

“The Last Supper: A Place of Forgiveness”

Luke 22:7-23

Sin disrupts the lives of God’s people and leaves its scars. By the grace of God, those scars generally go unseen. Think of how radically different it would be if all the people around you right now knew everything that you had ever done. Every moment, every failure, every unfortunate word – it would make for an uncomfortable gathering.

Tonight is Maundy Thursday, a time when we remember our Lord’s Last Supper and celebrate the Sacrament. As we do this, we gather in the presence of a God who does know every moment, every word. We draw near to worship a God who knows all about us. As you meditate upon our Lord’s Passion and come to receive His body and blood this evening, my prayer for you is that you experience the reality that He knows every last detail, and He loves you anyway, and this table is a place of forgiveness.

In Luke’s account of the Last Supper, he is very clear to let us know that Jesus knew about Judas. Like a movie where you see one person and then another and then both of them together, Luke joins Jesus and Judas in this account. First, he points to Judas. Luke tells us the Feast of

Passover is approaching and Judas goes to the rulers to betray Jesus. This was the Passover preparation of Judas—betraying His Lord.

Then, Luke points to Jesus. He tells us the day of Passover has come and Jesus sends Peter and John to locate the room where He will eat His Passover meal. This was the Passover preparation of Jesus—preparing a table for His disciples; all of His disciples. Then, Luke brings Jesus and Judas together. Luke tells us that the hour of Passover has come. We have moved from Passover approaching to the day of Passover and now to the hour of the feast. Luke sets before us Jesus and Judas and the Passover table. And here is where Luke tells us that Judas is in the presence of a God who knows. At the Passover table, Jesus says, “the hand of him who betrays Me is with Me on the table” (22:21).

How did the disciples react to this knowledge? They had an argument. Luke tells us that the disciples began to argue among themselves. Which one of them was it? “We must find out whose fault it is. We must dig around in everyone else’s closet looking for the certainty of sin.” I assure you that if you go looking around for sin and guilt, you will find it. Unfortunately, this is a trait of Adam’s children which goes all the way back to Adam. We have this sick desire to make sure that blame is assigned. Adam blames Eve; she blames the serpent.

But this is not how Jesus operates. That is what is so amazing about this Last Supper. Jesus knows about this evil. He begins the meal by talking about His suffering, and He closes the meal by talking about His betrayal. Yet in the face of certain evil, Jesus does not try to keep Judas away from His disciples. He doesn't turn His disciples against Judas, and He doesn't run to another city in fear. In the face of certain evil, Jesus does the certain work of God.

Yes, one will betray Him and another will deny Him and all will fall away. But in the midst of all that is wrong and weak and evil about human flesh, there remains one other thing that is true: God is alive. His love is certain. And this night, the kingdom of God is coming into the world. In the face of certain evil, Jesus offers certain forgiveness. "This is My body, which is given for you. . . . this cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood" (vv. 19–20).

The freeing of Israel from slavery. That's what the Jewish people remembered in the Passover. Tonight, however, Jesus calls His disciples to remember Him. He is their freedom. In Him is the new covenant. In Him is eternal love. In Him, sin, death, and the power of the devil are destroyed. In His body, He will bear the punishment of our sins on the cross. With His blood, He will claim us as His own so that the angel of death puts away His

sword. In this body and blood are eternal forgiveness, and as often as we eat this body and drink this cup we proclaim the benefits of the Lord's death for all people until He comes.

There, at this Last Supper, we see the gracious work of God among His disciples. Here, in the Lord's Supper, we see the gracious work of God among us tonight. Yes, we come tonight with scars, with parts of our lives that we'd rather not remember. There are things we have done that make us say, "Oh, if you only knew." For some of you, those sitting around you do know. For others, we don't. But for all of us, God knows. He sees and knows, and tonight we confess to Him the certainty of our sin. But tonight, God comes and proclaims the certainty of your salvation.

In the death of His Son, He has forgiven your sin. In His body and blood, He comes tonight to assure you of the certainty of His love. Here, you are no longer known as a sinner; you are known and acknowledged as a child of God. Tonight, God prepares a place for you at His table. A place of forgiveness. Come. I invite you to experience the wonder that happens when God knows all about you: But He chooses to know you only through the gracious work of His Son. Amen.