

Session 13

The Cup and the Cross

Mark 14:1-15:15 | A Ransom for Many: A Catholic Journey Through the Gospel of Mark

Part 1: Leader Preparation Guide

Session Overview

Discovery Aim: Participants discover the night the whole Gospel has been leading: an anointing for burial, the Bread of Life resolving in an upper room ("Take; this is my body... poured out for MANY"), the cup of Gethsemane, the Secret ending from Jesus' own mouth before the high priest, at the cost of his life, Peter's cockcrow, and the morning verdict. And they will find, hidden in plain sight, that the whole night runs on the four watches Jesus named in last week's final parable.

Catholic Touchstone: The institution of the Most Holy Eucharist (CCC 1339-1340) and Gethsemane's "not what I will, but what you will" (CCC 612): the sacrifice of the new covenant, offered first under signs at the table, then in agony in the garden, then in blood on the cross, one single offering.

What You Need to Know

Bethany first (14:3-9): an unnamed woman breaks an alabaster flask of pure nard, a year's wages, over Jesus' head. The objectors do math ("three hundred denarii... given to the poor"); Jesus does theology: "She has done a beautiful thing... she has anointed my body beforehand for burying." Savor the irony Mark has built for thirteen chapters: "Messiah" and "Christ" mean THE ANOINTED ONE, and in this entire Gospel, the only anointing Jesus ever receives is this one, for burial. A woman with a broken jar enacts what Peter at Caesarea Philippi could not accept: whether or not she understood all she did, her gesture honors a Messiah who is going to die, and Jesus himself names its meaning. Hence the staggering promise, which Matthew also preserves (26:13): "wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her", a promise being kept in your room tonight. (On "the poor you always have with you": Jesus is quoting Deuteronomy 15:11, whose very next clause COMMANDS open-handedness to the poor; it is a verse about perpetual obligation, not permission to neglect, and the Church reads it so.)

The Supper (14:12-25) is the summit of the study's Eucharistic arc, and your group has been trained for thirteen weeks to hear it. The four verbs of the green grass return in exact sequence: "he TOOK bread, and BLESSED, and BROKE it, and GAVE it to them" (6:41; the Decapolis feeding echoes them with "gave thanks," *eucharistesas*, 8:6, the very verb that named the Eucharist), and then the words of feeding contained: "Take; THIS IS MY BODY." The one loaf in the boat (8:14) is finally explained. Over the cup: "This is my BLOOD OF THE COVENANT, which is poured out for MANY." Every phrase detonates something planted: "blood of the covenant" lifts the covenant phrase of Exodus 24:8, Moses dashing sacrificial blood on the people at Sinai, "Behold the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you", except that covenant blood was splashed on bodies, and this covenant blood is given to DRINK, interiorized, the new covenant Jeremiah promised, written on hearts (Jeremiah 31:31-33). And "for many" is 10:45's ransom-saying completing itself: the Servant of Isaiah 53 who bears the sin of MANY now hands his companions the chalice of the offering. Let the group assemble these connections themselves; thirteen weeks of planted evidence makes this the night the study pays compound interest.

One more upper-room jewel, offered with a light hand: Jesus vows, "I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God" (14:25), and Mark then records the party singing the hymn (the Passover Hallel) and leaving, by the usual reckoning, before the ritual's final cup. Some fine Catholic scholars (Scott Hahn has made the case famous) propose that the Passover liturgy Jesus deliberately left

suspended is completed on the cross: offered wine refused at 15:23, and then, in John's account, "I thirst," the sour wine taken, and "It is finished." On that reading, the Supper and the cross are one continuous liturgy, table to Calvary, a single Passover of the Lamb. The Church has not defined this reconstruction; present it as a proposal many find luminous, and note that the doctrinal core it illustrates IS defined: the Eucharist and the cross are one sacrifice (CCC 1367).

Gethsemane (14:32-42): the cup James and John volunteered for (10:38-39) arrives; his followers will share its sufferings (10:39), but its sin-bearing fullness only he can drink. Mark's portrait is the rawest in the Gospels: "greatly distressed and troubled... My soul is very sorrowful, even to death," and the prayer that carries the Church's whole Christology: "ABBA, Father, all things are possible to you; remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what you will." A real human will, genuinely recoiling from death, freely handed over to the Father's will: St. Maximus the Confessor built the Church's doctrine of Christ's two wills on this sentence, and the Sixth Ecumenical Council canonized his reading (CCC 475). The agony is not theater and not weakness; it is the human will of God the Son doing, in darkness, what Adam refused to do in a garden of light. Meanwhile the three disciples, EXPLICITLY commanded "watch" (14:34, the very verb of 13:37), sleep three times. The doorkeeper parable is failing its first test in real time, and the clock of 13:35 seems to be running: supper in the EVENING (14:17), the garden deep in the night, and two watches to come.

