

Holy Wednesday
St. Luke 22:1—23:43
April 1st, 2026
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald P. 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:

“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.

My dear friends, traditionally in the Christian Church the Wednesday in Holy Week has always been associated with the betrayal of our Lord + Jesus by Judas Iscariot. This is why there are extra Services during Lent on Wednesdays. This is why the Lenten season begins on a Wednesday—Ash Wednesday. Historically, in the Church Wednesdays and Fridays have always been set apart as special days for fasting. In Friday we can easily see the reason for fasting. Just as each Sunday is a mini reflection of Easter, so too, Fridays are a mini reflection of Good Friday. Wednesdays are days of fasting because of its association with the Wednesday in Holy Week. On this day we remember and reflect upon the betrayal by Judas Iscariot. We remember and reflect upon how our Lord + Jesus was betrayed into the hands of sinful men, so that they could falsely accuse Him after a sham trial, and crucify Him on the tree of the holy cross.

It is on this day, Wednesday, when Judas Iscariot goes to the chief priests and scribes, who sought how they might put Him to death, and bargains with them for thirty pieces of silver to betray Him to them in the absence of the crowds. In the Passion History according to the Evangelist St. Luke this where his Passion history begins. St. Luke begins with the chief priests and scribes seeking to murder the Lord + Jesus, and Judas Iscariot going to them to profit from their desire to kill Him.

St. Luke makes an interesting assessment of the betrayal of Judas Iscariot. The Gospel reading for today says that “Satan entered into Judas.” This is how it is when we sin. When we give ourselves over to corruption and our sinful flesh, Satan has the rule and reign over us. When we allow the will of the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh to have the reign and rule over us, we do all sorts of sins and iniquities. We let transgression and trespass lead our way. In other words, we are forsaking, and turning our backs upon the will of the Lord God. And that is what St. Luke, the Evangelist, does in this Passion History from his Gospel. He is making a contrast between Judas Iscariot, who follows the will of Satan, and our Lord + Jesus, Who follows the will of His heavenly Father.

This Gospel reading from St. Luke begins with the betrayal of Judas Iscariot, or rather, with his agreement to betray the Lord + Jesus. The actual betrayal happens in the Garden of Gethsemane, where he comes to the Lord + Jesus and identifies Him with a kiss. St. Luke does not record the kiss, but rather shares our Lord's words with Judas, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?"

In between these two events—the agreement to betray and the actual betrayal—we have two other events that enlighten our understanding of our corrupt will, and our Lord God's will. We will address the second event first. For just prior to Judas Iscariot showing up with a multitude of people laden with swords and staves, we find our Lord + Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane praying to the heavenly Father. St. Luke records about our Lord + Jesus, and he is the only Evangelist to record this, that "His sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground."

We are taught a couple of things in this short paragraph by St. Luke. First, we see our Lord's humanity. Our Lord was fully human. He walked, talked, ate, cried, got tired, and slept. All the things that we as humans do. We see here in our Lord the human trait of anguish over death. As St. Cyril of Alexandria writes, "We say that the incarnate Word also willed to submit Himself to the measure of human nature by suffering what belongs to it. He is said to have hungered although He is life, the cause of life and the living bread. He was also weary from a long journey although He is the Lord of powers. It also is said that He was grieved and seemed to be capable of anguish. It would not have been fitting for Him Who submitted Himself to emptiness and stood in the measure of human nature to have seemed unwilling to endure human things."

St. Ambrose, likewise, "Nowhere else than here do I marvel more at His piety and majesty. It would have profited me less if He had not received my grief. He who had no reason to grieve for Himself therefore grieved for me. Having set aside the delight in eternal Divinity, He is afflicted by the weariness of my weakness. He took my sadness in order to bestow on me His joy. He came down to our footprints, even to the hardship of death, in order to call us back to life in His own footprints. I confidently mention sadness, because I proclaim the cross. He did not undertake the appearance but the reality of the incarnation. He must thus also undertake the grief in order to overcome the sorrow and not exclude it. Those who have borne the numbness rather than the pain of wounds do not receive the praise of having strength. He was a man in suffering, and acquainted with the bearing of sickness."

