

## “[RE]FRAME - Looking Ahead Through the Haze”

Scripture: Mark 14:32-42

Graphics: frames, pictures, garden, palms

Big Truth: The story of Jesus’ final week on Earth has multiple levels of understanding and meaning. What the events and actions seem to be on the surface are not always what they appear. In our walk with Jesus in the church, it’s easy to lose sight of the bigger picture while reading or hearing about the events of Jesus’ life. This series will help us see the bigger picture through the scenes that lead to the cross and empty tomb on Easter.

Focus phrase: Prayer clears our vision through the struggles of life.

### 1. Introduction

- A. Today, on our Christian calendar is Palm Sunday. It’s the day when we remember and celebrate Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem at the beginning of the last week of His life.
- B. If you’re joining us for the first time today, we’ve been on this journey with Jesus now for 6 weeks. We’ve called with sermon series REFRAME. We’ve been taking a look at the entire last week of Jesus’ life...and REFRAMING each day, so we can see these scenes with Jesus in a new way...and see ourselves, as His followers, in new ways.
- C. We started, way back in February, with that very story of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem on a humble colt. The crowds were singing Hosanna, just like we did this morning. That word means, “God Save Us!” And we asked ourselves, What Kind of King is this Jesus? And...has He changed my life?
- D. The next day, Jesus went into the Jewish Temple and overturned some tables. He wanted them to truly worship God, not their rituals...and wants the same from us.
- E. On day three, Jesus was surrounded by conflict. We REFRAMED our own conflict and said, “Focusing on God silences the conflict in my life based on love for God and others.”
- F. On Day 4, we said, “Jesus’ eternal plan is far greater than today’s trials or triumphs.” As we were just getting into the reality of this coronavirus crisis, were for looking for a new way. When Jesus returns, we will all experience HIS new day.
- G. Last week, we brought it home, literally. We invited Jesus to come sit at our tables and on our couches. From that place, Jesus invites us to give Him everything in our lives.
- H. Today, on a Sunday when we should be singing Hosanna together...maybe even waving palm branches in celebration, we find ourselves still going through this difficult season of life in the world.

- I. I've gotten quite a few phone calls this week from people that are really starting to struggle with this stay-at-home mode, even though we all know it critical right now. But, being home all the time, not seeing others, losing our jobs, worrying about being sick or getting others sick, it has us in a bit of a fog...a haze.
- J. Our view from 6 weeks ago of the celebration and hope as we looked forward to Easter Sunday next week, has now become a haze that's as, "...thick as pea soup," as my Dad used to say. It's just...well, muddy.
- K. Jimmy Hendrix wrote the song, Purple Haze, in 1967, based on a dream that he had of walking under the ocean. One of the lines in that songs asks, "Purple Haze all around, don't know if I'm coming up or down. Am I happy or in misery?" He goes on to sing, "Purple Haze all in my eyes, don't know if it's day or night..." That's haze.
- L. When I drive in fog over these Chautauqua County roads, I'm thankful that my car has fog lights. The fog lights are bright enough and low enough that they cut through some of the fog and make it easier to see a little farther down the road.
- M. Right now, I sense that we're weary and looking down the road for the day when we can be back together, or go to work, or even see our families. Our sight is pretty limited right now...and there's a haze around us. I'm thinking that our scripture today will help us.
- N. After the Last Supper, the disciples and Jesus went out from that Upper Room to the Mount of Olives. It was night. Dark. Probably hard to see very far.
- O. For Jesus, He had a task right in front of Him that made it hard to see anything else too far down the road. He knew it was getting close to the time when he'd have to give up His own life...to be arrested, beaten, mocked, and hung on a wooden cross.
- P. He knew WHY he had to do it. He knew WHAT the Father's plan was - that His death was the only way to pay the full price for the sin of the world...your sin and my sin.
- Q. Yet, the haze came crashing in around Jesus...around the disciples...as they went out to the Garden of Gethsemane after that Last Supper. For the disciples, that haze of confusion and doubt simply put them to sleep. But for Jesus, **that haze sent Him to His knees.**
- R. In OUR haze right now, Jesus is inviting us to follow Him to our knees in prayer. Today's message is all about prayer.
- S. If you're taking notes this morning, write this down: **Prayer clears our vision through the hazy struggles of life.**

- T. If you've experienced loneliness, fear, depression, anxiety, boredom, sadness, or any other purple haze in your life, maybe especially right now, this message is for you. I don't know about you, but sometimes those things make me feel weak.
- U. Here's the Good News: Prayer is not weakness. Prayer is laser vision to see through every haze.
- V. Let's pray and then turn in our bibles this morning to Mark 14:32-42.
- W. PRAY!!!