The trial (14:53-65) is where the Messianic Secret dies, by Jesus' own hand. False witnesses collapse; the high priest rises and asks the question of the entire Gospel: "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" And Jesus, silent until now, answers with a plain 'I AM' that many readers hear as an echo of the burning bush, joined to the explicit vision of Daniel: "I AM (*ego eimi*); and you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven", Psalm 110 and Daniel 7:13, the two texts he planted in the temple debates and the Olivet discourse, now spoken to the one man in Israel authorized to demand an answer (Matthew adds that he put Jesus under oath), at the moment when saying it means death. This is the most compelling reading of why the Secret held so long: the title could not safely be spoken until it could scarcely be understood any other way, and now, bound and hours from crucifixion, no one can mistake him for a warlord. He unveils himself at the precise moment it costs everything. The verdict is instant: "You have heard his blasphemy... And they all condemned him as deserving death." A careful note for your sealed-guess shepherding: the high priest SPEAKS the title as an accusation, and Jesus affirms his own identity, but the guess asked who would be the first human being to CALL Jesus the Son of God, a free confession about him. A sneering prosecutor and the defendant's own "I AM" are not that. One scene remains. Next week, bring the envelopes.

Peter's denials (14:66-72) run in deliberate parallel montage with the trial: inside, Jesus confesses and is condemned; outside, Peter is interrogated by a servant girl and collapses, three denials, escalating to curses, and then the COCKCROW, the third watch of 13:35, and "he broke down and wept." Remember whose preaching ancient tradition associates with this Gospel: Peter kept this story in his own preaching, in full and uncushioned. The second touch (8:25) has begun, and it begins, as it usually does, with tears. Morning (15:1, the fourth watch: "as soon as it was morning") brings Pilate, the "King of the Jews" exchange, and Barabbas, whose name means "son of the father": the crowd is offered the true Son of the Father and a counterfeit, and chooses the murderer. The scourging, the sentence, and the handing over close the session at the threshold of Golgotha.

Old Testament Roots and Fulfillment

- **Exodus 24:8.** "Behold the blood of the covenant": Moses' words at Sinai, quoted by Jesus over the cup with one devastating upgrade, the blood is no longer splashed on the people but given INTO them. Sinai's covenant sealed in animal blood; the new covenant sealed in his own.
- **Exodus 12:1-14 (leader background).** The Passover frame of the whole night: a lamb without blemish, its blood delivering from death, and the command that the lamb be EATEN. No Israelite was saved by admiring the lamb.

- **Jeremiah 31:31-33.** "Behold, the days are coming... when I will make a NEW covenant... I will write it upon their hearts." The upper room is the appointment Jeremiah made.
- **Isaiah 53:11-12 with Mark 10:45.** "He poured out his soul to death... he bore the sin of MANY." The cup-word "poured out for many" is the Servant Song and the ransom-saying arriving at the same table.
- **Zechariah 13:7.** "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered": quoted by Jesus himself on the way to Gethsemane (14:27), with a promise attached that everyone misses: "But AFTER I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee" (14:28). Even predicting their desertion, he schedules the reunion.
- **Psalms 110:1 and Daniel 7:13.** "Sit at my right hand" and "coming with the clouds": the two enthronement texts fused in Jesus' answer at his trial, the full claim, at the full price.

Voices of the Church

Voices of the Church: St. Ignatius of Antioch (Letter to the Smyrnaeans)

Within living memory of the apostles, on the road to his own martyrdom, St. Ignatius names the test of true faith: the heterodox "abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they do not confess that the Eucharist IS the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins and which the Father in his goodness raised up." For the generation taught by the apostles themselves, the realism of "this is my body" was not one interpretation among several; it was the dividing line.

