



Good Friday April 10, 2020

First Lesson: Psalm 22: 1-9

Gospel Lesson: Matthew 26: 14-16

Sermon Title: "Where is the Good News?: Betrayal: A monologue of Judas."

Preacher: Kirstie J. Engel

My name is Judas Iscariot; son of Simon;

And my prayer is that you will just hear me out before you judge me;

For I know that you all know about me; many of you have read about me; some of you may have already labeled me as someone not to be trusted.

For I have been called a thief, an embezzler, a betrayer....

So perhaps you are right....I am not someone that I would suppose you should trust;

But even in that, I just ask that you hear my story with a measure of openness, not so that you might have sympathy on me or even take my side;

But mainly I ask that you hear my story, so that you understand that there is not too much difference between you and I;

For I am human;

And I made a horrible mistake....

I betrayed someone that I deeply loved;

And the strangest thing, still to this day, I can't even explain to you why...

For I have been with Jesus for quite some time; three years to be exact...

Jesus chose me to be one of his first disciples; I am one of the first twelve!

And to be honest, I still don't know why Jesus chose me... **no one has ever really chosen me** for anything....

No one has really believed in me like Jesus did.

And I didn't ever really believe in myself,

Mainly because I kept finding myself in this vicious cycle of making one bad choice after another after another...

And my vice has always been with money;

I was in charge of the money box and I stole every chance I could... (John 12:6)

And when I saw that woman waste all of that expensive ointment on Jesus, I couldn't believe it.... because at the time all I could see was money being wasted....

So I am not proud to admit this, but I had a lot of vices...a lot....and greed and money was just a couple to name.....

And yet I know that Jesus knew all about my vices and yet he still chose me;

Yet he still believed in me....

Yet he still loved me....

And my response at the time was something that I just couldn't seem to control...

All I could see was the money....thirty pieces of silver to be exact...

And the ironic thing is that looking back I had everything I really needed....

I didn't really ever need that money...

I thought I did....

For like I said I was in charge of the money when we traveled together;

I've traveled with Jesus for three years – through Israel, Judea, even Samaria.....and so whenever we needed money, I was the one who would have to beg of young women to give out of their household money – women like Mary Magdalene; Susanna; Joanna, the wife of Herod and more....

So I suppose that my rationale at the time was that I yearned for a bit of security....

Jesus would teach us things like *foxes have holes and birds have nest but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.*

So I suppose I was tired of not having a place to lay my own head but if I am honest....I had everything I needed;

I did have food to eat; with basketfuls left.

I did have everything I ever needed...

I had it all..I just couldn't see it at the time...

But Jesus saw me....he saw the best of me....

But those evil officials; the Sanhedrin..... they unfortunately saw me too and they knew my vice....

They preyed upon me...

They saw my weakness....

And they knew that I would not pass on the opportunity....

But I swear to you all, I just didn't think it would have gotten that far....

...

And so on that night at the Passover, when my friend Jesus, proceeded to wash our feet....Peter objected, he said we were clean, but not all of us. (John 13:2-11)

And I thought to myself, "Does he know what I've done?"

And when Jesus announced that someone would betray him... I was ashamed...

I felt this surge within me to confess right there and then.... But I played right along and said to him, "Surely not I, Lord." He looked right at me and said, "Yes, it is you."

He knew.....Jesus knew.

Jesus knew and did not throw me out of there.

Jesus knew.... And yet he didn't even try to stop me or talk me out of it.

Jesus knew; he saw us coming before we saw him; saw the lanterns and torches and called out "Who is it you want?" The guards answered "Jesus of Nazareth." So Jesus said, "I am he."

We thought we were being ambushed, and the guards and the priests all jumped back and fell over each other.

Nothing happened.

While they were getting back up, Jesus said again, "Who is it you want?" And they said again, "Jesus of Nazareth." So he said, "I told you that I am he. If I'm the one you're looking for, let these others go." (John 18:2-9)

Are you coming after me with swords and clubs, as if I were leading a rebellion? I was with you every day in the temple courts, and you didn't lay a hand on me. But this is your hour – when darkness reigns."

Still, nothing happened. I looked at the other apostles with Jesus. They weren't prepared. Two of them had swords, if you can call Peter's fish-gutting knife a sword.

I looked at the priests and the guards. They looked back at me, and I realized it was me they were waiting for.

The time had come.

I had one last chance to change my mind....to do the right thing....and I hesitated as I locked my gaze with Jesus.....

I took a step forward and said, "Greetings, Teacher!" and started to kiss him.

At the time, I felt that there was nothing I could do. I'd made a promise. No – I had made a deal.

I had sold him out. I kissed him, and the priests and guards leaped forward to arrest him.

Peter drew his big knife and made a ridiculous attempt to defend him, and Jesus even put a stop to that.

Then all the apostles ran. I wasn't the only one who betrayed him.

The priests arrested Jesus and took him away. Then they made their payoff; thirty pieces of silver. The price of a man's life.

The priests took him and tried him for blasphemy, because he said he was the Son of God.

They spit at him. They blindfolded him and punched him and told him to prophesy who it was that hit him. Then the guards took him and beat him. (Mark 14:65) **All I could do was watch.**

By morning the chief priests and priests and the whole Sanhedrin handed down a guilty verdict, but they realized they couldn't stone Jesus to death without the Romans' permission.

So they trumped up a charge of treason and took him to the Roman governor Pilate.

I thought for a moment, Jesus might have a chance. Of all the ironies, the Roman governor said the charges were groundless and he didn't recognize blasphemy as a crime. So he offered to release Jesus.

And the crowd screamed for him to release Barabbas, a thief, instead.

When Pilate asked what they wanted him to do with Jesus, they started screaming, "Crucify him!"

So it wasn't just me, and it wasn't just the priests, and it wasn't just the apostles who betrayed him. It was everyone.

So Pilate had Jesus stripped to the waist and flogged with a whip 39 times. Then he put a purple robe on his bloody back and pushed a crown made of thorns on his head and made fun of him again.

I couldn't stand it any longer. I ran back to the temple to try to undo this deal.

I went to the priests and offered to give back the money.

I told them that I had sinned; I had betrayed innocent blood.

They refused to take the money. They acted like it was none of their concern. They said it was my responsibility.

Thirty pieces of silver. About a month's wages. For thirty pieces of silver, I've killed my master – and my friend

Jesus knew and I knew....and it was the saddest day of my life.....and all I wanted at that point was to just be INVISIBLE.

Love and Peace!

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