

Luke 22:21 - 30

21 *“But behold, the hand of the one betraying Me is with Me on the table. 22 “For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!” 23 And they began to discuss among themselves which one of them it might be who was going to do this thing.*

*24 And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest. 25 And He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called ‘Benefactors.’ 26 “But not so with you, but let him who is the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as the servant. 27 “For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table, or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves. 28 “And you are those who have stood by Me in My trials; 29 and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you 30 that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

We find ourselves in the upper room, with Jesus, on the evening before His being handed over to those who would be implicit in His murder. The upper room is safety. It is intimate. Just His disciples and Him, enjoying their final hours together as He teaches them.

The entirety of John chapters 13 - 16, four chapters in John's important gospel account, are given to the discourse and events during these few hours in this single place in time.

Judas has already made his deal with the Jewish leaders to hand Jesus over. But Judas didn't know where this final meal would take place. Jesus is in full control of everything that is about to happen. The Jews want Jesus dead. Jesus has planned to spend this final time, these hours, with the disciples, and indeed with Judas Iscariot who He knows will betray Him.

The clandestine nature of this meal is indicated in John 12:36b where it says; *These things Jesus spoke, and He departed and hid Himself from them.*

He has been teaching in the temple in the midst of a multitude of people. There is safety in that situation. A riot would ensue if the leaders who want Him dead were to take Him into custody in that situation.

He has been spending the nights somewhere, undisclosed, on the Mount of Olives. That's where He has been hiding Himself after the daylight sessions with the multitudes in the temple. The leaders who want Him dead don't know where they go in the evenings hidden within the Mount of Olives groves somewhere.

Judas would have liked to hand Jesus over at the location of their eating the Passover feast together. That would have been the perfect venue. The crowd is gone. Just Jesus and His disciples. The passover is after the sun has gone down. In the darkness in the upper room, the job could have gotten done very efficiently. But Judas didn't know where that room was going to be, so he has to wait for some opportunity to betray Jesus.

Thus we have this heart breaking tension of the Son of Man pouring His heart out to His chosen select men, giving them their final instructions before He will be taken from them, and in the midst of that company is a traitor who is putting on an act. Remarkable on so many levels!

Jesus has just instituted the sacrament of communion in the moments before the first words in our section this morning are said. The intimacy of the communion service. Remember my body, broken, for you. Eat the bread and remember my body which is about to be crushed . . . in your place. For your sins.

Remember my blood which is about to flow out of me. Drink the wine and as you do it, remember my blood, the lifeblood, the sign of death. Leviticus 17:11

*11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for your souls upon the altar; for it is the blood that makes*

*atonement for the soul.*

There is no magic in the blood of Jesus. If some of Jesus blood splattered on the Roman guard who thrust in the spear, it didn't save him. He's still guilty. There's no magic in the blood. The blood signifies one thing according to God's revelation to Moses that is written for us in Leviticus.

Sin causes death. Atonement for sin can only happen when a substitute dies in your place. A blood atonement isn't about the blood. The blood indicates the life has flowed out of the substitute in your place. Jesus is about to be that final substitute, once for all time, that the millions of lambs looked forward to. His blood indicates his life flowing out of Him, for us.

This is an intimate time amongst those who are the inner circle, the closest chosen ones, His chosen disciples. Remember my broken body when you eat bread. Remember my death when the blood which contained the life of my real human flesh flowed out of Me as I died, when you drink the wine.

The intimacy of those moments was almost unimaginable to us. And yet, within that tightnit group, there is an imposter. And they truly do not have a clue, his play-acting is so convincing. No one suspects, except Jesus who knows what is inside all men's hearts.