Voices of the Church: St. Cyril of Jerusalem (Mystagogical Catecheses, on the Eucharist)

Teaching the newly baptized of Jerusalem, yards from Calvary, St. Cyril reasons with devastating simplicity: since Christ himself has declared of the bread, "This is my body," who shall ever dare to doubt it? And since he has affirmed of the cup, "This is my blood," who shall waver and say it is not his blood? He once changed water into wine at Cana by his will alone, Cyril reminds them; is he not worthy of belief when he changes wine into blood? Judge not the matter by taste, he counsels, but be fully assured by faith in the Lord's own word.

Voices of the Church: St. Maximus the Confessor (on the prayer of Gethsemane)

St. Maximus, who gave his tongue and right hand rather than deny it, taught the Church to hear in "not what I will, but what you will" the proof that Christ possesses a true HUMAN will, really recoiling from death as human nature must, and freely, perfectly surrendered to the Father. The agony is not the divine will arguing with itself, nor a fake struggle staged for our benefit: it is our own human willing, assumed by the Son, healed at the exact point where Adam's broke. As St. Gregory Nazianzen had taught, what is not assumed is not healed; and in the garden, our own willing was taken up and taught to say Father.

Catechism Connection

- **CCC 1339-1340:** The institution: Jesus chose Passover to give his Body and Blood, fulfilling the ancient feast and anticipating his Passover to the Father; the Eucharist is its memorial.

- **CCC 1362-1367:** The Eucharist as memorial (*anamnesis*) in Scripture's sense: not mere recollection but the making-present of the one sacrifice; the Mass and the cross are ONE single sacrifice, the manner of offering alone differing (Trent's language, "truly propitiatory").
- **CCC 1376:** Trent's summary: by the consecration a change is brought about of the whole substance of bread into the Body and of wine into the Blood, fittingly called transubstantiation.
- **CCC 612 and 475:** The cup of Gethsemane: the Son's human will freely accepting the Father's redeeming plan; the Sixth Ecumenical Council's confession of Christ's two wills, the human will unresisting, indeed subject, to his divine and almighty will.

Thread Watch

Thread Watch (leader only)

The Bread: RESOLVES. Took, blessed, broke, gave, then "this is my body." The feedings, the crumbs, the one loaf, the quiz ("do you not yet understand?"), all of it lands here. Let the group make every connection; resist making any for them until they have tried. This is the study's Eucharistic summit; end the discussion of it in a moment of silence.

The Messianic Secret: ENDS, at 14:62, from Jesus' own mouth, before the high priest, at the cost of his life, with *ego eimi* and Daniel 7. The embargo's logic is now fully visible: he spoke when the cross made misunderstanding impossible. SEALED-GUESS PRECISION: the high priest speaks "Son of the Blessed" as an accusation; Jesus affirms his own identity. The guess asked for the first human to CALL him the Son of God, a free confession. That has still not happened. Tell the group to bring the sealed envelopes next week, and say nothing else.

The Four Watches: ENACTED in literary outline, let them find it: EVENING 14:17, the deep of night in Gethsemane (where "watch" is commanded, 14:34, and sleep wins three times), COCKCROW 14:72, MORNING 15:1. Mark names no hour in the garden; the pattern is the point. The doorkeeper parable was the Passion's timetable. Question 6 is built to trigger this discovery.

The Cup: From 10:38 through Gethsemane, poured at the table, accepted in the garden. Torn: NEXT WEEK. Everything resolves next week. Prepare accordingly, and prayerfully.

Session Goals

1. Participants can read the Bethany anointing as the Gospel's only messianic anointing, for burial, and can see her gesture, whether or not she grasped all of it, as the first act in this Gospel to honor a Messiah who is going to die.
2. Participants assemble the Bread thread's resolution themselves: verbs, Exodus 24:8, Jeremiah 31, "for many," and can articulate the Real Presence with the steelman answered.
3. Participants can pray Gethsemane's prayer and state what it reveals: a true human will, freely surrendered (CCC 475).
4. Participants discover the four-watches structure and 14:62 as the Secret's ending, and can explain WHY Jesus speaks now.
5. Participants hold Peter's fall with Mark's own mercy: full honesty, and 14:28's pre-scheduled reunion.

Time Note (90 Minutes)

Win 15 min | Build 55 min | Send 15 min | Closing prayer 5 min. **Pre-chosen cuts if running long:** compress the Judas verses and the Pilate/Barabbas scene into the leader bridges (keeping the "son of the father" irony as one sentence). Do not cut Bethany, the Supper, Gethsemane, the trial, or the cockcrow; if the session must run long tonight, let it.

