

March 15/16, 2025
"The Tension Builds"
Pastor Aaron Buer



SPEND DAILY TIME WITH GOD AS YOU READ, THINK, PRAY + ACT.

2025 Focus: 50 Key Truths

Each Friday, explore a key truth about our Christian faith and how we can live in light of this truth.

Day 1 [Mark 16:1-8](#) | The Final Hours

"Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'" Mark 16:6-7

Mark's Gospel is a fast-paced narrative that details Jesus's journey to the cross. The closing chapters focus on the events leading up to Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection ([Mark 14-16](#)). Mark's original audience was most likely Christians in Rome facing mounting persecution and pressure. These believers experienced growing assaults under the Roman Emperor and needed instruction and encouragement about how to follow Jesus in such times. So, Mark writes to encourage and embolden these believers as they journey with Jesus in the face of their pressures and struggles.

Though the hardships may differ, we all face pressures and struggles. This book (and our series about these closing chapters) should encourage us in the various struggles we face in following Jesus. Just as the cross of Christ was to embolden and empower the Roman Christians, so it should also be for us. Jesus paid the ultimate price to set us free and give us new life.

TODAY: Now is a great time to consider inviting a friend to join you at church. This series, leading up to Easter, is a great opportunity to introduce a friend to the gospel and the local church. If you or a friend want more information about our church or service times, go to adabible.info to view upcoming events and service times.

Day 2 [Mark 14:1-9](#) | The Perfume

"Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me." Mark 14:6-7

Jesus visits the home of Simon the Leper, enjoying a meal with his disciples. While Jesus reclines at the table, a woman enters the home and pours an entire jar of very expensive perfume (worth a year's wages) on Jesus's head. This woman understood Jesus's true mission and offered herself and her jar of perfume to Jesus. No gift was too extravagant for Jesus.

The same should be true for us. This woman's extravagant gift reminds us that what Jesus wants from us is everything—particularly our lives. Jesus is the gracious and good Savior who has come to seek and save the lost by dying on the cross for our sins. In response, he desires for us to give him our lives in joyful and grateful worship. This is the call of discipleship. Will we choose to follow?

TODAY: It is worth contemplating: have you given Jesus your *whole* life? Is there an area you've held back that you think may be too valuable for Jesus? It is possible to be a follower of Jesus and have reservations about handing over specific areas of life to his rule and reign. What would unreserved devotion to Jesus look like in your life? Spend time today journaling about what you might be holding back from Jesus. Then, ask God for the grace and strength to offer your entire life to him in worship.

Day 3 [Mark 14:10-11](#) | The Betrayal

Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over. Mark 14:10-11

At the beginning of Jesus's ministry, Jesus handpicks twelve disciples to be with him, learn from him and serve with him. One of these twelve was Judas Iscariot. For the next three years, Judas was with Jesus. Judas watched Jesus perform miracles and teach the masses. Judas even witnessed Jesus raise people from the dead. Yet, at some point, Judas was no longer interested in following Jesus. Jesus didn't meet Judas's expectations, so Judas wanted out.

Judas's lack of trust and submission to Jesus is in stark contrast to the woman who poured out the expensive perfume ([Mark 14:3-9](#)). While the woman went to great cost to worship and honor Jesus, Judas left Jesus hoping to score riches for himself. The contrast between these two characters reminds us that we do not follow Jesus to get where *we* are going; we follow Jesus to get where *he* is going. Our call is to remain faithful to Jesus when life disappoints and is not what we expect. Unmet expectations and disappointments are dangerous spaces. It is in such space that we turn our backs on who or what we had previously given our allegiance to.

TODAY: The truths of this story should lead us to surrender and worship. Join Ada Bible Worship as they sing, "[Jesus paid it all](#)." Consider these lines: "Thy strength indeed is small, Child of weakness, watch and pray, Find in Me thine all in all." As you sing, ask God for the grace and strength to find Jesus to be your all in all.

Day 4 [Mark 14:12-25](#) | The Secret Meal

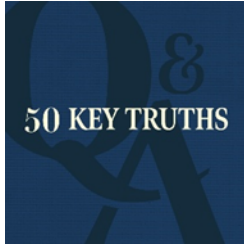
"Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." Mark 14:25

Jesus eats a secret meal while religious leaders scheme about how to have him killed. Meanwhile, Judas looks for an opportunity to betray Jesus. There is even mounting pressure with the Roman authorities. Tension builds all around Jesus. But through it all, God remains in control. Jesus leads his disciples through the meal and reminds them of the fullness of his coming kingdom. Though people scheme to bring Jesus down, God brings about his great rescue plan for the saving of many lives.

God is at work today in much the same way. Life often feels chaotic and out of control. From a human perspective, it is. But no matter how chaotic or hectic life may be, God is always in control. God orchestrates the details of life according to his all-wise plan to bring about salvation through his Son. A promise we can take to the bank is that God works all things for our salvation and transforms us to look more and more like Jesus (see

[Romans 8:28-30](#)). God is committed to our growth and salvation in Christ and often uses surprising means (including trials, hardships and even betrayal) to bring his plan to completion.

TODAY: Spend time in prayer, thanking God for always being in control. Ask for grace to trust God in the difficult seasons of life. Give God thanks for how he uses the chaos to draw you nearer to him. Also, use this time to consider [Romans 8:28-30](#) and God's commitment to work all things for our good in Christ Jesus.



Day 5 [John 20:31](#) | Question 11: The Bible's Purpose

Question: What is the purpose of the Bible?

Answer: The Bible's purpose is to reveal God to us and help us begin a genuine relationship with him.

But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. John 20:31

John explicitly states the purpose behind his Gospel, and by extension, all Scripture: to reveal God so people might believe and find life. The Bible is not merely historical documentation or religious instruction. The Bible was given to cut through the fog created by sin and show people who God really is. When John wrote these words, he summarized why he recorded Jesus's words and actions—so people could know God personally through his Son. As Hebrews tells us, God's Word is "alive and active," working powerfully to transform hearts and lives ([Hebrews 4:12](#)).

Today, the Bible continues to serve this vital purpose—helping us know God intimately as Lord and Savior. Scripture isn't primarily for learning information, finding wisdom or following rules. Its core purpose is relationship, revealing God's heart, character and love so we can know him personally and surrender to his authority. As we read Scripture, God's Spirit uses it to transform us, showing us both who God is and who we are. Through its pages, we discover our sin, understand God's will and learn to walk with him daily. The Bible remains God's primary tool for developing genuine relationships with his people.

TODAY: Read Scripture with its purpose in mind—getting to know God. As you read, ask, "What does this reveal about God's character?" and "How does this help me know him better?" Consider journaling your discoveries about God's nature and how they deepen your relationship with him.