The disciples may have been thinking, is someone going to kick down the door and get to Jesus. They were well aware of the threat. Things are definitely coming to a head. Something is about to happen. But if they were considering the possible scenarios of the threat against Jesus, it never once entered their minds that the threat was with them, one of them, in the intimacy of this gathering. That's a stunner no one saw coming. And Jesus drops that bomb;

*21 But behold, the hand of the one betraying Me is with Me on the table.*

Is it not eerie that a thousand years before this night, King David wrote these words; *9 Even my close friend whom I trusted, the one who shared my bread,*

*has lifted up his heel against me.* Psalm 41:9

Indeed John tells us this event, this exact arrangement was pre-ordained so that prophecy would be fulfilled. Listen to Jesus words, recorded in John 13:18 *I am not speaking about all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But this is to fulfill the Scripture: 'The one who shares My bread has lifted up his heel against Me.'* 19 *I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it comes to pass, you will believe that I am He...*

Jesus gives a prophecy about the prophecy. Judas is going to fulfil David's prophecy. And how do you know this Jesus? Because He's God. He says the reason I'm telling you ahead of time about Judas completing a 1000 year old prophecy is so that when it happens, you will believe that I am He. A prophecy about a prophecy, and both came to pass.

Until that moment, no one ever looked at David's words and understood they had dual meaning. They spoke of David's enemy Ahithophel who had been his close counselor and became a traitor with Absalom. No one saw that the passage about David and Ahithophel was a type. A picture of a greater traitor of the greatest King, Messiah. Jesus told us that, and then it happened. Awesome fulfillment of prophecy. It would help sustain these men in the coming trouble.

God knows the end from the beginning. Isaiah 46

9 *"Remember the former things long past,  
For I am God, and there is no other;  
I am God, and there is no one like Me,*

10 *Declaring the end from the beginning  
And from ancient times things which have not been done,  
Saying, 'My purpose will be established,  
And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';*

It's one thing that God knows the end from the beginning and declares it, that

boggles our minds, but now we move past boggled minds into the realm of inscrutable. Beyond the capacity of our finite minds to even begin to understand.

God not only knows all things and declares what will happen before it happens, He also causes all things. He also causes all things.

22 *“For indeed, the Son of Man is going **as it has been determined**; but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!”*

That's an impossible verse. I'm going to unpack it, but I can't solve it. The death of Jesus has been determined. 22 *“For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined;*

Acts 2. We've been here before; 22 *“Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know— 23 this Man, **delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God**, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.*

Jesus was delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, but you are guilty because you did it.

Who designed and planned the death of Jesus. God did. Who is guilty then? Judas, the leaders of Israel, the chief priests, Pilate, the Romans, the multitude who shouted give us Barabbas, and ultimately, you and me.

We killed Jesus. But God killed Jesus. But it's our fault. See where I'm going? Our brains are too small to figure it out. 22 *“For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!”*

Last Wednesday night I got a text from one of my kids; *Hey dad, because king tut was well before Jesus and all those people, where did they go? They*

*clearly worshipped worldly things but they didn't have a way to be saved.  
What happened to them?*

I can see my son in law, in my mind, saying; ask your dad. What happened to all the people before Jesus? What happens to those who never get to hear? We could lump Judas in there. He never asked to be born. He never asked to be the one person in God's sovereign plan who betrayed Jesus. Or did he?

Those questions are beyond my pay grade. And yours too. God is inscrutable. Beyond human understanding. The famous old quote. Don't try to unscrew the inscrutable. If you go there, you've just put yourself in the position of judge of God. You're going to argue with God who owns everything in creation because He created it, that He isn't playing fair? Hello? Danger!

The better question and the one that should frame every other question is Why did He have mercy on those who He has shown mercy. We all deserved the recompense of rebellion against our Creator. Why does He save anyone?

In Luke 17:1 Jesus says to His disciples, including Judas who had the privilege to be with Jesus every day for 3+ years; And He said to His disciples, "*It is inevitable that stumbling blocks should come, but woe to him through whom they come!*"

Almost identical to what He tells all of them together, in this upper room meal together on the evening before His death. Stumbling is inevitable. Satan rules this world. Stumbling and stumblingblocks are the norm for a planet in rebellion against its creator and owner.

But God uses the evil and causes it to accomplish what He wills. God is using Judas Iscariot who is being duped and controlled by who? Satan. Satan entered into Judas. Judas is just the pawn on this chess board. God is using the combined evil of Satan and Judas to crush the lifeblood out of His perfect Only Son, so that we can have redemption. His death in my place. His righteousness accounted to my account.