Part 2: Discussion Guide

Opening Prayer

Leader: Lord Jesus, tonight we enter the night you were betrayed, the night you took bread. Give us the woman's extravagance, keep us awake one hour, and when your words are spoken over bread and cup, give us the faith of the centuries: to take you at your word. Amen.

Win (15 minutes)

1. What is the most extravagant, "wasteful" act of love you have ever witnessed or received, something no accountant would approve? What did it communicate that a sensible gift could not?
2. Words spoken at a deathbed or a departure carry a weight ordinary words never do. Why? What do we instinctively understand about last words?

Leader bridge: Did everyone underline evening, midnight, cockcrow, and morning last week? Keep a finger there. Tonight the Gospel enters its final night, and everything this study has planted, the four verbs, the one loaf, "for many," the cup, the silence commands, comes due. Watch the clock, watch the bread, and listen for two words at the trial that we last heard on the sea.

Build (55 minutes)

Read Mark 14:1-11 aloud.

1. **Bethany (14:3-9). A year's wages in perfume, broken open in one gesture, and two audits of it: the objectors' ("why this waste?") and Jesus' ("she has done a beautiful thing... anointed my body beforehand for burying"). Now the irony thirteen chapters deep: what do "Messiah" and "Christ" literally MEAN, and when else in this entire Gospel is Jesus anointed? What has this woman understood that Peter, at Caesarea Philippi, could not?**

ANSWER (share after the discussion)

Messiah (Hebrew) and Christ (Greek) mean THE ANOINTED ONE, we learned it in Session 1 (CCC 436), kings, priests, and prophets anointed with oil for their mission. And in Mark's whole Gospel, this is the ONLY anointing Jesus receives: not in a coronation, not in the temple, but at a dinner table, from an unnamed woman, FOR BURIAL. The Anointed One's anointing is a funeral rite in advance; Mark could not say "the Messiah's mission is to die" more eloquently. And here is the contrast with Peter: he confessed the Christ and rebuked the cross; her gesture, whether or not she saw its full meaning, pours everything over a Christ who is going to die, honoring, ADORNING the very thing Peter called unthinkable, and Jesus himself gives the act its name: anointing for burial. Hence a promise given to no one else in this Gospel: "wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her", being fulfilled at this table tonight, note it. One guardrail: "the poor you always have with you" quotes Deuteronomy 15:11, whose next clause COMMANDS open-handed care for the poor; Jesus is invoking perpetual obligation, not granting an exemption, and the Church that adores him in the Eucharist is the same Church commanded to find him in the poor. Extravagance toward God and justice toward the poor are one love, not rivals.

Read Mark 14:12-31 aloud. Read verses 22-25 twice, slowly.

2. **The Supper (14:22-25). Group work, and take your time: (a) List the four verbs of verse 22 in order. Where, exactly, has this Gospel used that sequence before? (b) DISCOVERY: someone read Exodus 24:8 aloud, and someone Jeremiah 31:31-33. What is Jesus quoting over the cup, and what**

is he changing? (c) "Poured out for MANY", where has this Gospel planted that phrase? (d) And the one loaf in the boat (8:14), with "do you not yet understand?" (8:21): do you understand now? Assemble everything. This is the final exam thirteen weeks have prepared you for.

ANSWER (share after the discussion)

(a) TOOK, BLESSED, BROKE, GAVE: the exact sequence of the green grass (6:41), echoed at the Decapolis with one glorious variation, "gave thanks," *eucharistesas* (8:6), the verb that gave the sacrament its name. The feedings were rehearsals; the group has been watching the priest practice the liturgy for seven chapters. But the feedings never contained these words: "Take; THIS IS MY BODY." Not "this represents," not "this is like": the verb the Church has guarded with councils and martyrs. (b) "This is my BLOOD OF THE COVENANT" takes up the covenant phrase of Exodus 24:8, Moses at Sinai dashing sacrificial blood on the people: "Behold the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you." Jesus stands where Moses stood and upgrades everything: the blood is his own, and it is not splashed ON the people but given INTO them, drunk, interiorized, which is exactly Jeremiah's promised NEW covenant, no longer external like Sinai's but "written upon their hearts." The upper room is the appointment Jeremiah 31 made six centuries early. (c) "For many" is Mark 10:45 completing itself, "a ransom for MANY", and behind both, Isaiah 53: "he poured out his soul to death... he bore the sin of MANY." The Servant's offering, announced on the road, is being distributed at the table; and "many," remember, is Isaiah's idiom for the numberless multitude, he died for all (CCC 605). (d) The one loaf in the boat: the disciples fretted about bread supply while the Bread himself sat beside them. Now he says so, in four words. The whole Bread thread, two feedings, twelve baskets and seven, a Gentile mother's crumbs, one loaf, "do you not yet understand?", was never about catering. It was catechesis: he was teaching them, and us, what he would put into our hands. Leaders: when the assembly is done, before moving on, take thirty seconds of full silence. Some things should not be talked past.

