

## THE SPIRIT IS WILLING, BUT THE FLESH IS WEAK

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**Abstract.** This is the most intimate prayer of Jesus in Mark's Gospel. He prayed this right before his capture and there one may sense the struggle of the (divine) man confronting death. In Mk 14,18 he speaks about his resurrection, but he is not facing death easily. Nine of his disciples have to sit down, and three have to accompany him. In Gal 2,9 we read about stulos, and in Mk 3,16–17 Jesus gave new names only to these three disciples, and they wanted to suffer and die with him (Mk 10,38–39; 14,29.31). Jesus is troubled facing death, but this is not distrust. The disciples do not make up this story, otherwise it would lack Jesus's fear, and the fact that they fall asleep. In this story Jesus is stretched to the limit, therefore he needs the companionship of his disciples. He needs the closeness of his disciples, but he needs to be alone with his Father. He is still in hearing range, but who is the one who recorded his prayer. The heart of this passage is his prayer: he wants to escape death, but for him the will of his Father is more important. Jesus returns three times to his disciples, and finds Peter sleeping three times, and then he denies him three times. Jesus remains more and more alone. The prayer is not for escaping the temptation, rather for standing up to the test. The soul may represent the willing spirit as in Ps 51,12), which earlier is identified with the Holy Spirit, or the pneuma means the human spirit (Mk 2,8; 8,12). He warns his disciples, that the body is weak. After his third return they don't have to stay awake and pray anymore; this is a new situation. Now Jesus knows what God's will is, and he is ready to die.

**Keywords:** Jesus, spirit, flesh, disciples, weakness.

In the pericope of Mark 14,32–42, we read the most intimate prayer of the Gospel according to Mark, given by Jesus. It is delivered just before Jesus's arrest, and in it, the agony of a (divine) man in pain is depicted. He has to face death, and this is not easy for him. This is especially beautiful and encouraging for us because in Mk 14:28 he tells his disciples, "But after I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee", so he knows of his resurrection before his arrest, suffering, execution, but this does not make death any more acceptable - at least not according to the sincere prayer that follows.

Jesus is already on the Mount of Olives with his twelve disciples when they arrive in the Garden of Gethsemane, as recorded in verse 32. The name Gethsemane, according to Craig A. Evans, is derived from the Aramaic *gat šēmānē*, meaning “oil press”.<sup>1</sup> According to Cranfield, the name Gethsemane is derived from the Hebrew *gat šēmānīm*, which also means “oil press”.<sup>2</sup> The Greek transcription in Mark is closer to the Aramaic form. Cranfield notes in the same passage that since Judas knew where Jesus was going, and here he continues quoting Calvin, he (the Master), “as if he had made an assignation with his enemies, he presented himself to death”.<sup>3</sup> Jesus sits his disciples down in the garden in order to go to pray.

Verse 33 reveals that only nine disciples stay seated in the Garden of Gethsemane (Judas must have left after Jesus is going to pray), because he takes three of them with him. This is a special privilege, and suggests some kind of distinction if they are compared with the other disciples. Based on Galatians 2:9, the literature refers to Peter, James and John as “pillar apostles” (stulos). Mark 1:16–20 tells us that Peter, Andrew, James and John were the first to be called to follow him. Of the first disciples called, only Andrew stays, sitting in the Garden of Gethsemane with the larger group of disciples. For the purposes of accuracy, it should also be noted that James, the brother of the Lord in Gal 2:9, is not the same as the son of Zebedee in Mark 1:19, who was executed by Herod in about 40 A.D. (Acts 1:1–2). It can also be said, based on Mark 3:16–17, that Jesus only gave these three disciples new names and, again, gave them a special task. It must also be mentioned that the three disciples in question are the ones who had previously expressed their desire and willingness to suffer and even die with Jesus (Mk 10:38–39; 14:29.31). Now it is time for the proof. As on the Mount of Glorification, here again they fail, but they become the witnesses of these unique events.<sup>4</sup>

From the record, it seems that Jesus and his disciples, after the last supper, went out singing Psalms to the Mount of Olives, where he announced his death, resurrection and Peter’s denial (Mk 14:26–31). They then went to the Garden of Gethsemane on the same mountain, where he seated his nine disciples and went with three of them to pray. We read that he is taken aback, begins to be terrified,

<sup>1</sup> EVANS, Craig A., *Mark 8:27–16:20*. Word Biblical Commentary 34B. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 407.

