

Holy Wednesday
St. Luke 22:1—23:42
March 31st, 2021
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

When the Hour Had Come

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.

On Holy Monday we learned that Judas Iscariot's fall into perdition did not just happen instantly. Greed did not just suddenly overtake him. In the Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. John on Holy Monday the Evangelist told us that Judas Iscariot was in charge of the moneybox and that he would often take what was in it for himself. He was already consumed with greed before this Holy Week of our Lord's suffering and death. The Evangelist St. Luke tells us in today's Gospel reading that as the Passover approached the chief priests and scribes had gathered together to determine what they were to do about the Lord + Jesus. They had determined that the only course of action was to kill Him.

We learned also from the Gospel reading on Holy Monday that this meeting by the chief priests and scribes was prompted by the triumphal entry of our Lord + Jesus into the city of Jerusalem as He entered on a donkey and the colt of a donkey to the shouts of praise to the crowds welcoming into the city as a Victor. In their jealousy—because they would no longer be needed when the only High Priest necessary to atone for the sins of the people was now in their midst—they sought to get rid of Him. What is not said in that Gospel reading, but is made clear by today's Gospel reading is that the method of death that they preferred was crucifixion. They did not just want Him dead, but they wanted Him hanged upon a tree. For holy Scripture declares that all those who are hanged on a tree are cursed. They wanted this Man + Jesus to hanged on a tree, so that they could claim Him to be cursed in the sight of the world.

This plot was truly evil. The only Man, Who was also the Lord God incarnate, Who was perfect and without sin, they wanted to be considered accursed. The only One Who could atone for their sins and the sins of the whole world, they thoroughly reject. They want no part of this Man and the redemption that He can bring them. To further this plan, they put out the word that they were looking for men and ways that this plan could be executed. On account of his greed, Judas Iscariot went to the chief priests and scribes and agreed to betray the Lord + Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. His greed began when he was in charge of the moneybox. It found its completion when he agreed to betray the Lord + Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. Judas Iscariot only needed to wait for the right opportunity to hand over the Lord + Jesus to the chief priests and scribes. A time when the crowds were not surrounding the Lord + Jesus and He was all alone with just His Apostles.

When the hour had come the Lord + Jesus gathered together with Judas and His Apostles in the large furnished upper room to eat the Passover meal in which our Lord instituted the Lord's Supper for all those who cling to Him in faith and are made members of the Church. Our Lord + Jesus fervently desired to eat the Passover with His Apostles because it was the final preparation He needed to make before His sufferings and death. Our Lord + Jesus fervently desires to share this meal with us, too. He fervently desires for us to participate in His sufferings and death—to remember the offering up of His Body on the holy cross, and His shedding of Blood for us—for by these means He grants all those who eat this meal in faith forgiveness of all their sins, and where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

But this meal does not happen; this Passion of our Lord + Jesus does not happen without the betrayal of Judas Iscariot. This is why this Gospel comes on Holy Wednesday. Every Wednesday throughout the year is a mini remembrance of the betrayal of Judas. This is why Wednesdays are days of fasting throughout the year. Just as every Friday is a remembrance of the crucifixion of our Lord + Jesus on Good Friday, and is also a day of fasting throughout the year. This is why we also have a weekly day of feasting, too. Sundays are a mini remembrance of the resurrection of our Lord + Jesus, and so every Sunday is a day to feast and celebrate. We celebrate by sharing with one another the meal that our Lord + Jesus offers to us to give us remission of sins—His Body and Blood given to us in bread and wine.

So far this week we have heard three of the four Passions from the four Evangelists. The Evangelist St. Luke begins his Passion with the betrayal of Judas Iscariot. This is the beginning of the end for our Lord and Savior + Jesus, the Christ. But these things do not happen without our Lord's knowledge. Indeed, as He sat at the Passover meal with His Apostles—the meal He fervently desired to eat with them—He reveals that one of them would betray Him. This betrayal takes place after the meal when the Lord + Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane praying while His Apostles slept. A large crowd led by Judas Iscariot approached them in the Garden, and Judas went up to the Lord + Jesus and kissed Him.

He betrayed the Lord with a kiss. He came pretending to be a friend, but was in fact the enemy. Such is the way with evil most often. Evil does not come dressed in a scary Halloween mask. Evil does not come revealing its full evil. Evil comes as a friend. It comes as a deceiver to deceive. If we readily see the deception and lie, there would be no reason for us to fall, but because sin and temptation come as a friend to deceive, we quickly are led astray by the deception. Judas comes to betray our Lord + Jesus with a kiss. He comes as a friend to the Lord; a trusted Apostle and confidant. But our Lord + Jesus, being the perfect and sinless Son of God sees right through the lie and deception.

The serpent in the Garden of Eden also came to Adam and Eve as a friend and confidant. He came pretending to be a helper to our first parents. He gave the impression that he only sought to help out Adam and Eve; help them to know good and evil. Surely such knowledge has to be useful for mankind. Certainly, the Lord God would not withhold something that would benefit Adam and Eve. And so, the deceiver deceived Adam and Eve into eating from the tree of which the Lord God forbade them, and their eyes were opened to see that they were the ones who were deceived.

Judas Iscariot—the deceiver who betrayed the Lord + Jesus with a kiss—also realized way too late that he also had been deceived by the chief priests and the scribes. I am not sure what he thought would be the end result of his betrayal. Perhaps he thought that the Lord would be put in prison, or maybe even be beaten and scourged at the most, but he is despondent and saddened when he realized that the true intent of the chief priests and scribes was to kill the Lord + Jesus. They did not just want to kill Him, too, they wanted Him declared cursed by being hanged on a tree. They wanted to see Him crucified. Sadly, in his despair over the realization of what he did, he did not seek forgiveness. He did not look for forgiveness from the Lord + Jesus. Instead, he allowed himself to be further deceived by

the devil into hopelessness. He did not believe that there could be any forgiveness for him. Therefore, he went and hanged himself upon a tree. This man who tried to deceive our Lord + Jesus by pretending to be His friend and betray Him with a kiss, was deceived into becoming the son of perdition, and was cursed by hanging on a tree.

Our Lord + Jesus was also hung on a tree. He ended up exactly where the chief priests and scribes wanted Him to be. But this was all by our Lord God's design. It was His plan to offer up the life of the Son of God as a ransom for the sins of the whole world and the justification of all those who believe on Him. Our Lord + Jesus became cursed for us by hanging on a tree for us. He Who was innocent and without sin became a curse for us, so that all those who cling to Him, and this work of His, would never be considered cursed, but would be called the righteousness of the Lord.

When the hour had come our Lord + Jesus sat down with His Apostles and ate the Passover meal, and instituted the Lord's Supper for us. When the hour had come, He was led away like a lamb to the slaughter. He remained silent as a lamb before its shearers. When the hour had come, He won for us and all mankind forgiveness for our sins. He became a curse so that we would no longer be cursed. And then He gives us to eat of this blessed meal wherein He calls us to remember this sacrifice that He did for us, and receive through it, forgiveness, life and salvation. Therefore, my dear friends, let us come to this altar and receive the meal that removes the curse of sin from us, and grants us the blessing of the remission of our sins. 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!