3. **STEELMAN, build it strong before you answer it. A sincere Protestant friend says: "It is obviously a metaphor. Jesus also said 'I am the door' and 'I am the vine'; nobody checks him for hinges. He was bodily present holding the bread, so it could not literally be his body. It is a memorial: 'do this in remembrance of me.' Catholics literalize a beautiful symbol." And the stronger Protestant accounts go past bare symbol: the Reformed confess a true spiritual feeding on Christ by faith; Lutherans a sacramental union of Christ's body "in, with, and under" the bread. Build it all at full strength, it is reasonable and reverent. Then answer from tonight's text, this Gospel's architecture, Paul, and the men taught by the apostles. DISCOVERY: someone look up 1 Corinthians 11:27-29.**

ANSWER (share after the discussion)

Honor its strengths: Jesus does use metaphors of himself, the objection reveres him, and Catholics agree the Eucharist is a memorial, the dispute is what "memorial" and "is" carry. Now the answer, in layers. TEXT: "I am the door" comes with zero ritual apparatus; nobody is handed a plank and told "take, eat." Here Jesus attaches the words to an ACTION and a COMMAND at Passover, whose lamb, note it, had to be EATEN to save anyone (Exodus 12:8-11); admiring the lamb delivered no one. And "blood of the covenant" is sacrificial language: Exodus 24's blood was not a metaphor; covenants are cut in real blood, and he says the cup IS his. ARCHITECTURE: this Gospel has spent seven chapters training realism, two literal multiplications of literal bread by the four verbs, a rebuke ("do you not yet understand?") for treating the loaves as mere logistics, and one loaf in the boat. Mark's narrative theology has no room for "and then the payoff was a figure of speech." PAUL, writing before any Gospel: "Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy

manner will be GUILTY OF PROFANING THE BODY AND BLOOD of the Lord... For any one who eats and drinks without DISCERNING THE BODY eats and drinks judgment upon himself" (1 Corinthians 11:27-29). You cannot profane a symbol into judgment; Paul's warning only computes if the Body is there to discern. And "remembrance" (*anamnesis*) is Passover vocabulary: the Jewish memorial (*zikkaron*) does not merely recall an event but makes its participants present to it, "in every generation a man must regard himself as having come out of Egypt." THE EARLY WITNESSES: St. Ignatius of Antioch, within living memory of the apostles, defines the heterodox precisely as those who "do not confess that the Eucharist IS the flesh of our Savior"; St. Cyril of Jerusalem asks the question that ends the debate for anyone who trusts Christ's competence with words: "Since he himself has declared, This is my body, who shall dare to doubt?" Bare-symbol readings have no clear champion before the Reformation era; the memorial-only reading is the newcomer. And honor the stronger Protestant accounts: Reformed and Lutheran Christians confess far more than symbol, and the remaining Catholic difference is precise: whether the bread and wine themselves become, in substance, the Body and Blood (so that what rests on the altar is rightly adored), and whether the Eucharist makes present the one sacrifice. On those two points the Church cannot yield what she received. Last, gently, the deepest point: on the night before he died, a man does not speak in riddles. These are last words, chosen with a dying man's economy, and the Church has staked everything on the assumption that he meant them.

Read Mark 14:32-52 aloud.

4. **Gethsemane. Mark shows us Jesus "greatly distressed and troubled": "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death." Then the prayer: "Abba, Father, all things are possible to you; remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what you will." Three questions: What is "this cup" (trace it: 10:38-39, Isaiah 51:17)? Is the recoil a failure of nerve, what does the Church actually teach is happening in that sentence? And what are the three disciples doing, and why does last week's underlining suddenly matter?**

ANSWER (share after the discussion)