<sup>2</sup> CRANFIELD, C. E. B., *The Gospel According to St Mark*. The Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959) (reprint 1989), 430.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> FRANCE, R. T., *The Gospel of Mark. A Commentary on the Greek Text*. The New International Greek Testament Commentary. (Grand Rapids, Michigan and Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 2002), 582.

worried, restless, agitated, stressed, even in a state of shock (NEB translation) (ekthambew), and to agonize, to be afraid, suffering, discouraged, anxious, depressed (ademonew). The three disciples witness this, but then he also moves on from them and prays only in the presence of the Father. In Matthew's Gospel, the verb 'to be afraid' is replaced by the verb 'to be sad' (lupew) (Mt 26:37), while Luke is even more plastic when he speaks of Jesus praying in 'agony' (en agwnia), while his sweat fell as great drops of blood on the ground (Lk 22:44). John only mentions that he went out across the stream of Kedron into a garden, but before that we read Jesus's high priestly prayer (Jn 17:1–18:1). In the same line of thought, we can also mention Luke 12:50, where Jesus says, "But I have yet to be baptized with baptism, and how anxious I am until it is done". The verb *sunekhw* (here in passive form) means to torment, afflict, agonize, keep in distress. The fear, anxiety and anguish are signs that it is not easy for Jesus to face death. This is not an expression of a lack of trust in God, for then his prayer would be different, but a full sense of what it means to face the passing, the bitterness of death, even if it is not a hopeless position, for there on the other side is the sure promise and the brightness of resurrection. It would be difficult to suppose that the disciples invented this story, for in that case, they would have described him as facing death calmly and peacefully,<sup>5</sup> and they would not have recorded themselves as having fallen asleep at key moments against Jesus's explicit command.

In verse 34, he calls his three disciples and shares with them that he feels sad, even unto death, or deathly sad, as it can be translated. The adjective 'sad, deeply sad, utterly distressed, very sorrowful'<sup>6</sup> (*perilupos*) is now the third expression that reveals that Jesus is being used and tested to the maximum. We find the same adjective in the LXX when we read in Gen 4:6 about the state of mind Cain was in immediately before he killed his brother Abel. Then Mark uses the term in Mark 6:26 to describe the feelings of Herod Antipas after he had frivolously made a vow to Herodias's daughter, who, on the advice of her mother, had demanded the head of John the Baptist. Its appearance here and its association with *he psukhe mou* may suggest that it is in some way an echo of the refrain in Psa 42:6.12 and 43:5. In the two Psalms in question, the sense of doubt gives way to a sense of trust and calmness in God ("Trust in God, for I will give thanks to him, my God of salvation!" – Psalm 43:5).<sup>7</sup>

He asks his three disciples, or rather commands them, to stay there and watch. Jesus needs their presence that is why he took them with him. The command

<sup>5</sup> HOOKER, Morna D., *The Gospel according to St Mark*. Black's New Testament Commentaries. (London: A & Black, 1991) (reprint 1993), 346.

<sup>6</sup> VARGA, Zsigmond J., *Újszövetségi görög-magyar szótár* (Budapest: Református Zsinati Iroda Sajtóosztálya, 1992), 767.

<sup>7</sup> FRANCE, *The Gospel of Mark*, 582.

to watch (gregorew) continues the main theme of the last parable in Mark 13. The difference is that there they have to watch and keep guard because they do not know when the end will come. Here the command means more than simply 'to stay awake', because the end is at hand, it has begun, it is time for the test, and if they want not to be ashamed they must be vigilant.<sup>8</sup> According to Eduard Schweizer, the call to 'be vigilant' is meant as a counterpoint to the disciples' falling asleep, their falling into slumber, which we will learn about later.<sup>9</sup>