Therefore, our Lord + Jesus in taking upon Himself our flesh, bears in His flesh all that is inherent in the nature of our flesh. These are all the things that He Himself created in mankind when He gave us flesh and blood. When He created us, He created us to laugh and cry, to hunger and be satisfied. He created us to fear death, to have anguish over the thought of our own deaths. Here, in a perfect way, our Lord + Jesus shows us that death is not something intended for us when He created us. It is to be feared. The thought of it creates anguish and sorrow. With our Lord + Jesus, Who was perfect in every way it caused blood to pour out of Him like drops of sweat. That is how contrary to our nature death is to be. This is how contrary to the nature He created us with, and the nature that He took upon Himself, death is.

All this He does for us. He endures this anguish, because we endure the anguish of death. He does this because it is the Father's will. This is the second thing that we learn from this short paragraph of the Evangelist St. Luke's Gospel. All this He does in accordance with the will of the heavenly Father. This prayer to the heavenly Father that the cup might pass from Him is not to be understood as if the Lord + Jesus had a separate will from the Father. Their will is one will. The heavenly Father's will is the will of the Lord + Jesus. He is not doubting the will of the Father. That would be a sin and contrary to the Father's will. No, our Lord + Jesus is confirming the will of the heavenly Father. He is saying, "Thy will be done," just as we do in the Lord's Prayer. Only He means it, whereas when we pray it, our thoughts often stray, or do not fully understand what the Lord's will is. He understands what the will of the heavenly Father is. It is to suffer and die upon the tree of the holy cross so that by His death He

might atone for the sins of the whole world.

That is the contrast shown us in the Passion History of St. Luke. We have the will of our Lord Whose will is the same will as that of the heavenly Father, and we have the will of Judas Iscariot, whose will is the polar opposite of the Lord God's will. The will of Judas Iscariot is the will of Satan, for Satan has entered into him. These two wills—the Lord God's will and the will of Satan—are at war in this Passion History. The will of Satan seems to get the upper hand when our Lord + Jesus is arrested, tried, and hung a tree to die. But the will of the heavenly Father is accomplished, for the sins of mankind are fully atoned for by the death of the Son of Man, our Lord + Jesus. He has earned for us forgiveness of our sins. He has gained for us eternal life and salvation by His obedience to the will of the heavenly Father.

There is in this Gospel Passion of St. Luke, a third will that is presented. That is the will of St. Peter and the other Apostles. They are not fully corrupted like Judas Iscariot. They have not fully allowed Satan to enter into them. Howbeit, they are still sinners. Our Lord tells St. Peter that Satan asked to sift him like wheat, that he would deny the Lord three times. St. Peter in his confidence claims that will never be the case. The history shows a different outcome, however. He denies the Lord three times just like the Lord + Jesus said he would, and he went out and wept bitterly. St. Peter, and the other Apostles, are like us.

We are the ones who struggle daily with the corruption of our nature; we struggle daily with sin and iniquity. We, like St. Peter, fail often. But unlike Judas, we pray for forgiveness. We live lives in humble repentance, seeking to do the will of the heavenly Father, even though we may fail often. In our bitter tears, we beg the Lord God for forgiveness. And on account of the obedience of His Son; on account of the intercession of the Son of God, we are granted forgiveness for all of our sins.

Therefore, my dear friends, as we remember this Holy Wednesday the betrayal of Judas Iscariot, let us also remember that our Lord + Jesus confirms that His will is the Father's will, so that by it we may have life and salvation. And let us in our fears and sorrows over sin and death, cling in faith to our Lord + Jesus. For He took upon Himself our full nature, so that what we are unable to do, He fulfilled perfectly, so that we may have life with Him eternally. Thanks be to our Lord + Jesus Who has won for us the victory over sin and death! 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 the 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!