

Holy Wednesday
St. Luke 22:1—23:42
April 8th, 2020
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Then Satan Entered Judas

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Every day of Holy Week has its own unique character; something that adds to the narrative of our Lord's Passion. On Palm Sunday the focus is on our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem; the Prince of Peace coming into the City of Peace to be crowned the King of Peace through His death on the holy cross. On Holy Monday the focus of the Gospel pericope is our Lord's visit to the house of Lazarus and His being anointed by Mary in preparation of His death and burial. On Holy Tuesday the focus is on our Lord + Jesus being buried in the ground, like a grain of wheat, in order that He might bring forth much life for all those who believe on Him; that He might give us eternal life when we die in Him.

Tomorrow and the next day, on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, the focus is plain to see. On Maundy Thursday we focus on the institution of our Lord's Supper—the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. The Gospel of the washing of the feet of the Apostles illustrates for us that in the Blessed Sacraments our Lord + Jesus washes us clean of our sin. In Holy Baptism He washes us with water and His Word. In the Lord's Supper, He washes our sin away through His very own Blood poured out for us on the tree of the holy cross, where He offered His Body as a once and for all time sacrifice for us and all mankind.

The Propers for Holy Saturday take us to the grave of our Lord + Jesus Christ. In the grave, on the Sabbath (Saturday) He rests from all of His labors to atone for the sins of all mankind. His rest in the grave is a reminder of the rest our bodies will have in the grave until the Last Day, when our Lord + Jesus calls all those who believe on His Name out of their graves to be reunited with Him in Heaven. There we will be given new and glorious bodies—a wedding garment to wear—to attend the eternal marriage feast of the Lamb in His Kingdom. The Church—the Bride of Christ—will be united to the Bridegroom—our Lord + Jesus Christ—and we will sing the eternal Liturgy which we practice every time we gather here in this place.

So, you can see that every day in Holy Week draws our focus to the death of our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. We are turned away from what we do, or think we can do, to the only saving work that has been done on our behalf, the work of our Lord + Jesus on the tree of the holy cross. Well, what is the focus of today? How does today fit in with this overarching theme of Holy Week? Holy Wednesday has always been the day of our Lord's betrayal. This is why Wednesdays throughout the year (when it is not a Feast or Festival) are days of penitence and fasting. In the same way that Fridays are special

days of penitence and fasting on account of Good Friday (every Friday is a mini-Good Friday), every Wednesday is a remembrance of our Lord's betrayal at the hands of His disciple Judas Iscariot.

This is why the Passion History from the Evangelist St. Luke begins by telling us that "Satan entered Judas." One may ask, "Why is not Thursday considered the day of our Lord's betrayal, since it is on that day that our Lord is arrested after the Holy Supper?" The answer is that it is on Wednesday, according to Church tradition, that Judas agreed to betray our Lord + Jesus into the hands of sinful man for thirty pieces of silver. The events of Holy Monday, where Judas was publicly chastised by the Lord for his greed, come to their full fruition. Therefore, the focus of today, Holy Wednesday, is the betrayal of our Lord + Jesus by Judas which leads to His crucifixion and death.

Every day of Holy Week draws our focus to the crucifixion of our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ, adding in a particular aspect that leads to His cross and suffering on our behalf.

It is easy for us, and the rest of the world, to beat up on Judas Iscariot for his betrayal of our Lord + Jesus. It gives us someone at which to direct our hatred. He is certainly culpable. He is definitely guilty of the crime charged against him. He even shows his unbelief when he ends his own life in despair. Therefore, it is easy for us to distance ourselves from the works and actions of Judas. But should we? Our sins are no greater than the sin of Judas. Every time we sin, we also betray our Lord God, for we have disregarded Him and His will and Law. We have only acted in our own interests to the disregard of the Lord God, and often times we act to the disregard of our fellowman, whom we see every day. If we can disregard our neighbor who we see, how much easier it is for us to disregard the Lord God Who we do not see.

Satan entered Judas on account of his greed, and since the chief priests and scribes were willing to pay him for his betrayal, he willingly allowed Satan to have reign over his actions; he allowed Satan to deceive him to the destruction of his very own soul. He was deceived into committing mortal sin; He betrayed an innocent man into the hands of the men who plotted to kill Him. He was a willing participant in the death of the Lord + Jesus.

When we willingly sin; when we willingly disregard God's Word and Law, Satan also enters us. Many men allow Satan to rule their every thought, word, and deed. If we are honest, we also have to admit there have been times where we have chosen to obey the tenets of our own sinful flesh and done what we wanted contrary to God's Word and Law. The end of Judas should serve as a warning for us. He allowed Satan to enter into him and allowed the devil to deceive him to the destruction of his very own soul. Judas was deceived into great sin, shame and eventually into despair so that he went out and hung himself and his entrails spilled onto the ground. A gruesome death for committing a gruesome act. It is a picture of only a portion of the horrors that await unbelievers in Hell.

The example of Judas should scare us, especially when we are faced with temptation. We are tempted often to pursue our own wants and desires contrary to the will and Law of God, and to the detriment of our neighbors. This is why, out of His great love for us our Lord + Jesus sends us His Holy Ghost to preach into our ears that He is our salvation. He is the One Who, even though betrayed into death by Judas Iscariot, willingly endures the suffering, shame and death at the hands of these sinful men, so that He might atone for the sins of the whole world. He atones for the sins of the whole world, so that all those who in their trial and temptations by Satan, that serpent of old, might look up to the cross of our Lord + Jesus in faith and be saved.

Through faith in the Lord + Jesus; through faith in His sacrifice for us, we have forgiveness of sins. Through His cross and death, He draws all mankind to Himself. We who daily are tried and tested by the devil into great sin, shame and despair, find comfort and peace in the sacrifice of our Lord + Jesus on our behalf. It is His cross that has redeemed us from the power of the devil. It is His cross

that brings us out of eternal death into eternal life. It is His cross that takes away the condemnation that we deserve Hell, and proclaims to us that He has suffered and died for us, so that He might prepare and eternal home for us in Heaven.

When the devil tries to deceive us into great sin and shame, the Holy Ghost is there with the Word of God reminding us that our citizenship is in Heaven. We are members of the Body of Christ, and because of this the devil has no power over us. Therefore, when we are tempted let us not allow Satan to enter us as he did Judas, but instead let us use the Word of God as a trusty shield and weapon against the slings and arrows of the devil, the world, and against our sinful flesh. For the Lord + Jesus has been betrayed into the hands of sinful men, so that we do not have to be betrayed into the power and kingdom of the devil.

For this reason, let all the world bend the knee at the Name of our Lord + Jesus; all those in Heaven and on Earth; of those above the Earth and beneath it. For our Lord + Jesus has obeyed the Law of God to the point of death on our behalf. He has fought that old serpent of old on the tree of the holy cross and even though His heel was bruised, He crushed the head of the serpent by His death and burial. For this we give Him hearty thanks, for He has rescued from the power of the devil, and given us a place in His Kingdom, where we wear the white robes of His righteousness, and sing with Him and all the saints and angels the eternal Liturgy of the Lamb in His Kingdom. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!