

✠ Homily for Good Friday, Year C -- 19.April, A.D. 2019 ✠  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 2958-59th St., Sacramento, CA 95817

**John 18:1-12** After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. 2 Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. 3 So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. 4 Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, “Whom are you looking for?” 5 They answered, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus replied, “I am he.” Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. 6 When Jesus said to them, “I am he,” they stepped back and fell to the ground. 7 Again he asked them, “Whom are you looking for?” And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.” 8 Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he.[f] So if you are looking for me, let these men go.” 9 This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, “I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me.” 10 Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. 11 Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?” 12 So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him. (NRSV)

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory now and forever. Amen (Gal. 1:3,4)

### 1. O, poor Judas, what have you done?

On that night when you betrayed Jesus, you betrayed the promised Messiah, God's Son. He it was—who did not count equality with God a thing to be held onto at all costs—who came among us as a Baby.

And now, in his early thirties, you knew, Judas, where he would be with the other eleven on this night after celebrating the Passover.

You knew the place, “... because”—as the evangelist John writes—“Jesus often met there with his disciples. 3 So [you] Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons.”

And when everything was over, “...the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him.”

O, poor Judas, what have you done? You betrayed your Lord!

### 2. Who was Judas?

That question is one of the most ancient and haunting questions of Christendom.

The holy Evangelist Matthew simply identified him as “...one of the twelve.”

Can we imagine his horror when Matthew wrote those words? “Judas, one of the twelve.”

It is *impossible* that someone so close to Jesus for three years could fall so low, Dietrich Bonhoeffer said in a sermon, “it was completely impossible, and yet it did happen....It is wholly and completely inexplicable, incomprehensible, and will always remain an utter riddle—and yet it did indeed happen. *“The Collected Sermons...”* (Fortress, 2012), p 188

### 3. And Now a Greater Mystery

Jesus himself had called and chosen Judas—Jesus must have known from the first that Judas would be his betrayer—a real mystery.

And didn't he love Judas as he did the rest?

There was no indication that Jesus might have hated Judas, was there?

Jesus would not have been perfectly sinless if he had hated, because he himself said that the one who hates is a murderer, and a murderer has no eternal life abiding in him.

But Jesus could not save Judas even though he loved him—a mystery indeed.

### 4. What Is In This Story for Us?

Must we not realize that in Judas we see for certain God's rejection of individuals?

Here is eternal damnation on display. Judas finally realized what he had done. Some theologians have speculated that Judas admired the party of the Zealots—maybe even was one—and by betraying Jesus he would push him into a place where Jesus would have to use his almighty powers to save his country. That's when Jesus would destroy the hated Roman rulers and the leaders of the Jews as well, and the throne of David would once more be held by a new David who just happened to be born in David's town, Bethlehem—see how it all fits in the mind of Judas? According to this scenario, when Jesus did **not** fight back after being condemned to the cross—when he did **not** take on the powers in Jerusalem—did **not** defeat them and set up the Messianic throne, Judas began to despair.

St. Matthew writes:

**3 When Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. 4 He said, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." 5 Throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself.**

So Judas committed suicide by hanging, thus earning eternal damnation.

O, poor Judas, what have you done?

Matthew said you repented, but the word he used means only to have regret about something and to wish that it could be un-done.

O, poor Judas, did you not know that true repentance is more than just regret?—that one must return to Jesus with all your heart, trust him and beg to be forgiven?—that true repentance means turning around onto a new path following the Savior?

### **5. Speaking of a Savior . . .**

Whatever the motives of Judas—whether simply money, for he was a thief, and as he had the money box for the twelve, he used to steal from it—or whether his motive was to have a high office in his imaginary Messianic kingdom—the result was the same.

***Jesus, the Son of God, was condemned to the cross.***

There was Jesus, suffering unimaginable anguish as the enormity of the whole world's sin engulfed him—our Savior on the tree of the cross.

Judas climbed his own tree with a rope, feeling nothing but despair, a loss of all hope.

Jesus meanwhile—for all humanity, including you and me—lived out the words of Ps. 22:

**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**

**Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?**

### **Final Word—**

What shall we today say to all that? Where do we stand?

Will any one of us admit to being a bit like Judas?

Listen to Isaiah the prophet:

**All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him [the suffering Servant] the iniquity of us all.**

Therefore, because of the cross, St. Paul urges us—on this Friday we call good, 2 Cor. 5::

**19 ...in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. 20 So we are ambassadors for Christ,... we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.**

Being reconciled, now we can rejoice with Jerry Burce, missionary to New Guinea::

**So peek from your tents in today's deep night. Sure, it's ugly dark out there. But notice that glow in the offing, the wondrous light of God in Christ Crucified, at once dreadful yet so full of promise. Emmanuel. God with us. All things accomplished for your children's salvation.**

**Completed. Done. Let hearts be cheered!** (ThTh-4/18-J. Burce)

O, Poor Judas—if you had only known!

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria*

*The Rev. Dr. Don Schedler, Ph.D., Snowline Hospice Chaplain, Retired,  
Cameron Park, CA. [1073 spoken words] Iowan11 pt.; Georgia 10 pt., Arial. 10.*