us to relive Jesus' private moments with His closest friends. Jesus had one last opportunity to teach His disciples about His kingdom. One final meal to share with those He loved before the shadow of death fell. One more warning about the coming storm that would test their loyalty.

One of the Twelve had already fallen. In our previous *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we watched Judas Iscariot meet secretly with “the leading priests to arrange to betray Jesus to them” (Mark 14:10–11). In the passage for this study, we'll sit beside Jesus during a simple meal with His disciples and let His words penetrate our souls. We'll feel the shock of His prediction, “All of you will desert me” (14:27), and learn that *only through His strength* can we withstand the gale-force winds of this world and remain loyal to our Master.



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The Bible-Teaching Ministry of Chuck Swindoll
Study 10 • Page 1

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES
BIBLE STUDIES

Simple Meal . . . Shocking Prediction

Mark 14:22–31



PREPARE YOUR HEART

*I love you, LORD;
you are my strength.* (Psalm 18:1)

Think of the heart attitude of David—the king of Israel and the slayer of the giant Goliath—when he said these words. Lean on the Lord for strength as you express your deep affection for Him.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Mark has been building toward these climactic moments in Jesus' life. Jesus had foretold His death three times (Mark 8:31; 9:30–32; and 10:32–34). In the final week of His earthly ministry, He illustrated the treachery of the religious leaders in the parable of the evil farmers (12:1–12). Now, only a few hours before His unjust arrest, He predicted His betrayal by Judas (14:18–21).

As night fell, thousands of Passover pilgrims gathered as families to observe a feast Jews had celebrated for generations. But for Jesus and His disciples, this ancient tradition would take on new meaning. Watch Him and His disciples closely as they celebrate the first Communion.



Observation: Simple Meal, Shocking Prediction

Put yourself in the shoes of Jesus' disciples as you enter the scene. Don't observe a passage of Scripture in a hurry.¹ Take time to notice how Mark selected each word and constructed each sentence. Pick out the action words and watch for the transitions that mark the sequence of events.

A Meal and a Song—Mark 14:22–26

See the dimly lit “guest room” where they gathered to eat the Passover meal (Mark 14:14). Notice the elements that symbolized Israel's deliverance from Egypt. Roasted lamb—representing the sacrifice that spared the Hebrews from the plague of death. Flat, pancake-like pieces of unleavened bread—reminders of their urgent haste. Bitter herbs—reminiscent of their bitter slavery. Salt water—symbolizing their tears. A chutney paste—representing the mortar for making bricks. And wine—a taste of the promised land.

Simple Meal . . . Shocking Prediction

Mark 14:22–31

What did Jesus do with the bread and the wine in [Mark 14:22–26](#)? What did He say each element represented? What else do you observe in these verses?

While they were eating their meal, He was pondering His suffering and death, no doubt thinking, What can I tell them that would help them remember My death from now on as long as believers populate the earth?
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

A Prediction and the Reaction—Mark 14:27–31

Hear the small stones crunching under the sandaled feet of the disciples as they walked a narrow path in the middle of the night and held a few torches to light their way. By now, Judas had slipped away to set the wheels of betrayal in motion. What shocking prophecy did Jesus make concerning the remaining eleven disciples in [Mark 14:27–28](#)?

Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away.” If you could read this in the original, you would see that the way Mark wrote it, the word “all” is in emphasis, so it’s a universal prediction. “Every one of you eleven.” —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Hear Peter’s reaction to Jesus’ blunt statement in [Mark 14:29–31](#). What did Peter say in reply? What was Jesus’ response? How did Peter and all the others assure Him of their loyalty?

And they were all saying, “Yeah, that’s right, Peter. We’re in this. Band of brothers, loyal to the end.” —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Simple Meal . . . Shocking Prediction

Mark 14:22–31



Interpretation: The Lord's Table and His Prediction

Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper in [Mark 14:22–26](#). Explore the Seder traditions and the Lord's Supper in your Bible-study resources. Consult Pastor Chuck's commentary [Insights on Mark](#) or [Constable's Notes](#) online at netbible.org. Explain Jesus' new symbolism for the bread and the wine. What is the significance of Communion to believers' present lives and future hope?