Jesus goes to pray in the garden of Gethsemane (v. 32), and in verses 33–36 we see the content of his prayer. In the first part of the pericope (vv. 33–34), describes how Jesus felt, while in vv. 35–36 the evangelist describes how he coped with this tense, fearful situation.<sup>10</sup> In verse 35, Mark tells us about Jesus's prayer. He describes how Jesus "went a little further", apparently from the three disciples. We find the adjective *micron* ("little") significant here because it implies so much. Jesus needed to be close to his disciples, that is why he took them with him to the Garden of Gethsemane, and that is why he did not go very far from his three disciples. The adjective used here suggests that he stayed within earshot and perhaps within sight. The account in Lk 22:41 supports our hypothesis, because we read there that he "moved away from them about a stone's throw" (hosei lithou bolen). Gundry notes that it was natural to pray with the spoken word, even when the intercessor was alone.<sup>11</sup> This is important to note because many have questioned how this prayer was recorded for us if Jesus was alone. Therefore, the three disciples must have heard their Master's prayer, because we do not know exactly when they fell asleep. Firstly, we can assume that the disciples did not fall asleep immediately, and secondly, that Jesus himself could have told them the content of his prayer after his resurrection.<sup>12</sup> Some scholars have also raised the possibility that the young man wearing the shirt may also have heard the Lord's prayer<sup>13</sup>. However, Jesus wanted to be

<sup>8</sup> HOOKER, *The Gospel according to St Mark*, 348.

<sup>9</sup> SCHWEIZER, Eduard, *The Good News according to Mark*, trans. by Donald H. MADVIG (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1970), 312.

<sup>10</sup> DONAHUE, John R. and Daniel J. HARRINGTON, *The Gospel of Mark*. Sacra Pagina Series, volume 2. (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2002), 411.

<sup>11</sup> GUNDRY, Robert H., *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993) (reprint 2000), 864.

<sup>12</sup> BROWN, R. E., *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave. A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels* (London: Chapman, 1994), 174.

<sup>13</sup> BURKITT, F. C., "The Last Supper and the Paschal Meal," *Journal of Theological Studies* 17 No. 67 (April 1916), 291–297, and SAUNDERSON, B., "Gethsemane: The Missing Witness," *Biblica* 70 (1989): 224–233.

alone with his Father when he spoke to him, and so he moves “a little” away. This closeness and distance illustrate both of Jesus’s needs in the hour of trial.

When he leaves his disciples, he lays on the ground and prays. The Hebrew man usually prayed standing on his feet with his hands raised and looking up to heaven (Mk 6:41; 11:25; Mt 6:5; Lk 18:11.13). Falling on the ground or on one’s face was the habit when one was supplicating, asking for something (Mk 5:22; Mt 18:26.29; Lk 5:12; /17:16 here it is thanksgiving/), or witnessing some extraordinary event, or perhaps experiencing the presence of God (Mt 17:6; Lk 24:5; 1 Cor 14:25; Rev 7:11; 11:16). Going back to the beginning of Scripture, in the Old Testament we read many examples of someone falling on their face (Abraham: Gen 17:1–3; the Israelites: Lev 9:24; Moses and Aaron: Num 14:5; 16:4.22; 17:10; 20:6).<sup>14</sup> The verbs ‘to lie down’ (piptw) and ‘to pray’ (proseukhomai) are in the continuous past tense, which means that Jesus turned to his Father continuously.

Mark presents the supplication here in indirect speech, while in the next verse he records the same prayer in direct speech. Here we are informed that Jesus wishes this hour to pass from him. When he says, “if it be possible” (ei dunaton estin), he is not doubting the power of God, but asking his Father to change the divine plan concerning his death.<sup>15</sup> The “hour” of which Jesus speaks is in God’s power, he determines it. This kind of language is familiar in apocalyptic literature, where it is used in the sense of the end, the fulfillment, the time of judgment (Dan 11:40.45 LXX). The “hour”, which occurs again in verse 41, indicates that it is the hour of his surrender into the hands of sinful men, and this time his request is not heard.

In verse 36, Jesus directly addresses his Father by calling him Abba. The original Aramaic term (abba) appears only in Mark, and expresses an intimate, close, tender relationship (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6). This kind of intimate, bold and uncomplicated address was not characteristic of Hebrew prayer, which avoided the use of God’s name. The “Abba” on Jesus’s lips is clearly a sign that he was aware of his sonship with God.

After the invocation, there is a statement, an acknowledgement: “everything is possible for you”. In the previous verse it was “if it be possible, let this hour pass from him”, but now the intensity of the request is stronger, the hope that God can change his will or bring it about in another way than through death on the cross. In his study, Derrett suggests that perhaps, as in the case of Isaac, God may find another way, even though Abraham’s arm is already raised with the knife ready to fall (Gen 22:1–19).<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> EVANS, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, 410–411.