## 2. Scripture

### A. READ verses 14:32-42

- B. A couple months ago, during our Shift Intentional Discipleship Series, we spent two weeks on this passage of scripture. The first week we talked about Jesus' OPENNESS to the plan that the Father had for Him. The second week, we talked about Jesus' OBEDIENCE to the plan. See, Jesus needed to show us how to live a life of openness and obeying.
- C. He got to being open to the plan and then be obedient to the plan **by going to His knees** in the midst of the struggle. To pray to the Father, "...not what I want, but what YOU want."
- D. Jesus was able to see with laser vision the plan ahead BECAUSE He went to His knees before the Father. And not only THAT, but Jesus received assurance and courage from the Father to not only SEE the plan...but move toward it... and through it.
- E. Now, that's Jesus. That's not us, right? We're more like the disciples out there in the Garden that night.
- F. They all went out from the Last Supper, bellies full, out into the Garden that night. Jesus said to them, "Stay here and pray." Jesus then took Peter, James, and John - his inner circle - a little farther...and said, "...stay awake and pray while I'm gone."
- G. By the time Jesus got back, the three were all asleep, which also means that they obviously weren't praying.
- H. Jesus sternly said to Peter - "Stay awake! And pray... that you may not come into the time of trial (some translations say temptation)."
- i. Here's the deal: Jesus knew already that Peter was going to deny Him publicly because he said so during the Last Supper. Jesus also knew that the disciples would abandon Him. Jesus wasn't asking them to stay awake and pray so they would avoid THOSE things. He was asking them to stay awake and pray so that they would **not be tempted to walk away altogether after the Father's plan was finished.**

- ii. Jesus told Peter that it was a matter of flesh versus spirit. Peter's flesh nature wanted to sleep, run away, deny, and fail.
- iii. Yet, Peter's spirit wanted to do the right thing. Peter's flesh was WEAK, but the God who lived in Peter was willing to do the heavy-lifting during this haze.
- I. By the time Jesus went away again, and came back, they were asleep again... and, Mark writes, it was because they were tired and didn't know what to say to Him.
- J. So, instead of staying awake and praying and talking to Jesus in the midst of their confusion and boredom, even...they slept.

### **3. Application**

- A. In the haze of your life right now - and ANY TIME, actually - are you tempted to shut it down and fall asleep, or are you willing to stay awake and pray?
- B. Will you seek to improve your vision through the things of this world that are mere fog lights in the haze, allowing you to see a little ways ahead, only to see that it's the same as it is now?
- C. OR will you seek the laser vision that comes from the Light of Jesus Christ, who not only cuts through the current haze, but can see all the way to the end of time and wants YOU to see it too?
- D. Right now, that may be more challenging than you'd thought. You're bored or sad or anxious or alone or simply struggling to see the point of all this crisis. Maybe it was that way even before the coronavirus pandemic and now it's overwhelming.
- E. Here's some truth for you: No one blames you for your depression, sadness, anxiety, fear, boredom, or any other thing that you experience in the haze. This time in our history is rough...hazy. Your life can be hazy.
- F. Jesus is not ashamed of you. Jesus loves you.
- G. Jesus knows what you're feeling because there was a time in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus agonized to such an incredible degree that Matthew and Luke's gospels tell us He experienced hematohidrosis, where extreme anxiety or fear causes a person to sweat drops of blood.
- H. Jesus is not ashamed of that. He's not ashamed of you.
- I. But Jesus also doesn't want you to stay wandering around in that haze. Jesus is inviting you today to your knees in order to give you laser vision that can see ahead, through the haze, to HIS mission and plan for your life.
- J. Even though the disciples failed to do what Jesus asked them in the Garden that night, we know that the disciples went on to experience Jesus'

resurrection, receive the Holy Spirit, preach the gospel, and change the entire world with that Good News.

- K. They couldn't see it in that moment that night, but they were being given laser vision through the haze.
- L. Jesus is offering you that same laser vision through the weariness of this virus and anything in your life that fogs your vision.
- M. The way forward is through prayer. And I'm not talking about a rote grace before a meal or even the Lord's Prayer as great as those are. I'm talking about a heaven-rattling, on your knees, crying out to God for rescue from the haze. It's a throaty HOSANNA from the depths of your spirit that says "SAVE US, LORD!"
- N. Right now, I KNOW you have time to do this. God IS using this pause to call His people from our comfortable routines which may not include fervent, desperate prayer. He's calling you to a new day when you stay awake and you're not ashamed to fall on your knees in passionate prayer.
- O. If ever there was a time to spend on our knees before the Lord it's now, church.
- P. Prayer clears our vision through EVERY struggle of life.

#### **4. Conclusion**

- A. When we aren't asleep in the haze, we can be wide awake and ready to pray.
- B. The Holy Spirit is SO ready for our church, our families, and each one of us to leave behind the soft, comfortable religion we so want to practice. What Jesus wants is to take us into the Garden at night with Him to wrestle with and receive our mission for His Kingdom work.
- C. Imagine a church that's ready to sit and listen during this life-pause. I see it happening in the words and actions of the people of this church. I see people stepping up and praying like never before.
- D. This haze is not something we invited or even asked for...yet, God is using this to raise up His church in ways we've never seen before.
- E. And Jesus is inviting you and me to go to our knees to simply ask, "What do you want, God?"
- F. My prayer, church, is that life will never be the same again. Things will get back to normal, for sure, but I pray that our new normal sees an in-breaking of the Holy Spirit into our lives is such a powerful way during this PAUSE that, through fervent prayer, we receive laser vision to love, along with a burning hunger to see Jesus at work within us today, tomorrow, and all the way down the road.

- G. Church, this haze is showing us that we need Jesus as the most important person in our lives...and the Holy Spirit is willing, even though we are sometimes weak.
- H. With Jesus, though, our weakness becomes His strength and we are transformed...to then transform our world.
- I. Keep looking up...keeping going to your knees in prayer...keep seeking and asking and knocking.
- J. Let's pray!