

MINISTRY BY MAIL
Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship
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Second Sunday In Lent, February 28, 2021

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 159, 164:1, 142:1-4, 156, 516,

Lessons: Isaiah 53:4-12, Acts 1:12-22, John 12:1-8

Sermon Text: John 18:1-12

Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehlretter

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Judas Iscariot, a man from the village of Kerioth, betrayed Jesus into the hand of his enemies. He is the one of whom Jesus said in the upper room: ***“The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.”*** Matthew 26:24 (NIV) What a terrible statement from the Son of God who knew what would happen to Judas!

Six days before the Passover, Mary in Bethany anointed Jesus by pouring out a bottle of expensive perfume on Jesus’ head and feet. John tells us that ***“one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, ‘Why wasn’t this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year’s wages.’ He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.”*** John 12:4-6 (NIV)

After the anointing at Bethany ***“Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus. They were delighted and agreed to give him money. He consented, and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present.”*** Luke 22:4-6 (NIV) He received 30 pieces of silver for this, which was the price of a slave. This is the value of a slave that is killed by an ox. This was also about half a year’s wages, and this money would have provided many earthly things for him. But what did it really get him? Eternal damnation. Judas’ greed got the best of him, and we read at the Last Supper in the upper room that ***“Satan entered into him.”*** John 13:27 (NIV) Tonight we hear again about

THE BETRAYAL OF JESUS

1. **Judas did what he had been paid thirty pieces of silver for, but**
2. **What benefit did Judas get from his earthly wealth?**
3. **Jesus yields and accepts what is prophesied for him.**
4. **How is it that we sometimes betray Jesus?**

John is the most detailed of the four evangelists as they recorded this historical event. This betrayal happened after Jesus’ suffering and praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. We know that ***“Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place [where Jesus was captured] because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So Judas came to the grove, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.”***

As Jesus returned from his agonizing in prayer and woke up his sleeping disciples and ***“as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders. Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: ‘The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.’ Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, ‘Rabbi!’ and kissed him.”*** Mark 14:43-45 (NIV)

Judas, until now, had not been an open and avowed enemy of Jesus, his rabbi, his teacher. He was one of the twelve, one of those closest to Jesus and had made a good public confession of following Jesus. The hypocrisy that consumed his life is now revealed.

“Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, ‘Who is it you want?’ ‘Jesus of Nazareth,’ they replied. ‘I am he,’ Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) When Jesus said, ‘I am he,’ they drew back and fell to the ground. Again he asked them, ‘Who is it you want?’ And they said, ‘Jesus of Nazareth.’ ‘I told you that I am he,’ Jesus answered. ‘If you are looking for me, then let these men go.’ This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: ‘I have not lost one of those you gave me.’”

“Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: ‘The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.’” Mark 14:44 (NIV) This was not a kiss of love. This was a kiss of betrayal, in effect, a kiss of death. This was out and out hypocrisy, the crowning act of his wickedness. A kiss was really a sign of friendship and discipleship as well as a token of love.

We are reminded of the words of King David in Psalm 55: ***“If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were raising himself against me, I could hide from him. But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend, with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship as we walked with the throng at the house of God.”*** Psalm 55:12-14 (NIV)

We see here the revelation of sinfulness which is found in every human heart which it is awful to contemplate, but it should urge us to extreme watchfulness in our lives.

Jesus endured this base act of hypocrisy because he came to atone for the sins of Judas as well as for all other sins, and because in Jesus alone, can we find strength to overcome.

As Judas and the armed men approached him, ***“Jesus replied, ‘Friend, do what you came for.’ Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him.”*** Matthew 26:50 (NIV) With that word “friend” Jesus reminds Judas of the love he had offered him. Here we see fulfilled the words from the Psalm: ***“Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.”*** Psalm 41:9 (NIV)

After the kiss, ***“The men seized Jesus and arrested him.”*** Mark 14:46 (NIV)

Judas, whom we might think of as ‘the worst of sinners’ was one for whom Jesus died. He is included in ‘the world’ whom God loved and justified. God declared Judas ‘not guilty’ because of the sufferings, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

But Judas did not receive and believe this fact of what we call ‘objective justification’. That is the fact that God has declared all men righteous, not guilty of all the sins they commit. That gift becomes our own by faith, by believing it. Judas did not have faith in it, and he continues in his sin of betrayal. There is still hope for him, and there will be until he commits suicide and sends himself to eternal damnation in hell.

