

Holy Wednesday  
St. Luke 22:1—23:43  
April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## Satan Entered into Judas

*In Nomine Iesu!*

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

### **Sermon Text:**

Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might put Him to death; for they feared the people. And Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went away, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might deliver Him unto them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. And he consented, and sought opportunity to deliver Him unto them in the absence of the multitude.

### **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.

Satan, the prince and ruler of this world, by deceit and malice subjected Adam and Eve to his rule by leading them to sin against the Lord God. He usurped the rule of the Lord God. He claimed the rule of this world, even though he is not really the one who truly has the authority and rule over this world. But many of Adam and Eve's children not only allowed him to rule, but chose him as ruler and prince of this world. The chief priests and captains of the temple allowed Satan to rule in their hearts. In their jealousy they sought to kill the Lord + Jesus. They had planned to have Him put to death for a long time before the events of today's Gospel reading from the Evangelist St. Luke. However, they had not as yet figured out how to put Him to death.

St. Luke tells us that they feared the people. This is telling on two fronts, first they feared the people instead of fearing the Lord God. They chose to fear mankind rather than the One Who had come down from Heaven to win salvation for mankind. Second, they feared the people, but included in their reasoning was the protection of the people. They imagined that they were doing a good work by getting rid of the Christ. They wanted to remove the Christ from His influence over the people, and they thought this was a God-pleasing thing that they did. From this we see who is actually influencing the chief priests and captains of the temple. They have allowed Satan to be the ruler and prince of their lives and actions.

This is what Satan does, he tempts us into sin by using that in which we are the weakest. The chief priests and captains loved being in power. Power had corrupted them. They did not want anyone to take that power and authority over them. Therefore, they sought the death of the One Who actually had true power and authority; the One to Whom the power and authority they claimed actually belonged. In this we see they are no different from their ruler and prince. They are no different from their father

Satan for not only did he claim an authority and rule which he does not actually possess, but like Satan, who was a murderer and liar from the beginning, so too are the chief priests and temple captains liars and murderers. They would murder the Lord + Jesus, Who was the Son of God, and they would by extension murder the people, who could no longer benefit from the teachings and presence of the Lord + Jesus. The chief priests and captains would rob the people of being in the presence of the Son of God; of the means to be in communion and fellowship with the Lord God in the flesh.

But these things are not being done without the approval providence of our Lord + Jesus. He is after all the true Ruler and Prince of this world. He has come down from Heaven and taken upon Himself our flesh for the express purpose of saving and redeeming us from the false power and authority of Satan, and all those who would align their wills with the devil. Our Lord + Jesus goes willingly to the tree of the holy cross. He has planned our salvation to be done in this way. He has planned to save mankind from sin and death by offering His life as a ransom for us. He has planned to be our Savior and Redeemer by dying on the tree of the cross to atone for the sins of the whole world.

Therefore, the Lord + Jesus is not a hapless victim of the evil plots of the chief priests and captains of the temple. But still, they plot and scheme. In their jealousy—their fear of having their assumed authority taken away from them—they seek to kill the Lord + Jesus. But on account of their fear of the people, they could not just have Him assassinated. This they feared would turn Him into a martyr, a death of a person the people could rally behind and overthrow them and take away their authority. Which, ironically, is exactly what happens in the end. The only difference was that the Lord + Jesus was no longer dead, but He had risen from the dead and defeated death once and for all.

But the chief priests and captains could not just kill the Lord + Jesus; they could not just have Him murdered. They needed the Lord's death to be legal. He needed to be put on trial, even if it was a sham trial. He needed to be sentenced to death by a legal authority, even if they had to threaten and coerce the person giving sentence. They needed the Lord's death to be legal, in order that it might serve as a testimony to the people that this Man + Jesus was deserving of death. And they did not just seek His death by just any means, they meant to hang Him on the cross. For all who are hanged are cursed. In this we see Satan's influence upon them. They wanted Him not only dead, but they wanted Him to be considered the worst of criminals; a cursed criminal. Even though He was innocent of all crimes.

