

Good Friday: How Deep The Father's Love For Us – Luke 22-23

Luke 22. Good Friday is one of the most poignant reminders on the calendar of God's love for us. His *deep* love. To bring about the greatest perversion of justice in the history of mankind, and offer us the greatest *gift* of all time. The gift of salvation.

How deep his love, to carry out such injustice, on such innocence. To use such sin, to bring about such forgiveness; and righteousness. How deep his love, to work all things together for good, even though it included so much bad.

What's more, it was all *predestined*. Predetermined. That's what it says in **Acts 4:27–28**. Explicitly. The early believers were praying to God, and said – [27] *Truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel*, [they were all gathered] [28] *to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place*.

That not only includes the cross, that God predestined the cross, but everything leading up to it. And every-*one*. Because a *plan* implies a process. God determined beforehand that all of it would happen, and then did it. By his *hand* it says. His work. His sovereignty. His orchestrating of events. Ordaining some and allowing others, but using them all to accomplish his purpose.

What love. How deep. That he would go to such lengths, to save us. Us. Who regularly and routinely fail him. Doubt him. Shame him. Ignore him. And yet he carried out his plan, nonetheless.

Outline

I have 6 thoughts for you along those lines, starting in Luke 22:1 – [1] *Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called the Passover. [2] And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to put him to death, for they feared the people. [3] Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve. [4] He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them. [5] And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. [6] So he consented and sought an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of a crowd.* (ESV)

That opportunity came a few days later of course, when Judas kissed him in the garden of Gethsemane. (Luk 22:47-48) Which is stunning enough in and of itself, but even more so that God used the influence of Satan to bring it about. To start the plan.

How deep the Father's love for us . . .

That he used the influence of Satan to betray his Son (22:3-6; 47-48)

Used it, because it was all according to plan. When Judas entertained the temptation of getting something for nothing, money for a kiss, he gave Satan an opportunity to influence him (Eph 4:27). And God used it. To initiate his plan and pave the way to the cross. He actually used the influence of Satan.

Does that mean God sinned in any way? No. He can't. The Bible is clear. It simply means he's so completely sovereign, he can use even the worst, the worst being in the universe, to accomplish what's best. And he did. For us. At the expense of betraying his Son.

How deep the Father's love for us.

And how deep . . .

That he used the hatred of men to curse his Son (22:63-65)

To curse him verbally and curse him spiritually. Luke 22:63 – [63] *Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking him as they beat him*. [That in and of itself is amazing love. That God would allow them to *abuse* his Son like that.] [64] *They also blindfolded him and kept asking him, "Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?"* [More mocking.] [65] *And they said many other things against him, blaspheming him* [insulting him with the utmost contempt; as in cursing him]. That's the idea. They cursed him.

And that wasn't even the worst of it. Not even close. The cross was. They cursed him verbally with their words, and spiritually with a cross. **Gal 3:13** – *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree* [a cross]."

He was cursed. And God used the hatred of men to do it. For us. How deep his love.

Third, how deep the Father's love . . .

That he used the self-interest of leaders to convict his Son (22:1-2, 66-71)

The chief priests and scribes were seeking how to kill him (2), because they were desperate to protect their own interests. Their position and power. So they trumped up a charge of blasphemy – How ironic is that? – and held a kangaroo court to convict him. Eventually using his own testimony, the truth, against him.

Luke 22:66 – [66] *When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people gathered together, both chief priests and scribes. And they led him away to their council, and they said, [67] "If you are the Christ [the Messiah, the Deliverer], tell us."* But he said to them, *"If I tell you, you will not believe, [68] and if I ask you, you will not answer. [69] But from now on the Son of Man* [a Messianic title referring to himself] *shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God."* [70] *So they all said, "Are you the Son of God, then?" And he said to them, "You say that I am."* [A statement of confirmation] [71] *Then they said, "What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips."*

It was blasphemy in their minds, that he would claim to be in the presence of God, and exactly what they needed to convict him. To sentence him to death (Mk 14:64) and protect their own self-interest.

How deep the Father's love. To use the sin of self-interest, to convict such selflessness.

Then, they took him to Pilate. And it was there, about 5 in the morning . . .

That he used the weakness of rulers to punish his Son (23:1-17; 24-25)

Pilate could have stopped the whole thing. On multiple occasions. Like in 23:4 when he said – *I find no guilt in this man*. And v15b when he said – *Look, nothing deserving death has been done by him. [16] I will therefore punish and release him*.

He did the former, but not the latter. Because his convictions were weak. Especially in the face of pressure.

And then he passed him off to Herod. Who had even less conviction. And punished him more. And when *he* was finished, he passed him back to Pilate. Forging a weak friendship between weak rulers at the expense of God's Son.

But it was necessary to prepare Jesus for a timely death, and God used it. He used the weakness of rulers to punish his Son. How deep the love.

Fifth, how deep his love for us . . .

That he used the madness of crowds to condemn his Son (23:18-23)

Luke 23:18. Pilate said he would release him – [18] *But they all cried out together, “Away with this man, and release to us Barabbas”*—[19] *a man who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection started in the city and for murder.* [20] *Pilate addressed them once more, desiring to release Jesus, [21] but they kept shouting, “Crucify, crucify him!”* [22] *A third time he said to them, “Why? What evil has he done? I have found in him no guilt deserving death. I will therefore punish and release him.”* [23] *But they were urgent, demanding with loud cries that he should be crucified. And their voices prevailed.*

Their voices prevailed. Because mad crowds carry a lot of weight with weak rulers. But God used them both to bring about the very thing we needed. A sacrifice of condemnation. A Lamb.

How deep his love, to use such anger, to condemn such gentleness. Such holiness.

And last, how deep the Father’s love for us . . .

That he used anything at all to bring about the crucifixion of his Son (Acts 2:23)

Not that God did it directly, but that he used the evil of *man* to do it. Like Peter said in **Acts 2:23**, speaking to the people in Jerusalem 50 days later. [23] *This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.*

God used the evil of man, to bring about the death of his Son, according to his definite plan. What love. How deep. To use anything at *all* to bring about the crucifixion of his Son, let alone all the evil. All the hatred. All the wickedness. But he worked it all together for good, just like he always does, for us.

Prayer (Servers go to tables) – Father, how deep your love, indeed. It’s almost too much for us. Too much to fathom, and too painful to think about. But oh how we need it. And want it. So rend our hearts and fill our souls as only you can.

The Lord’s Table

Close

[44] *It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, [45] while the sun’s light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. [46] Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” And having said this he breathed his last.* (Lk 23:44–46)

Because **You are (deeply) loved.**