The cup is the one James and John blithely claimed they could drink: in the prophets, the cup of wrath, judgment poured out and drunk down (Isaiah 51:17), and at the table an hour ago it became "my blood... poured out for many." In the garden, the metaphor arrives with its full weight, and only one man on earth can drink it. The recoil is not weakness, and the Church staked a council on saying so: Christ has a TRUE human will (CCC 475; the Sixth Ecumenical Council, following St. Maximus, who gave his tongue and hand for this doctrine), and a true human will genuinely shrinks from torture and death, it would be inhuman not to. What we are watching is that real human will, OURS, assumed, freely subordinating itself: "not what I will, but what you will", Adam's garden rebellion replayed and reversed in a garden at night. He is not overriding his humanity; he is healing it at the exact joint where it broke. And note the word he teaches us: ABBA, Father, intimate, trusting, spoken INTO the darkness, not after it lifts. Meanwhile: the three were commanded "WATCH" (14:34, the precise verb of 13:37), and three times he comes and finds them SLEEPING, the doorkeeper parable failing its first test within twenty-four hours of being told. Check your underlining: supper in the EVENING (14:17), the garden in the dead of night, and the Master of the house keeps coming and finding them asleep. Two watches remain on the clock (the pattern is literary, Mark names no hour in the garden, and it is hard to miss). "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" is not an excuse; it is a diagnosis, and the prescription was the thing they were not doing: watch AND PRAY.

Read Mark 14:53-72 aloud.

5. **The trial (14:53-65). False witnesses collapse; Jesus is silent; then the high priest asks THE question: "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" And Jesus answers: "I AM; and you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." After thirteen weeks of silence commands, weigh every element: the two words he opens with (where did we hear them on the sea?), the two Scriptures he fuses (you have met both), and the timing. WHY does he say it NOW, and what does it cost? What was the Secret for, in the end?**

ANSWER (share after the discussion)

The two words: *ego eimi*, "I am," a plain affirmative on its surface, last heard on the sea (6:50), carrying for many readers the undertone of the burning bush (Exodus 3:14), now spoken to the high priest's direct, official demand (Matthew records the oath). The two Scriptures: Psalm 110:1 ("sit at my right hand", his own riddle from the temple, 12:35-37) and Daniel 7:13 ("coming with the clouds", from last week's discourse, 13:26), fused into a single claim: you will see me enthroned and vindicated. The timing crowns the group's best theory, and one compelling way the Church's readers have long understood the Secret: he speaks NOW because NOW the title can scarcely be misunderstood. Bound, condemned, hours from a cross, no one can mistake him for a warlord; the confession and the crucifixion arrive together. On this reading, the Secret was never shame or strategy for its own sake: it was quality control on the meaning of "Christ," held until the cross could define it, and he releases it himself, at the one moment it costs everything, to the one man authorized to demand it. The price is immediate: "You have heard his blasphemy... they all condemned him as deserving death." He is condemned, in the end, for telling the truth about himself, the truth Mark told US in verse one. Sealed-guess shepherds, a precision: the high priest UTTERS "Son of the Blessed" as an accusation, and Jesus affirms his own identity. But your envelope asked who would be the first human being to CALL Jesus the Son of God, a free confession about him, and a prosecutor's sneer plus the defendant's "I AM" is not that. Bring the envelopes next week. One scene remains.

6. **Peter (14:66-72), running in split-screen with the trial: inside, Jesus confesses and is condemned; outside, Peter is questioned by a servant girl, and denies, three times, escalating to invoking curses, "and immediately the cock crowed a second time." Check your underlining again: which watch just struck? Then: "he broke down and wept." Remember whose preaching this Gospel is. What does it mean that PETER kept this story in his sermon for thirty years, and what had Jesus already scheduled at 14:27-28?**

ANSWER (share after the discussion)

COCKCROW: the third watch of 13:35, striking on schedule. The contrast Mark builds by intercutting is unbearable and deliberate: the prisoner, facing death, tells the truth; the free man, facing a servant girl, lies three times, the man who swore "if I must die with you, I will not deny you" (14:31), undone not by torture but by embarrassment around a charcoal fire. And then the sound, and the remembering, and "he broke down and wept": the second touch (8:25) beginning the only way it could, with the collapse of every illusion Peter had about his own steadiness. Now the astonishing fact of this Gospel's existence, on the tradition the Church received: Mark writes Peter's preaching, which, on the tradition's account, means Peter told this story at his own expense in his own preaching. The first pope's résumé, as preached by the first pope, leads with his worst hour, because the point of his story was never Peter's strength; it was the mercy that met him (recall Session 8: infallibility was never impeccability, and the office runs on Christ's prayer, Luke

22:32, not Peter's nerve). And the mercy was pre-scheduled: at 14:27-28, quoting Zechariah's struck shepherd and scattered sheep, Jesus attached a promise nobody heard: "But AFTER I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." Before they even fell, he booked the reunion. Hold that verse; it has one more appointment to keep, next week, from an unexpected mouth. For everyone in your group who has ever wept at their own cockcrow: this Gospel exists because the man who failed worst was retrieved, and could not stop talking about it.