*"But behold, the hand of the one betraying Me is with Me on the table. 22  
"For indeed, the Son of Man is going **as it has been determined**; but woe to  
that man by whom He is betrayed!"*

The predeterminate plan of God is going to be carried out according to His sovereign will, but woe to that man that is the one who betrays Jesus.

Matthew says; 26:23 Jesus answered, *"The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with Me will betray Me. 24 The Son of Man will go just as it is written about Him, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed. It would be better for him if he had not been born."* 25 Then Judas, who would betray Him, said, *"Surely not I, Rabbi?"* Jesus answered, *"You have said it yourself."...*

You have said it yourself Judas. ***Surely not I.*** Listen to your own preaching. ***Surely not I.*** This thing is unimaginably hideous. To sell Jesus to His enemies. To His death! Surely not. Not I. Don't let it be me that does the most evil sin ever accomplished on earth.

The only way to make any sense of it is to surmise that at this point, Judas is a complete atheist. No God. Do what seems good to you. The jews are going to get Jesus anyways. He obviously has a death wish coming to Jerusalem at this time. Preaching in the temple every day, in the faces of all of His enemies.

He isn't a king. There won't be a kingdom. I'm out of here. May as well get whatever golden parachute I can get on my exit. 30 days wages. 30 pieces of silver. They'll pay me the price of a common slave to get at Jesus. Better than nothing. Sell nothing get something. Take the deal and get out. Were those Judas' thoughts. No God, no penalty, get out of this whole deal asap, take some money on your way out.

Ultimately, our story in the unfolding chapters is about 2 men. Two cases of men who walked away from Jesus. One goes to perdition. Woe to that man.

One is restored. Why? Why does one walk away permanently and the other walk away, sorrowful, temporarily, and is then lovingly restored.

Again, those are questions beyond our pay grade. Peter is selected by God to preach the first christian sermon in the new covenant. Peter is selected by God, along with the other apostles, to be the foundation layer of a temple built with the souls of men; The church.

Judas is selected by God's sovereignty to be the one who will see it all, hear it all, not believe, walk away, and sell Jesus as he exits.

Peter doesn't get the credit for all of the glory brought to God by the church. Peter is just the instrument that the Holy Spirit uses to begin His church. All of the glory goes to God.

Judas does get the credit for spending 3 years with Jesus, being the continual recipient of His love and care, the greatest opportunity ever given, and at the end, he doesn't believe. He sells Jesus for whatever he can get as he makes his exit. But the blame is his. All of that is on him. Judas after 3 years is a practical atheist. Amazing story. It's frightening to think about these things.

Everyone in that room asks the same question. Is it me. There is humility in that response. God forbid that I'm the one that's going to take leave of my senses and betray Jesus.

Humility and horror that in our weakness we might be the one who betrays Jesus. And the betrayer hypocritically joins in. Since he's a practical atheist he thinks he can surely fool his fellow disciples with his little ruse, and Jesus, who he believes is just another man, will also be fooled.

Here is the troubling thing we can not do anything about. 11 men in that room never suspected Judas as being anything more or less than what they were. They were a company of men. A group specially selected by Jesus to be apostles. Sent out ones. Ambassadors.

Judas went out on the missionary journeys with the 12, 2X2. He went out with the 70. Just like the rest. He was part of the group, part of the company, part of the select team. No one saw what was inside Judas.

Jesus taught that the wheat grows in the field but the enemy has sown tares, worthless weed plants, that look so much like the wheat, you can't weed them out. You'd pull out the real wheat along with the tares if you tried to separate them while they're growing together.

Judas was a tare amidst the wheat. No one except Jesus knew that. Not a clue.

I think about this too much. The bar is so low these days, anyone can come in. We don't have any filters at all. There is no membership roll for this church. No one has read a written covenant about what we claim we believe here in this place and signed a membership roll stating they are in agreement with a statement of covenant together.

I look out at the tiny flock here and wonder; are we all wheat? Are there tares here. The disciples didn't have a clue. Why would I? Paul says; Love believes all things.

