

Quick Exit

Scripture Reading — Mark 14:44-52

Then all the disciples deserted him and fled. — Matthew 26:56

In a congregation that I served as a pastor, our membership included a large number of immigrants from Africa: refugees from deadly civil wars in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ethiopia/Eritrea, and Sudan. Adjustment to North American culture (and winter temperatures) was not easy, but there was gratitude and relief for a new opportunity in Canada. Slowly but surely, the immigrants found the church community to be a safe place to share stories and testimonies of what they had endured. Each refugee story was different.

But there was a common element in every story, whether the refugee came from a rural village, a town, or a city: the experience of feeling abandoned, deserted by people whom they had assumed would be there for them if trouble came. Sometimes the abandonment was by a neighbor, or by one they thought was a friend, or by a small business partner, or a fellow worshiper, or even a family member.

When the temple guards came to seize Jesus, it was his closest followers who abandoned him, exiting quickly in a panic. One escaped only because his garment tore off as a soldier seized him. Jesus had to face the ordeal ahead of him alone.

Have you ever felt alone and abandoned? Please know that Jesus is there for you and can help to fill the emptiness with his presence.

Prayer

Lord, help me to notice when someone feels abandoned. Then help me to know how best to be used by you to fill that void. In your name, Amen.

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