

Holy Wednesday
St. Luke 22:1—23:42
April 13th, 2022
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

The Feast of Unleavened Bread Drew Near

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 Palm Sunday we processed into the holy city of Jerusalem with our Lord + Jesus as He was greeted by the very great multitude with palm and olive branches and shouts of praise for the arrival of the King of Israel, the Son of David, entering into King David's city. On Monday we were taken back to the day before when our Lord ate at the house of Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead after four days, showing His power over death. He was also anointed for His own burial by Mary, the sister of Lazarus, with very costly spikenard. In his greed, Judas Iscariot was indignant, feigning care for the poor as a mask for his own greed. Yesterday, on Tuesday, our Lord + Jesus reflected upon what benefit the whole world would receive for His death on the cross. When the wheat seed went into the ground and died, it would produce much fruit. When the Bread of Life—our Lord + Jesus—was buried in the ground after His death on the cross, He would draw all men to Himself.

Thus, we have a brief summary so far of our journey with our Lord through His suffering and death to His death for the sins of the whole world on the tree of the holy cross. Today, the Wednesday of Holy Week, is all about betrayal. This is why Wednesdays throughout the year are considered days of fasting, because it is the day upon which the preparations for our Lord's betrayal were made between the chief priests and scribes and Judas Iscariot. The Evangelist St. Luke in his Passion history of our Lord points to the chief betrayer of our Lord; to the one who is at the head of all betrayal and hatred for our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. The father of betrayal is Satan, the devil, the old evil foe. He is the one that is plotting our Lord's death and destruction on the tree of the holy cross. He hates the Lord God so much that he does not care that by nailing the Lord + Jesus to the tree of the cross he brings about his own utter defeat.

Satan is the one responsible for bringing the chief priests and scribes together with Judas Iscariot. First, he fills the chief priests and scribes, and all the unbelieving Pharisees and Sadducees, with envy toward the Lord + Jesus. They religious leaders of our Lord's time are simply jealous of our Lord. This we learned yesterday from the Passion of our Lord + Jesus Christ according to St. Mark. Even Pontius Pilate understood that the chief priests and scribes had handed over the Lord + Jesus on account of envy. Envy is a sin that leads to other greater sins. Envy breeds murder. Consider the examples we have from holy Scripture. Cain, the first son of Adam and Eve, was jealous of his younger brother Abel, because his sacrificial offerings were accepted by the Lord God and his was not. To what did his jealousy lead? He murdered his brother Abel so that his blood cried out from the ground up to

Heaven; his blood cried out to the Lord God.

What about the brothers of Joseph, the sons of Jacob, called Israel, the ones for whom the twelve tribes of Israel are named? Joseph would have dreams and would tell his dreams to his brothers, and his father and mother. His dreams foretold that his brothers would bow down before him; he would be their superior. His brothers, who were all older, did not like that very much. They grew more and more jealous of him, and when they had the opportunity, they plotted to kill him. He was rescued by his oldest brother Reuben from death, because he had planned to get back into his father's good graces after his own sin of sleeping with his father's concubine. And the Lord God used the whole event to put Joseph in a position to save his brothers, and his father, and their families from death by starvation. But this again is an example of envy leading to thoughts of murder.

Satan who is the father of lies, and was called by the Lord + Jesus in one of the Gospel readings for the season of Lent, a murderer from the beginning, led the chief priests and scribes into jealousy and hatred for the Lord. This bloomed into a full passion for murder. They desired greatly to put the Lord + Jesus to death. But they could not do it themselves, for they feared the crowds. They loved the praise of men more than the praise of the Lord God. They would rather not do anything to the Lord + Jesus and save face with the crowds, than act on their desire for murder spawned by their envy and jealousy.

For this reason, the devil, Satan, enters into Judas Iscariot. The chief priests and scribes were led by the devil into betrayal of the Lord + Jesus over their jealousy of Him. The old evil foe uses a different tactic with Judas Iscariot. There are sins that lead to greater, more soul-destroying sins. Envy leads to murder. The sin of Judas that clung to his flesh was greed. He loved money more than He loved the Lord. The scribes and the chief priests loved the praise of men more than they loved the Lord and it led to their envy of the Lord, for the whole world went after Him. Judas Iscariot's love of money led his break from the Lord + Jesus.

We heard on Monday how Judas was indignant because the fragrant oil that Mary used to anoint the feet of the Lord + Jesus was "wasted." He tried to hide his greed by feigning care for the poor. Greedy people always sound more caring for other people when it is somebody else's money they are desiring to spend. St. John in his Gospel tells us that Judas was a thief; he had control of the moneybox and would take what was in it. His greed would lead to his betrayal of the Lord + Jesus. His greed would lead to his eternal demise.

Therefore, my dear friends, we have the two groups that would work together to put the Lord + Jesus to death on the cross. One group was led by envy, but could not do it themselves. Judas was led by greed, and conspired with the scribes and chief priests on how much money he could make if he delivered the Lord into their hands. It was a marriage made in the depths of Hell.

The truly sad thing about these two groups is that the chief priests and scribes rejected the Messiah that they had long-awaited on account of their jealousy. They chose eternal damnation on account of their unbelief simply because of envy. They could have easily repented and turned to the Lord + Jesus in belief and would have had salvation, but they chose to reject the Lord. They were deceived into envy and murder by Satan.

Judas Iscariot is no different. His greed led him to give up eternal life for a few measly coins. He chose eternal destruction for thirty pieces of silver. He too could have easily repented of his sin and clung in faith to the Lord + Jesus. Both of these two groups could have easily been forgiven if they had sought that forgiveness from the Lord + Jesus. The Lord + Jesus desires that all men be saved. He desires that all those who reject Him in their unbelief, might give up their unbelief and cling to Him in faith. This is why He willingly goes to the cross to suffer and die. He suffers the pain, mockery,

scourging, crucifixion and death to draw all mankind unto Himself. He would have us all learn that we cannot save ourselves from our sins. He is the One Who can pay the penalty of our sins, and give to us the forgiveness that He obtained for us by His death on the tree of the holy cross. He would have us learn that no matter how great are sins are; no matter if we are filled with envy, greed, thievery, or murder, there is forgiveness found in Him. There would be forgiveness even for those who betrayed Him. Forgiveness for all sins is found in Him and only in Him.

This is why, my dear friends, that even though on this Wednesday in Holy Week we see the preparations for our Lord's betrayal made; even though this betrayal causes us to fast and pray to our Lord for His mercy. There is mercy to be found in His loving act of redemption for us. No matter how great our sins are, there is forgiveness found in Him, for He paid for *all* of the sins of mankind. His innocent suffering and death on the tree of the holy cross pays for the sins of us all. Let us give Him thanks and praise that He has loved us in spite of our sins and betrayals, and that through His precious means of grace, draws us all to Himself, so that we might spend all of eternity with Him in Heaven. Thanks be to God! Amen! 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!