<sup>15</sup> DONAHUE and HARRINGTON, *The Gospel of Mark*, 408.

<sup>16</sup> DERRETT, J. D. M., “The Prayer in Gethsemane (Mark 14:35-36),” *Journal of Higher Criticism* 4 (1997): 78–88.

After the statement, the acknowledgement comes the formulation of the request: “take this cup from me!” Previously it was an hour, now it is a cup, but both mean the same thing, the substitute death. The verb “take away” (paraferw) is in the imperative, which expresses even more the sincere desire of the Son to escape from the coming death. Jesus shows such a human face that he is terrified, tormented, not wanting to die. When he declared to his disciples in Mk 14:27 that God would beat the shepherd, he was actually quoting Zech 13:7 that the shepherd would be cut off, and now he is begging for an escape from the beating, from the cutting off. The human fragility and weakness found here was often seen as hurtful, unpleasant, downright unacceptable in the Church Fathers’s time and in the Middle Ages, because it did not conform to the orthodox assumption that Jesus could not feel pain and suffer.<sup>17</sup>

In this verse, we can find and read the essence, the centre, the focus of the pericope, the summary of Jesus’s prayer. It contains the desire for release from death, but it does not stop there. He goes on, and there comes the phrase that has given us all hope ever since: ‘nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will’. His desire to obey the Father, his love, overcomes his own fear. Several times in his earthly life he has already refused to deviate from his mission (e.g. in Mk 8:31–33, when Peter cannot imagine his Master being killed, or in 9:2–8, when Peter would build tents so that he could stay with Moses and Elijah on the mount of glory). He accepts the will of God for himself, is baptized with “baptism” (10:38), accepts the “hour” (14:35) and the “cup” (14:36). What he taught his disciples in Mt 6:10, “your will be done”, he again gives effect to, “not as I will, but as you will”.<sup>18</sup>

In verse 37, the prayer is stopped because Jesus returns to the three disciples who are asleep. We do not know exactly how long Jesus prayed, but by the time he returned, his disciples were overcome by sleep. In his question, Jesus blames Peter for an hour (mian oran), that is how long he should have been awake. Evans also calculates Jesus’s distance and the duration of his prayer as an hour or less.<sup>19</sup> He returns to addressing Peter, and by the name of “Simon”, because he is not now worthy of “Peter”, the name of the rock which his Master had given him. He questions him for falling asleep. Peter and two of his fellow disciples should have provided Jesus’s prayer backdrop, but instead

<sup>17</sup> MADIGAN, K., “Ancient and High-Medieval Interpretations of Jesus in Gethsemane: Some Reflections on Tradition and Continuity in Christian Thought,” *Harvard Theological Review* 88 (1995): 157–173.

<sup>18</sup> EDWARDS, James R., *The Gospel According to Mark*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Leicester, England: Apollos 2002), 434–435.

<sup>19</sup> EVANS, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, 414.

they slumber. Peter had vowed a few hours earlier that he would not stumble and that even if he had to die for his Saviour, he would not deny him (vv. 29–31). In the meantime, the denial begins to slowly, almost unnoticeably, to creep up, to mature, and to take shape. For the moment, Peter and his two companions are only falling asleep, an emotional letting down, but it foreshadows a literal abandonment, when they will literally escape, and then Peter will deny. Jesus will come back three times, Peter will fall asleep three times, and this is a prelude to his three times of denial. Jesus is gradually left alone, the furthest from him is Judas, who is about to betray him, but he is also far from the eight disciples sitting in Gethsemane's garden. His three differentiated disciples are left near him in vain, they fell asleep during the prayers of their suffering Master, who is about to die for them.

In verse 38, the reproach continues, but now it is addressed not only to Peter, but also to all three of them, because it uses the plural form. For the second time, the command to keep vigil (*gregorew*) is given – though there is more than just staying awake – because the first imperative had resulted in their falling asleep. In addition to the vigil, another command is given now, and that is to pray (*proseukhomai*). They are to watch and pray so that they do not fall into temptation. Here the supplication is not so much to avoid the trial as to be able to stand it. They have previously assured Jesus that they were ready to die with him (v. 31), ready to take the cup and be baptised (10:38–39), and now it is time for them to act accordingly. In their prayer, this earlier commitment may be expressed, even in the form of Jesus's pleading that this hour may pass from them, that this cup may be taken away from them, not as they will, but as God wills. For now, they have only to be vigilant and pray, because temptation is all around them. They have already fallen once, but now they are being given a second chance.