Dig Deeper

Morning (15:1, and there is your FOURTH watch: "as soon as it was morning", the clock of 13:35 complete in outline: evening, the deep of night, cockcrow, morning; the end-times discourse reads as the Passion's timetable, and the Church has long heard in that night the judgment of the world). Before Pilate, the "King of the Jews" exchange, and then Barabbas: Mark tells us the crowd chose a murderer over the Messiah, and the name is the theology: BAR-ABBAS means "son of the father." Offered the true Son of the Father and a counterfeit, the world freed the counterfeit and condemned the true, and the release vividly images substitution: Barabbas could say, in a way all his own, "Jesus died and I went free," and he stands, unnamed and unnumbered, for the rest of us. A quiet detail for the fourth-cup watchers: at 15:23 Jesus REFUSES the offered wine mixed with myrrh. He has a vow running (14:25). Some fine scholars propose the Passover he left suspended in the upper room is completed on the cross itself; hold it lightly, as the Church does, but hold it, the doctrinal core it illustrates is certain: the table and the cross are ONE sacrifice (CCC 1367).

Send (15 minutes)

1. The woman broke the flask; the disciples audited it. When you examine your own devotion honestly, which are you: measuring what is reasonable to give God, or breaking the jar? What would breaking the jar look like in your actual circumstances?
2. "Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation": Jesus diagnosed willing spirits and weak flesh, and prescribed one hour. Where is your Gethsemane right now, the cup you are asking God to remove, and can you give him one literal hour with it this week?

Live It This Week

- Keep the hour he asked for: one Holy Hour this week, before the tabernacle if at all possible, with Mark 14 open. If you fall asleep, you are in apostolic company; come back the second and third time, as he did.
- At Mass, when the priest speaks the words of institution, the words from this table, make St. Cyril's act of faith silently: "You have said, This is my body. I dare not doubt it."
- Pray Gethsemane's prayer over your hardest current thing, word for word: "Abba, Father, all things are possible to you; remove this cup; yet not what I will, but what you will." Once daily, seven days.
- BRING YOUR SEALED GUESS to the final session. Do not open it early.

Closing Prayer

Leader: Lord Jesus, on the night you were betrayed you took bread, and you meant every word. We adore you in the Sacrament your last night gave us. Teach us the woman's extravagance, keep us awake one hour, and when our cockcrow comes, let it break our hearts toward you and not away. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.
(Together: one Our Father.)

Scripture Memory Verse

"Abba, Father, all things are possible to you; remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what you will."
(Mark 14:36, RSV2CE)

Part 3: Leader Reference Card

Primary text: Mark 14:1-15:15

Every passage used this session, in order:

- Mark 14:1-11 (Bethany; the anointing for burial; Judas)
- Deuteronomy 15:11 (the poor with you always, obligation not exemption)
- Mark 14:12-25 (Passover; the institution of the Eucharist)
- Exodus 24:8 (the blood of the covenant)
- Exodus 12:1-14 (the lamb eaten, leader background)
- Jeremiah 31:31-33 (the new covenant)
- Isaiah 53:11-12 with Mark 10:45 (poured out for many)
- 1 Corinthians 11:27-29 (discerning the body, steelman chain)
- Mark 14:26-31 (Zechariah 13:7; the Galilee promise, 14:28)
- Mark 14:32-42 (Gethsemane; the cup; the sleeping watchmen)
- Isaiah 51:17 (the cup of wrath, from Session 10)
- Mark 14:43-52 (the arrest; the young man who fled)
- Mark 14:53-65 (the trial; ego eimi; Psalm 110:1 + Daniel 7:13)
- Mark 14:66-72 (Peter's denials; cockcrow)
- Mark 15:1-15 (morning; Pilate; Barabbas)
- Mark 13:35 with 14:17, 14:34-41, 14:72, 15:1 (the four watches enacted)
- CCC 475, 605, 612, 1339-1340, 1362-1367, 1376
- Memory verse: Mark 14:36