

From A Distance by Adam Hofer

How are you following Christ from a distance? This question kept coming into my mind as I was preparing a message recently for Mark 14:53-72. This is an important question because by asking it, we open the door for God to convict our hearts and empower us to surrender our lives to Him. If we are honest with ourselves, we often follow Christ from a distance.

In the passage, Jesus was taken by the guards to the high priest's house for an informal night trial. Meanwhile, Peter followed from a distance. He followed as an observer because persecution and death awaited him if he were closer to Jesus. He followed right into the courtyard of the high priest. There, he sought out comfort by a fire with the servants because it was cold. He watched as they brought Jesus inside the high priest's house to be judged.

Inside the house, stood the whole Sanhedrin, all 71 members, even though only 23 members were needed to convict Jesus of a crime. They stood there to conduct an unlawful trial. The trial was unlawful because the trial was done at night, at a house instead of the Chamber of Hewn-Stone, and on a feast day. Yet, not one Sanhedrin member wanted to miss the chance to condemn Jesus.

They were looking for "evidence" (Gk. *marturia*, meaning "witness" or "testimony") against Jesus so they could put him to death. Yet, they were not interested in the truth. They had already determined to kill Jesus. Their problem was they lacked the evidence to justify capital punishment. However, no evidence was found.



Two stepped forward saying they heard Jesus say, "I will destroy this temple made with human hands and in three days will build another, not made with hands." This would have been a capital offense. However, when separated, their statements did not agree.

Out of frustration, the high priest got up and spoke directly with Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" Jesus remained silent, which fulfilled Isaiah 53: "Like a lamb who is led before the slaughter is silent, so He opened not His mouth." The high priests pressed on, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" Jesus replied, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." This was a clear reference to Daniel 7, which described the Son of Man coming on the clouds in the Ancient of Days having authority, glory, and sovereign power over all nations. Eternal dominion. In other words, Jesus said, "I will be back, and you will be judged by Me." The high priest then tore his clothes, which was a symbolic expression of horror that was required of the high priests whenever he heard blasphemy. They all condemned him as worthy of death.

Meanwhile, Peter was below in the courtyard undergoing a trial of his own. Yet, not with religious leaders. Rather, with a servant with no power or authority. "You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus," she said. He denied it. Later, in the entryway, she said again, "This fellow is one of them." Again, he denied it. About an hour later, those standing near to Peter said, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean." He denied Jesus for a third time. However, this time he welcomed God's judgment to fall on him if he were lying. The rooster crowed. He looked over at Jesus and Jesus looked back at him. He broke down and wept.

He wept because he followed Jesus from a distance. And following from a distance led him to deny Jesus. And while he denied Jesus, he sought out comfort by a fire. The question I have for you is: **How are you following Christ from a distance?** The truth is we follow from a distance when we claim to be Christians, yet deny the faith with others. We follow from a distance when we say Jesus is our Savior, yet do not show He is our Lord through our actions and words. We follow from a distance when we seek the fires of comfort in our lives instead of surrendering to His will. We follow from a distance when we expect our walk with God to cost us nothing. We follow from a distance when we resist God's call in our lives out of fear of being looked down upon, standing out, and persecuted. All of which Jesus experienced in the passage. This Easter, ponder this question and intentionally decide to stand with Christ, even when doing so is hard. Stand with Christ, but not from a distance!

Mobile Ministry—Ready To Launch!

We are excited to announce that we are going to start a Mobile Ministry this Spring! Our 24' trailer will be outfitted to be a Travel Repair Station that will be stationed in neighborhoods, apartment complexes, schools, and churches throughout Sioux Falls metro. John Blok, our Care Center Coordinator / Pastor, will be heading this new venture. Our Mobile Ministry will give us the flexibility to be an active presence in the very neighborhoods our guests live throughout Sioux Falls metro.



Immigrants in Sioux Falls

Historically, our Bike Ministry has served the homeless and working-poor populations in Sioux Falls metro. However, we are rolling in new directions! From now on, we are partnering with LSS New Americans to ensure all new immigrants in Sioux Falls have reliable bicycle transportation to and from work. As people from around the world adjust to living in the States, we feel blessed to be part of their journey.

Join Our Team as our Bike Ministry Coordinator!

Our Geared-To-Empower Bike Ministry is in need of a Bike Ministry Coordinator. Their main job duties would include: 1) sharing the Good News of Jesus, 2) recruiting, training, and assisting volunteers, 3) assisting children and adults with bicycle repair, and 4) preparing bicycles for guests. If interested in joining our team, please send Adam Hofer your resume and cover letter via email at adam@centerofhopesf.org.

The Importance of Outreach

Outreach is a major part of the Center of Hope mission! Brian Narcomey joined our team as our Outreach Pastor one year ago! Since starting, he started a weekly Bible Study at the Bishop Dudley Hospitality House, an evening Talking Circle at the St. Francis House, and is active in outreach on the streets, hospitals, hospices, and homes. The next time you see Pastor Brian, thank him for his service at Center of Hope. He is a blessing to our guests!

Let's Connect—Mission Moments, Pulpit Supplies, and MORE!

Out of our gratitude, we want you to know that we value our partnership in ministry. If you are a pastor, elder, or deacon of a church, do not hesitate to reach out to us if you need pulpit supply help or if you want us to update your congregation on what God has been doing at the Center of Hope. We would love to join you for worship! **All for HIS glory and honor.**



MEMORIAL GIFTS

Center of Hope appreciates the gifts In Memory of — Robert Ageson and Phyllis Rogers

Your Gifts SPREADS HOPE:

Stock or Commodity Gifts—Talk to your financial advisor about gifting stocks and commodities to the Center of Hope.

Make it Double—Check with your employer to see if they will match your charitable contributions to the Center of Hope.

Be a Sustainer of Hope—A monthly gift will bring stability to individuals and families. Give online at: www.centerofhopesf.org

In-Kind Gifts—Clothing, Winter gear, Bicycles, Hygiene items, Backpacks for people transitioning out of prison, encouragement cards/letters, office supplies before donating)

Financial Update

Fiscal year runs from April to March, for the year 2025-26

April—To Date. Income
\$0

2024-25 Budget Need
\$472,553.04

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