

MIDWEEK OF LENT 3: PARTICIPANT
WEEK 4: WEEK OF MARCH 24
THE BETRAYAL
Luke 22:47–53

OPENING

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heav'n, to earth come down!
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
All Thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation,
Enter ev'ry trembling heart.

—“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling” (*LSB* 700, v. 1)

INTRODUCTION

In this section of the Passion Narrative (Luke 22:47–53), Luke relates the betrayal of Jesus by Judas and His arrest by the religious leaders. At the heart of this scene is the contrast between the powers of darkness and the eternal love of God.

Jesus summarizes the events at hand when He tells the religious leaders, “this is your hour, and the power of darkness” (v. 53). Yet, even in the darkness, we see the gracious light of Christ. Throughout the betrayal and arrest, Jesus demonstrates the love of God. He willingly bears this suffering as part of God’s work of salvation, and He acts in the midst of this suffering to teach, to protect, and to heal.

Though we see the hour and the power of darkness in this moment, Luke also reveals to us the eternal love of God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In Luke 6:16, Judas is introduced into the narrative as the one “who became a traitor.” Here, Luke records that Jesus asks Judas if he “would betray the Son of Man with a kiss” (22:48). Luke invites the reader to see Judas’s betrayal as one of a series of events, each offering its own form of betrayal to the powers of darkness. Consider each of the scenes in this section of the Passion Narrative and identify the betrayals. Who are the individuals, what has God called them to do in relationship to Christ and His Word, and what are they doing that betrays this calling?

2. In 2 Timothy, Paul encourages Timothy that “if we are faithless, [Christ] remains faithful—for He cannot deny Himself” (2:13). At His birth, the angels revealed Jesus to be the Savior (Luke 2:13), and in His ministry Jesus repeatedly highlighted saving the lost as His mission both in parables (15:1–32) and in direct teaching (19:10).

In this section of the Passion Narrative, how does Jesus demonstrate in word and deed His faithfulness to God’s mission to save those who are lost?

3. Lent is a time for repentant reflection. As we meditate on this text, Luke invites us to consider the powers of darkness in our own lives. What tempts you to betray the work God has called you in vocation to do?

4. In the face of such sin, Luke reminds us of the mission of Jesus: to seek and to save the lost. How is Jesus still engaged in that mission in this place?

CONCLUSION

In Psalm 136, Israel learned to sing of God's enduring love in a responsive song. The first voice declared a work of God and then the second voice responded with the refrain, "for His steadfast love endures forever." So Israel praised God for the wonder of creation, remembering His steadfast love.

In this text, Luke helps Christians continue to sing that song. Faced with the powers of darkness, Christ responded with an eternal love. In repentance, we come before God confessing the ways we have betrayed His calling in our lives, and yet, even now, because of the willing suffering and death of Jesus Christ, God proclaims us forgiven, "for His steadfast love endures forever."

CLOSING PRAYER

Almighty God, in Your eternal love for us, You sent Your Son into this world, to save us from our sin. In Him, you made us Your children, heirs of Your heavenly kingdom and partakers of Your heavenly grace.

Forgive us, we pray, for those times when we have not lived as Your children and, in Your eternal love, renew us, that we might grow in faith and love toward You.

Through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and ever. Amen.