

Immanuel (Augsburg) Lutheran Church

Shobonier, Illinois

Maundy Thursday

April 14, 2022

John 13:21–30

Judas Iscariot

After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." 22 The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. 23 One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table close to Jesus, 24 so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. 25 So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, "Lord, who is it?" 26 Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it." So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. 27 Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly." 28 Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. 29 Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor. 30 So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night. (John 13:21-30 ESV)

In the name of Jesus, the only Savior of the world,

I'm sure you've seen Leonardo da Vinci's painting *The Last Supper*. You know, the one where Jesus and the twelve are sitting on the same side of the table. It's been reproduced in many and various ways. What you may not know is that when da Vinci had finished the masterpiece, he asked a friend for his honest opinion. "It's wonderful!" exclaimed the friend. "Christ's chalice is so real I can't take my eyes off it!" Immediately, da Vinci took a brush and painted over the chalice, exclaiming, "Nothing shall detract from Jesus!"

Nothing shall detract from Jesus! And why is that? Because Jesus was betrayed. Let that soak in. Jesus was betrayed. The Words of Institution for the Holy Supper begin, "On the night when He was betrayed." We hear these words so often that we don't really hear them.

We're in a series called Witnesses to Christ. Today, we meet Judas—Judas Iscariot. And we meet him in the Upper Room the night Jesus was betrayed. "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me" (John 13:21).

Betrayed by Judas, one of His twelve disciples. Betrayed by Judas for thirty pieces of silver. Betrayed by Judas with a kiss—image that, a kiss! Betrayed by Judas in a garden east of Jerusalem called Gethsemane. Betrayed! That's why da Vinci exclaimed, "Nothing shall detract from Jesus!" Jesus was betrayed for us.

According to Matthew 26:25, Judas was seated close to Jesus—close enough for the two of them to carry on a private conversation. It may be that the Savior singles out Judas as an important guest. Then Jesus gives Judas a morsel of bread, even while planning to betray Jesus. "Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him" (John 13:27). The term Satan is only used to tell this story in John's Gospel. This accents the absolute seriousness of the situation. John 6:70 calls Judas a devil, while Mark 5:13 and Luke 8:30 employ the same vocabulary to describe evil spirits entering the Gerasene demoniac.

John writes, "After receiving the morsel of bread, he [Judas] immediately went out. And it was night" (John 13:30). It is dark. The whole scene is dark. Jesus warned that night is coming (John 9:4). Night and darkness now come with a vengeance.

Why did Jesus allow all of this to happen? It was for you. "For you" are powerful Gospel words! For. God is not against you or in opposition to you. God is not your enemy. God is for you. Not just for him and her, for those and them. God's love is intensely personal. It is for you!

Martin Luther writes concerning the Sacrament, "This is something more than the sermon; for although the same thing is present in the sermon as in the sacrament, here there is the advantage that it is directed at definite individuals." In that respect, it's like Private Absolution. That's because Jesus never gives up on you. You may give up on you, but Jesus will never give up on you. When soldiers spit in His face, Jesus didn't give up. When a whip ripped open His back, Jesus didn't give up. When nails crushed His nerves, Jesus didn't give up. Come what may, even when we betray and deny Him, Jesus doesn't give up. Jesus will never give up on you.

In the Lord's Supper, God acts for you—right now. God delivers Christ's true body and true blood here and now. Holy Communion is the opposite of remembering a dead man. Holy Communion is a meal with a man who lives!

How so? Is in "Take, eat; this is My body" and "Take, drink; this is My blood" means "is." Is doesn't mean "signifies," "represents," or "symbolizes." This view didn't arise until the

eleventh century when the watchword was "flee to reason." What happens in the Supper is not reasonable. It doesn't make sense. Yet, Jesus says, "This is for you!" That makes it so.

With God's Word, what may look ordinary can be completely extraordinary. In Baptism, ordinary water becomes extraordinary when God's Word is added. So also in the Lord's Supper. When Christ's words—"Take, eat; this is My body; and take, drink; this is My blood"—are spoken over bread and wine, it's not what we expect. It's so much more! The bread participates with Christ's body! The wine participates with Christ's blood! What may look ordinary is completely extraordinary.

But there's more! There's always more in the Gospel. Da Vinci's The Last Supper includes a view of heaven. The Lord's Supper is a foretaste of the feast to come. Jesus is coming to restore all things. At the heavenly banquet, we will no longer have to look at our sin. We will be perfect, wearing white robes washed in the blood of Jesus. At the heavenly banquet, we will no longer be sad because of broken hearts and broken lives. In heaven, we will be gathered together with angels, archangels, and all the company of heaven, in the body, even as we now do in the Supper here by faith. At the heavenly banquet, we will no longer need Jesus to come to us in the Sacrament. We will see Jesus face-to-face, and He will fill us with unspeakable joy that will never end!

So, no matter what words people use when they speak about Holy Communion, we must believe Jesus' words that He gives and we receive His very Body and Blood. At the same time, you must believe that He gives such a gift "for you." For you who repent of your sin. For you whose life is often complicated and troubled. For you who feel the weight and burden of your sin and its consequences. For you who want nothing to distract from Jesus.

For you—in the past, Christ died. For you—right now, Christ is present. For you—in the future, you will partake of the marriage feast of the Lamb that will have no end! Amen.

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

From the series "Witnesses to Christ" by CPH.

Rev. Timothy J. Landskroener