*1 Cor. 13:6 Love takes no pleasure in evil, but rejoices in the truth. 7 It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

That's our default. We believe all things. We accept anyone who walks through our doors back there as a christian, until we see fruit that begins to prove otherwise.

Judas was an accepted brother among brothers until the day and the hour Jesus astonished everyone in the room by stating that the one who would betray Him to His death was one of the brotherhood. That was as stunning to these men as a snake bite.

What! Who! God forbid that it might be me! Please don't let it be me! They

all recognized the fragility of their weakness.

Of course humility is over in about 5 minutes and the fight is back on about who is the most important disciple. Peter is the obvious choice. But James and John have got the power of numbers. Plus a persuasive mother. They have a family connection somehow with Mary the mother of Jesus.

*23 And they began to argue among themselves which one of them it might be who was going to do this thing. 24 And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest.*

Jesus is trying to get their tanks topped off for what lies immediately ahead. Judas is trying to fool Jesus. And the blockheads are fighting about who's most likely to be the betrayer, and also, more importantly, who among them is the most important. It's a good thing Sovereign God causes all things to happen according to His will because if it was up to us . . . ?

They've been having this argument all the way to Jerusalem. Jesus is going to get killed and I'm going to be in charge. ***Oh no you're not!*** They're like children.

I'm sort of horrified that God has given me the responsibility to be a shepherd over 15 of you. I can't imagine being the shepherd of 200, or a thousand, or 5,000. The last thing I want to be is the guy who is at the top.

This is the default in a fallen world where dog eats dog as every dog is clamoring to be top dog. That's how the world rolls.

I was talking to my old high school buddy Glen about a fellow in his town who is selling off his toys because he's going blind. This guy had built the perfect shop for his hot rod collection with a sort of make believe '50's perfect town with all of the antique gas pumps and porcelain signs where his homies could pull right up to the bar in his shop on their Harleys and on and on.

And he was telling Glen, his little palace isn't diddly compared to his better

monied friends in Los Gatos and Santa Cruz and Pescadero. His was barely cool enough to be in the club. The "whoever dies with the most toys wins" club.

This is the fallen world. You work to be the coolest cool guy with the coolest toys, more cool than anyone else's toys, and you go blind and then you die. Wow. But that's all the world has got. That's the default now, and it was the default then. Be top dog.

The disciples are having a contest to see who's going to be the most important, the greatest of all, in the kingdom of God. Top dog in the Jesus club. Jesus will be taken from them in hours. Literally. And they're fighting over who's going to be the top. The greatest among them. Can you see Jesus, who knows everything ahead of time that is about to unfold, sort of rolling His eyes at this group.

Like the old joke, He looks at these guys and asks the Father, can we consider plan B, and His Father says, there is no plan B. You're going to have to turn the world upside down . . . with idiots. Blockheads is all we've got for this deal. After 3 years of intense training.

You can roll your eyes at them all you want. The problematic truth is, they didn't have the Holy Spirit yet. Sure they were blockheads accomplishing nothing. But the Spirit had not yet come. What's our excuse? We do have the Holy Spirit, and we're not getting it done. When the Spirit came to them, fell on them at Pentecost, in Jerusalem, they DID get it done.

All the world has is top dog. Dog eat dog scratching your way to the top. Jesus says; That isn't how we roll. Being top dog in Satan's world for 5 minutes is vanity. Futility. Jesus says, that's what they do, that's all they've got, but that isn't how the kingdom of God rolls.

We are not of this world. We have come out of this world and become slaves of the King of another world. Actually this world, after He returns and deposes Satan and crushes all evil, all rebellion here. We are slaves of the

King in that world that is to come. Quickly.

And we play by different rules. We're going to look at a different set of rules from a different play book, totally foreign to this world. God's rule in His authority to reign, and how people who dwell in that world act in relation to each other. Kingdom people live with each other by a different set of rules than non-kingdom people. We don't live by this world's rules.

Next week. Exciting truths about a world separated from this one. And we are part of that world, not this one, if we know Jesus as our Saviour and Lord. Two distinct kingdoms living together on the same turf. Are we distinct? Are we separated. The lines have never been more blurred. Next week.