Jesus warns them that the soul is ready, but the body is powerless. This is also the dilemma of the disciples: the soul represents the human response to God, while the body represents human weakness (cf. Isa 31:3).<sup>20</sup> Cranfield, in seeking the meaning of the words soul and body in this verse, first thinks of the analogy of the words “my soul is ready” (Ps 51:14), the parallel of the ready soul in Psalm 51, which is identified with the Holy Spirit in the previous verse of the psalm. In the light of this, the Holy Spirit given to the disciples is ready, but human nature is weak (*asthenes*). Then, further exploring the burr of the meaning of the words, he assumes – correctly, I think – that the spirit (*pneuma*) here, like in Mk 2:8 and 8:12, means the human spirit, and Jesus applauds their willingness to do good “so that their weakness may not make them despair” (Calvin).<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> HOOKER, *The Gospel according to St Mark*, 349.

<sup>21</sup> CRANFIELD, *The Gospel According to St Mark*, 434.

Verse 39 records Jesus going to pray again. This is his second leaving of the three disciples, and more than likely, he is also going to a nearby place, as we read in verse 35. It is assumed that he came back to his three disciples because he wanted to take strength from their presence in prayer together, their communion. He must have been disappointed. In the parallel account in Luke's Gospel, we read that an angel appeared to him from heaven and strengthened him (Lk 22:43). After Peter's rebuke and the disciples's instruction, he continues his supplication. He gives a personal example of the command just given. His second prayer seems to have been the same in content as the first, but many have argued, it was not a literal agreement.<sup>22</sup> This may be confusing because the new translation's wording "prayed with the same words" (*proseuxato ton auton logon*) may suggest that there was a literal agreement between the two prayers, but the Greek text also allows us to translate it as "prayed the same (not the same way)". Whatever the case, Jesus was presented with the same question, the same situation. Perhaps it was after the first prayer that it began to become clear to him what the Father's will was. The phrase "as you will" in verse 36 suggests this.

Verse 40 tells us that Jesus returns a second time and finds them sleeping again. Experiencing this, his loneliness only increases. Mark also explains their second failure, as "their eyes were heavy". They were in such an uncomfortable situation that they did not know how to respond to him, how to explain what had happened. Even after the clear command to watch and pray, they could not stay awake, and so could not pray. Peter had been in this situation more than once, and on one occasion – on the mount of glory – we read the same thing about him: "he did not know what to say, for they were so terrified" (Mk 9:6). There too, the three disciples in question were present. Peter had misunderstood his Teacher earlier, when he first announced his coming sufferings (8:31–33), so much so that he earned the adjective "Satan".

Mann also points out that the rabbis's rule was that if, during a celebration, one of the members fell into such a deep sleep that he could not answer the question asked, the celebration was declared over. Even then, a distinction was made between falling into slumber and deep sleep. Mark's remark about the disciples's sleep and their inability to answer may have been a reference to this rabbinical practice, and it would then not only be that Jesus did not want to be

<sup>22</sup> SWETE, Henry Barclay, *The Gospel According to St Mark* (London: Macmillan and Co. / New York: The Macmillan Company, 1905), 347; HENDRIKSEN, William, *The Gospel of Mark*. New Testament Commentary. (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1987<sup>3</sup>), 590.

alone in his agony, but that it was against his will to end the celebration of the Pesach so early.<sup>23</sup>

Tertullian writes in his work “On Prayer” that when God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son, he was not tempting him to evil, but testing his faith. Through the example of Abraham, he showed what it is like to be a man for whom the pledge of love is no more important than God. Later, when the Lord asked his disciples to “pray that you may not be tempted”, he expected the same commitment. Nevertheless, they were tempted, abandoning their Lord by giving free way to the temptation of sleep, instead of enduring in prayer.<sup>24</sup>