As the men walked toward the small garden of Gethsemane, Jesus applied [Zechariah 13:7](#) to Himself and His disciples. The Greek verb *skandalizo* means “to cause to stumble.” Now, look up [Mark 14:27–28](#) in the MSG and J. B. Phillips translations. What would cause all eleven disciples to stumble?

The verb carries a passive sense; that is, it does not mean the disciples will willfully defect, but external factors will act upon them and cause them to do so. In other words, it will be a lapse rather than an egregious rebellion.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Peter reacted to Jesus' prediction with an emphatic no! And so did the other ten disciples in [Mark 14:29–31](#). How would you explain Peter's proud protest and the disciples' overconfidence?

You know what follows? Silence. Jesus simply decides, “I’m not going to argue with them.” Why? Because that night, they all, in fact, fled.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Correlation: The Lord's Communion and Believers' Strength

Jesus' death, predicted in the Old Testament and realized in the New Testament, is the foundation of the Christian faith.

Compare [Isaiah 53:1–5](#); [Mark 14:22–26](#); [Hebrews 9:22](#); and [1 Peter 2:24](#). What do these passages teach about Jesus' suffering? What role did His blood play in believers' forgiveness?

It's mistranslated in some versions, "wounds" plural. No, there's one massive wound. He had been so battered and bruised with the fists of the soldiers and those who beat Him with their rods. "By His wound, we are healed." Apart from the shedding of the blood, there is no "forgiveness of sin."

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

What was the problem with the way the Corinthian believers were taking Communion, according to [1 Corinthians 11:17–34](#)? What important lessons must all believers glean from the Corinthian church and Paul's admonition?

Let me warn us against two things when we come to the Lord's Table at any time in the future. Guard yourself against growing weary of the familiar. Jesus wanted us to remember Him every time we ate from the bread and drank the wine. The second thing I want to warn you against is to not get so persnickety about the elements themselves that you miss their importance. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Scripture is full of accounts of men and women of God who caved under pressure. What can all believers learn from Paul's boasting about his weaknesses in [2 Corinthians 12:1–10](#)?

Simple Meal . . . Shocking Prediction

Mark 14:22–31

Guard against overestimating your loyalty, your spiritual strength.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Remember Christ—Lean on Him Continually

After reading about His simple meal of eternal significance and His prediction that His closest followers would fall away, pause and reflect.

First, *think about Jesus' wound on your behalf*. Meditate on the shedding of His blood that brought you forgiveness. How will this Bible passage change the way you experience the Lord's Table? How does it infuse you with hope for the future?

What a magnificent day that will be when we sit in His presence! One of the first experiences in glory with the saints will be the spread of the meal, the eating of the bread, and the drinking from the cup. And He will serve it, and we will enjoy it together. It is a sermon without words, a spiritual pantomime. Every time you're at the table, make it significant. It's what you tell yourself that becomes so important based on what you've learned from the Scriptures.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Second, *hear the voice of the Lord whispering to your soul that He alone is the strong One*. How does this passage serve as a warning for you? As an encouragement?

In what area of your life do you sense you have overestimated your spiritual strength? Why not express how much you need Him to take your heart and seal it for His courts above?

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Mark 14:22–31

When you survey the Communion table at your church, recall our passage. Picture Jesus and His disciples at the Last Supper, gazing upon the Passover elements. The lamb representing the Lamb of God whose sacrifice saves you from the curse of death. The bread and the wine symbolizing the body of Jesus and His blood that cleanses you from sin. Now, eat and drink. And always remember Jesus' sacrifice for you.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. (1 Corinthians 11:26 NASB)



A FINAL PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for these soul-searching words. I ask You to put steel in my spine, strength in my heart, and truth on my tongue so that I can fight the good fight, finish the course, and keep the faith all the way to the end. I am leaning on You continually. I love You, Lord. You are my strength! In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](https://www.insight.org/how-does-pastor-chuck-swindoll-study-the-bible)" at [insight.org](https://www.insight.org).

For the 2027 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Mirlenda Noëlliste in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 2011, 2026 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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Insight for Living
Study 10 • Page 7

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