

# Sermon Notes: The Last Week

## Lent 2024, Week #5

### Introduction

We continue our Lenten sermon series based on the book *The Last Week* by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan, journeying day by day through Jesus' last week in Jerusalem. We are quickly moving to the end of the week, and therefore closer to the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus. Each day has been building, and this day we arrive at Jesus' most profound teaching at the last supper. But that's not the end of the day...

### Illustration Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iHH1EqPu2qA>

A clip from the 1999 film *The Green Mile*, where a man wrongly-convicted of murder awaits his execution.

### Video Discussion Questions

1. If you've seen this film or read the book on which it is based, there are some unexplainable events that precede this clip. The inmate, John Coffey, displays extraordinary healing powers. In this clip, Paul Edgecomb (the guard played by Tom Hanks) notes that Coffey is "one of [God's] true miracles." Have you ever seen or experienced something extraordinary or unexplainable? Do you think God had anything to do with it? Why or why not?
2. While this film portrays Coffey as a person with extraordinary ability, he surely is not perfect. Have you ever known anyone to be blamed or even punished for something they didn't do? Why do you think they were blamed or punished? What did/do you think about that circumstance?
3. Coffey is offered a preacher to say a prayer before his execution. Coffey declines, but instead suggests that Edgecomb—to his surprise—could say a prayer if he likes. Why do you think he declines a preacher but welcomes Edgecomb?
4. In this clip, Coffey says: "Mostly I'm tired of people being ugly to each other. I'm tired of all the pain I feel and hear in the world every day. There's too much of it. It's like pieces of glass in my head all the time." The film and book are set in the mid-1930s. Do you think Coffey's sentiment is old? Do you think this sentiment is applicable today? Why or why not?
5. Consider this same quote in the time of Jesus. Is this in line with anything you think Jesus may have felt or said? Why or why not?

### Mark 14:12-26 (CEB)

<sup>12</sup>On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb was sacrificed, the disciples said to Jesus, "Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover meal?"

<sup>13</sup>He sent two of his disciples and said to them, “Go into the city. A man carrying a water jar will meet you. Follow him. <sup>14</sup>Wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, ‘The teacher asks, “Where is my guest room where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?’” <sup>15</sup>He will show you a large room upstairs already furnished. Prepare for us there.” <sup>16</sup>The disciples left, came into the city, found everything just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

<sup>17</sup>That evening, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. <sup>18</sup>During the meal, Jesus said, “I assure you that one of you will betray me—someone eating with me.”

<sup>19</sup>Deeply saddened, they asked him, one by one, “It’s not me, is it?”

<sup>20</sup>Jesus answered, “It’s one of the Twelve, one who is dipping bread with me into this bowl. <sup>21</sup>The Human One goes to his death just as it is written about him. But how terrible it is for that person who betrays the Human One! It would have been better for him if he had never been born.”

<sup>22</sup>While they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, “Take; this is my body.” <sup>23</sup>He took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. <sup>24</sup>He said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. <sup>25</sup>I assure you that I won’t drink wine again until that day when I drink it in a new way in God’s kingdom.” <sup>26</sup>After singing songs of praise, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

**Note:** the rest of the day’s narrative [can be found at this link](#).

### Scripture Discussion Questions

1. How does Jesus prepare on this Festival day? He delegates a task to two disciples, but do you think that’s all? What else do you think he may have done?
2. Jesus makes a shocking proclamation during the meal. How did the disciples respond? How do you think you would have responded in that situation?
3. Jesus says, “But how terrible it is for that person who betrays the Human One! It would have been better for him if he had never been born.” Do you think this statement is specific to this betrayal? Are there times today when Jesus is betrayed? Is there any room for grace or forgiveness?
4. What actions has Jesus taken in the lead-up to this text? What are the purposes behind those actions?
5. The disciples were those who followed Jesus and wanted to be like him. How do they react to Jesus’ actions, both in this story and those before? Do you think their reactions demonstrated they were ready to be like Jesus or not?
6. What characters do you relate to in this text and why?

7. Have you ever served someone else in the way Jesus does in this text? How did it go? What responses did you observe from others?

### **Add'l (Optional) Questions for Consideration**

1. After the text above, Jesus and the disciples go to the Mount of Olives. On the way, Jesus predicts Peter's denial. Peter thinks this is incredulous. Have you ever heard anyone say something about you that you didn't think could be true? How did that result? Were they right? How did you respond?
2. Jesus prays in Gethsemane for "this cup of suffering" to be taken away. He then follows with, "not what I want but what you want." What does this prayer say to you? What do you think Jesus was asking? Have you ever prayed similarly or asked for the same thing?
3. During this time of prayer, Jesus finds the disciples sleeping. Have you ever felt so exhausted—either physically or emotionally—that you couldn't stay awake? Do you think this is what was happening for the disciples? What did you do in your situation? What do you think the disciples should have done (if anything)?
4. When Jesus is arrested, an unnamed bystander cuts off the ear of the high priest's slave. Why do you think this was done? Do you think this was an appropriate response from this bystander? Why or why not?
5. What do you think about the young man in verse 51?
6. When Jesus is tried by the Sanhedrin, why do you think he stays silent? Would you have stayed silent?
7. Outside the trial, Peter denies knowing Jesus. Have you ever denied your faith? Have you ever denied knowing someone that you actually did know? Why or why not?

### **Weekly Action**

An essential part of the text for this week is Jesus sharing final meal with his friends. Some time during the course of this week, share a meal with a person or people who are important to you. Make sure to be free from distractions (like televisions, phones, etc.). Let this simple act be a celebration of the connection you share with this person or these people.

### **Prayer**

God of Moses and Miriam, God of those who followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem, God of all who call on you today—you delivered the Israelites from bondage in Egypt, keeping them safe from harm, as they ate the bread of affliction, seasoned with salty tears and bitter herbs. Today, you continue to hear the voices of all who live in fear and pain, offering them the bread of life and the cup of salvation, as a promise to deliver them from despair and anguish. As we remember the last meal that Jesus shared with his disciples, give us the courage to live as servants, to love the world as you have loved us, and to pour out our lives as members of the body of Christ. Amen.