Verse 41 does not record Jesus’s going and praying in the third time, only his returning a third time. Nor does Mark say that the disciples have fallen asleep again, but Jesus’s words make it clear that this is the case. He tells them, or more precisely commands them, to sleep (*katheudw*) and rest (*anapauw*). Morgan argues that Jesus is not saying this ironically, but precisely in a loving way. According to him, a time must have gone by while the disciples slept, and Jesus was watching over their sleep, because the hour had not yet come, Judas had not yet arrived.<sup>25</sup> All this is difficult to prove, but the adverb *to loipon* (further) does not rule it out completely. The Codex Bobbiensis has resolved this issue by inserting “after a little while he waked them up” before “the hour came”.<sup>26</sup> The command of Jesus is the exact opposite of what he had been asking them to do. Now they no longer have to watch and pray with him. This also indicates that the situation has radically changed.

Jesus’s next words are about this change. He says “enough”. The verb *apekhw* gives the exegetes quite a lot to think about. It could mean enough, it could mean that it is done (that is, the death of Jesus is no longer in question), it could mean that it is paid in full (Judas has received the money for betraying Jesus and is therefore ready to act), or it could mean that he (Judas) will take possession of me (Jesus).<sup>27</sup>

He announces that the time has come. He had previously wanted to avoid this hour, this cup, but now he says otherwise. In his first prayer, he did not want to die, but in humility he said that the Father’s will be done. Two wills

<sup>23</sup> MANN, C. S., *Mark. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. The Anchor Bible, Volume 27. (New York, London, Toronto, Sidney, Auckland: Doubleday, 1986), 592–593.

<sup>24</sup> ODEN, Thomas C. & Christopher A. HALL (eds.), *Mark. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*. New Testament II. (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 203.

<sup>25</sup> MORGAN, G. Campbell, *The Gospel According to Mark* (New York, Chicago, London, Edinburgh: Fleming H. Revell Company, s. a.), 303.

<sup>26</sup> METZGER, Bruce M., *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London / New York: United Bible Societies, 1971) (revised 1975), 114–115.

<sup>27</sup> BROOKS, James A., *Mark*. The New American Commentary, volume 23. (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1991), 235.

clashed there in the garden of Gethsemane. In his second prayer, similar thoughts were expressed. After his third prayer, he became sure that this was the Father's will and the way forward for him. Now he does not want to stay alive, the time when he thought that there was another way out of this is over. It is clear to him that this is what he must do, and he is ready to accept death on the cross.<sup>28</sup>

The coming of the hour necessarily implies that the Son of Man will be given into the hands of sinful men, betrayed. In 9:31 he said that he would be given "into the hands of men" (eis kheiraj anthrwpwn), but here the situation is aggravated, for he mentions that he will be given "into the hands of sinners" (eis tas kheiras twn amartwlwn).<sup>29</sup> Earlier in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus speaks three times of his coming betrayal, suffering, death and resurrection (8:31–32; 9:30–31; 10:32–34). On all three occasions, he calls himself the Son of Man. The Son of Man, the Messianic King, did not use the power of his position. Now he is given over to his opponents, the sinners.<sup>30</sup>

In verse 42 the scene moves on. Much has happened in the last verses: Jesus returned for the third time and found his three disciples asleep. This time he did not wake them up, did not rebuke them, but let them rest. Either they are asleep and he speaks to them asleep, or they wake up and he speaks to them half asleep. He may have let them rest for a while, but then the situation changes again, or he may have seen the coming torchlight and is now giving them a wake-up call. "Wake up, get up, come on!" (egeirw), sounds the command. They must go, more than possibly to the other eight disciples, before Judas gets there. He is not calling them to escape, but to meet what is about to happen.

They must go, because the traitor is close. The previously mentioned adjective "sinners" (amartwlos) also applies to Judas, who betrays him. Here Jesus knows definitely, what betrayal is waiting for him. The hardest part of the trial comes next.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> FOCANT, Camille, *L'évangile selon Marc*. Commentaire Biblique: Nouveau Testament, 2. (Paris, Les Éditions du Cerf, 2004), 541.

<sup>29</sup> FRANCE, *The Gospel of Mark*, 589–590.

<sup>30</sup> GOULD, Ezra P., *The Gospel According to St. Mark*. The International Critical Commentary. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1896), 272.

<sup>31</sup> WITHERINGTON, Ben, *The Gospel of Mark. A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 380.

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