Objective justification is the scriptural fact and truth that God justified the whole world. Judas rejected it, had no faith in the forgiveness of sins, committed suicide and was condemned eternally to hell.

Just like the other apostles, Judas had been given special blessings from Jesus. Luke tells us that Jesus ***“turned to his disciples and said privately, ‘Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.’”*** Luke 10:23-24 (NIV)

But what did the 30 pieces of silver profit Judas? ***“When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. ‘I have sinned,’ he said, ‘for I have betrayed innocent blood.’ ‘What is that to us?’ they replied. ‘That’s your responsibility.’ So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.”*** Matthew 27:3-5 (NIV)

It is said that Judas ‘repented’; but it was not Christian repentance, not a Godly sorrow. It was only remorse caused by the pain of guilt and perhaps an attack of conscience. He did this only when he saw that Jesus was condemned, and he then began to realize something of the consequences of his sin, of his crime

He felt bad enough that he brought back the thirty pieces of silver, the very thing which helped motivate his crime, his sin. But those who had bribed him had no sympathy for him. Notice their response. Judas, after having served the purpose of the Jews, was discarded by them with total contempt. This is the final pay the

devil gives all his slaves. Judas threw the pieces of money into the temple, but the priests didn't want to accept them. Satan needed Judas and bought him with a price.

Jesus submitted to this terrible betrayal, just like the Passover lambs who for hundreds and hundreds of years had been slaughtered – killed – to point forward to this day. When Judas came forward, Jesus said **“Do what you came for, friend.’ Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. With that, one of Jesus’ companions, [Peter,] reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. ’Put your sword back in its place,’ Jesus said to him, ‘for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?’ In that hour Jesus said to the crowd, ‘Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.’ Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.”** Matthew 26:50-56 (NIV2011)

Isaiah tells us: **“We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.”** Isaiah 53:6-7 (NIV) Jesus yielded to his captors because it was ordained that he must die this way for the sins of all men.

This 30 pieces of silver, the price of a slave shows the scorn and contempt of the Jews for Christ in offering such a small amount, and of Judas' scorn and contempt in accepting it. It shows how eager Judas was for a little money, and how covetousness had eaten out his conscience.

It shows how people belittle Christ and their own souls when they accept bribes for doing evil. Especially in our world now, think of how influence, votes, honor, chastity are bought and sold like so much merchandise.

If only Judas was the only one to betray Jesus!

Many have heard the Gospel, have been baptized and fed with the Gospel, and even on the day of their confirmation devoted themselves, sincerely, in the most solemn manner, to the Lord and his cause. But, unfaithful to their sacred vows, they turned their hearts to the gods of this world. Christ requires the crucifixion of the flesh with its lusts and affections. He requires unconditional submission to the Word of God, and unceasing endeavors after godliness. But the ideas of the sinful flesh and the ways of the world guided by the ways of Satan lead them to become enemies of God, and to betray Christ with their deeds and words.

How is it that we betray Jesus? It's easy to think about how terrible Judas was. He betrayed Jesus and abandoned him. But aren't here times when we betray Jesus? We deny we know him. We cause offense and lead others into sin. We ignore God's Words. We put other things ahead of Christ. We don't speak up for him. We knowingly go along with others when they publicly go against the Word of God. We go against our own conscience in thinking we can ignore God's Word.

We have seen Judas betray Jesus. We know our own hearts, and as God's beloved children, we daily turn to him in true repentance, knowing that there is forgiveness. Judas didn't benefit from it. In our prayers we ask God to guard and keep us.

Lord, preserve us so that we may receive all the eternal blessings you prepared for us! Amen.