

# Expository Thoughts On Mark - Mark 14:53-65

by J.C. Ryle

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## Transcript

Solomon tells us in the book of Ecclesiastes, that one evil he has seen under the sun, is when "folly is set in great dignity, and the rich sit in low place." (Eccles. 10:6.) We can imagine no more complete illustration of his words than the state of things we have recorded in the passage before us. We see the Son of God, "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," arraigned as a malefactor before "the chief priests, and elders, and scribes." We see the heads of the Jewish nation combining together to kill their own Messiah, and judging Him who will one day come in glory to judge them and all mankind. These things sound marvelous, but they are true.

Let us observe in these verses, how foolishly Christians sometimes thrust themselves into temptation. We are told that when our Lord was led away prisoner, "Peter followed Him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest--and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire." There was no wisdom in this act. Having once forsaken his Master and fled, he ought to have remembered his own weakness, and not to have ventured into danger again. It was an act of rashness and presumption. It brought on him fresh trials of faith, for which he was utterly unprepared. It threw him into bad company, where he was not likely to get good, but harm. It paved the way for his last and greatest transgression--his thrice-repeated denial of his Master.

But it is an experimental truth that ought never to be overlooked, that when a believer has once begun to back-slide and leave his first faith, he seldom stops short at his first mistake. He seldom makes only one stumble. He seldom commits only one fault. A blindness seems to come over his understanding. He appears to cast over-board his common sense and discretion. Like a stone rolling down-hill, the further he goes on in sinning, the faster and more decided is his course. Like David, he may begin with idleness, and end with committing every possible crime. Like Peter, he may begin with cowardice--go on to foolish trifling with temptation, and then end with denying Christ.

If we know any thing of true saving religion, let us ever beware of the beginnings of backsliding. It is like the letting out of water, first a drop and then a torrent. Once out of the way of holiness, there is no saying to what we may come. Once giving way to petty inconsistencies, we may find ourselves one day committing every sort of wickedness. Let us keep far from the brink of evil. Let us not play with fire. Let us never fear being too particular, too strict, and too precise. No petition in the Lord\

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