This they plotted by the influence of the ruler and prince of this world, Satan. But they could not figure out the how. Then, as St. Luke tells us, Satan entered Judas. Like the jealousy of the chief priests and captains which Satan used to lead them to plot the death of the Lord + Jesus, Satan uses the greed of Judas Iscariot to give the chief priests the means to put the Lord + Jesus on trial, and to sentence Him to death on the tree of the holy cross.

The betrayer of our Lord, Judas, is a particularly tragic story. It shows us how vulnerable all people are to Satan's influence. It shows how easily mankind can be led into sin and unbelief. Judas was one of the twelve chosen apostles. He was chosen to be sent out by the Lord + Jesus after His death to preach the good news of salvation to all who would hear. He was not chosen to be the betrayer. Judas chose to become that of his own volition. Satan got his hooks into Judas by the most common of corruptions: greed. St. John, in His Gospel, told us on Holy Monday that Judas had control of the moneybox, and he would freely take from it to satisfy his own greedy desires.

Judas had been rebuffed by the Lord on Holy Monday, when he scoffed at the waste of the pure nard by St. Mary. He feigned compassion for the poor. He was really just disapproving because he was regretting that the pure nard was not sold so that the money could be placed in the moneybox which he controlled. The Lord + Jesus, in His compassion, tried to call Judas to repentance; to lead him into the way of truth. But as is the case so many times when someone's sins are pointed out to him, the

rebellious spirit—the Old Adam—raises his ugly head, and objects and puts a barrier to the Holy Ghost to work in the person's heart. Instead of repentance and faith in the Lord + Jesus, the impenitent unbeliever chooses to allow Satan to enter in and have control over his thoughts and actions.

Judas in his greed sold the crown of eternal life for thirty pieces of silver. He gave up that which is eternal for that which is temporal. He chose that which is corruptible, in exchange for an incorruptible crown. This is how Satan corrupts mankind. Judas serves as our example—our warning—to live daily in repentance. For one who lives daily in contrition and faith lives daily in his Holy Baptism. By daily drowning the Old Adam, by daily confessing one's sins, we learn to cling in faith to the Lord + Jesus. Judas became the betrayer of the Son of God; of the Lord + Jesus, because he allowed his sin of greed to fester within him, so that faith could not take hold. He chose to be a greedy thief instead of being given salvation freely for Christ's sake.

The reading from St. Luke today ends with another thief. The thief on the cross. He was justly condemned for his deeds, as he confesses. He received the due reward of his actions. But this thief also recognized that the Lord + Jesus was innocent of His crimes. This led him in his final moments to repentance and faith. His heart was changed. He no longer allowed Satan to rule him as the other malefactor continued to do, but He confessed his sins to the One from Whom forgiveness, life and salvation come. Unlike the chief priests and captains who allowed Satan to guide them to kill the Lord + Jesus; unlike Judas Iscariot whom Satan entered so that he traded salvation away for thirty pieces of silver, and went and hanged himself, and would henceforth be called cursed, the thief on the cross repented and clung in faith to the Lord + Jesus. He would be in paradise with the Lord + Jesus that very day.

For this is why our Lord + Jesus took upon Himself our flesh after coming down from Heaven. He came to overthrow Satan who usurped the rule of this world from the Lord God, and claimed an authority over mankind which was not actually his. The Lord + Jesus willingly goes to the cross to buy back from sin and death mankind. He suffers and dies willingly for those who hated Him, for those who would have Him legally sentenced to death. He died to pay for all the sins of the whole world. Now all those who like the thief on the cross, and St. Peter who in his contrition went out and wept bitterly after having denied the Lord three times, can find salvation in the Lord + Jesus alone through faith. Faith which confesses one's sins, and clings to the cross of the Lord + Jesus which paid for all of our sins. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

#### **Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

#### **The Votum:**

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

*Soli Deo Gloria!*