

Is it Me
Luke 22:20-23

Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May the words of my mouth and the ears of our hearts be open to the word of God this day. AMEN.

“Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases. He was wounded for our transgressions and upon him was the punishment that made us whole”. It was late Thursday Night after our Passover feasting was done, as we sat around in that-after dinner stupor, it was then that he made the statement. You know the statement that I’m talking about – the statement that pierced us to the heart. The one that made each of us examine ourselves. The one that had us look deep into our soul. The one that made us ask in our own minds the question – “Is it me?”

He had made statements before; statements that had shocked us; statements that had made us laugh; statements that had pushed our faith; but this statement was different. He had spoken in stories in parables. Sometimes they were funny. They were different from anything I had heard before. They always made ya think. They had some hidden meaning. Sometimes he spoke like one with great authority, with such confidence and certainty, you had to believe whatever he was saying was true. But this time it was different, it wasn’t funny, it wasn’t a story, it wasn’t even overly confident like when he quoted Scripture. This time it was just a simple one line truth that caused him pain. You could see it in his eyes as he looked around that room and made eye contact with each one of us. It was that moment of silence, a moment of pain, of sorrow, of hurt, when Jesus looked at me and the other disciples and said, quite plainly, “one of you will betray me”.

Have you ever betrayed someone you cared deeply about. Have you let them down, hurt them and seen the pain in their eyes. It is truly an awful feeling. You can say you didn’t want to do it. You can try to explain. But the fact is you did it and you can’t change it. They know it and you know it. The trust and love that you once shared is broken, destroyed by your traitorous words or actions. You caused that person that loved you and trusted you and only wanted the best for you a broken heart, a pained soul, its’ as if you took a sword yourself and thrust it into their heart. That’s betrayal. That’s how I felt in the moment after Jesus says that one of us, his own friends, would betray him. I got that dry lump in the back of your throat, the stomach stirring up, the weakness in the legs. One of us will betray him, what an awful feeling. Is it me.

He knew the hearts of men. He knew just the right words to say and when to say them. He didn’t beat around the bush when it came to spiritual issues but always got to the meat of issue. He seemed to have a special gift when it came to knowing where people stood spiritually. All of us

seemed to be open books when we came into His presence. Perhaps that's why it bothered us so much, because he knew, he knew what each of us were thinking. Is it me.

Even as we started denying it and pointing fingers at the other disciples. Even when the conversation turned to who the greatest disciple is, trying to out do each other with our loyalty to Jesus, we all wondered if we were the one.

Okay we wouldn't say it, out loud. But many of us had had our doubts, we had our questions. We wondered if he was truly the one the prophets had been expecting for so long. I had traveled with him and ate with him and seen him live day in and day out. I had seen the great thing he had done, the healings and the gatherings of 5000 and 4000 and other crowds that came to hear his sermons. But I had also seen him enraged ripping apart our holy temple and the way he verbally humiliate in stories and names our religious leaders, our traditions. At times I cheered his preaching and welcomed what he had to say, but at other times I shamefully must confess I wondered if he was just wrong. In my heart I knew that I was don't everything I could to help him in his work. I wasn't giving that 110 percent, because I still had those traditions ingrained in me, those societal expectations, the doubts and the fears. I doubted and was troubled by what I had seen and by what I had experienced. I don't know anyone of his followers who not say the same thing if they were truthful with themselves. As a follower of Jesus Christ, do you always believe with out doubts, without fear, without worry, doing everything, giving everything, even your life so that his work can be done. I wonder what your answer is if you are truthful with yourself?

He knew that's what we were all feeling when he said that at the Passover. When he looked right at us and said that one of us will betray him. We were like an open book before him. We can not hide from him. Did we think that somehow we were immune to His spiritual insight? Did we think that just because we had been traveling with Him for these past three years that He would not expose us at some point? Now we knew we were not immune to His exposure. Now we know we had been found out. With one statement He exposed us all. With one statement He got us asking the question – "Is it I?" Is it you. Is it us.

I could say that it's in our blood. It's a human trait, based from one generation to the next. All humans have always been this way – self-centered you know? Adam and Eve were dissatisfied with God had given them – they wanted more – and so they ate of the tree. Cain wanted more attention from God so he killed Able. Lot wanted the better land so he moved toward Sodom. Sarah wanted Isaac to be the sole heir, so she cast out Hagar and Ishmael into the desert. Jacob wanted Esau's birthright so he tricked his own father into giving it to him. Joseph's older brothers were jealous of his favoritism and so plot to kill him, only to change their mind and sell him into slavery for a profit. Moses wanted to impress the people with his power so he hit the rock twice

when God told him to do it only once for water. Saul was angry over David's skills and character so he tried to kill him repeatedly. David wanted Bathsheba so he took her even though she was already married. And so on and so on. Humanity, our forefathers our ancestors have sinned and done what is against God, so why wouldn't it surprise anyone that we also have sinned and betrayed Jesus. Is it me. Is it you.

Yes, most definitely it is because of me Jesus died, it is because of you Jesus died. Maybe we didn't sell him out for thirty pieces of silver. But we sin, and do what is wrong in the eyes of God over and over and over again we do it. I know that I am not above such a thing – even though I pretend I'm not. But I also know that when I get – I want more and more and more. When I do not have – I fret and grow impatient. I am always looking out for myself – looking out for number one. And when someone wrongs me I always want to get even. I always want to win. I always want to be on top. Is it any wonder that Jesus died because of me. You are all no different. He died because you want, you fret, you get angry, you are jealous, you are self-centered, you are, well you know what you are...

Jesus died on that cross willingly going there, he could have stopped it, he could have defended himself, but he didn't, he did it to forgive us our sins. He wore our sins on his shoulders and carried them to the cross for us. He even called out with his last breaths, to God the Father to forgive us, forgive all humanity for we didn't understand what we were doing. We were killing the son of God with our sins. We nailed him there, you and me, together. Nailing him painfully, betraying him, causing him pain with each sin that we do.

But thanks be to God that he loved us so much that he was willing to do this great sacrifice for us. So that we can come to the waters of baptism and receive the light of the world, Jesus Christ, and his salvation. That as the water washes over us we are claimed as his children now and forever, washed clean by his own sacrifice and by his death.

Thanks be to God, that I am the one, you are the one, that he loved us so much he was willing to die for us. Let us stand at the feet of the cross and look upon the sacrificial gift he grants us this night. Amen.

Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people according to their needs.

Almighty God, you loved us so much that you sent Jesus Christ, your Son our Lord, to face the cross and pain of such a horrible death so that once and for all time, we know we are forgiven. We could never repay you what we owe, we could never make things right with you and make us ready to come into your presence. Only through this sacrificial death, are we made a part of your

eternal kingdom. We look towards that cross this night knowing the love you have for us and we give you thanks.

LORD IN YOUR MERCY, Hear our Prayer..

Everlasting Lord, we ask that you turn your healing touch on all the places of the world that are in need of your grace and comfort. Send your peace to areas of the world that are torn apart by pains and sorrows. That have not experienced the joy of your new day, of your freedom, of your love. Where there is war, send your spirit of peace. Where there is hunger, send your spirit of fulfillment. Where there is disease send your spirit of healing. Where there is hopelessness and depression, worry and fear, send your spirit of hope and love. May your Spirit wash anew upon this earth and grant us the ability to face and give aid to all the needs that are around us.

LORD IN YOUR MERCY, Hear our Prayer.

Gracious Father, we pray for your Holy Church. As servants of Christ we are given a freedom and joy that cannot be hidden. As servants redeemed and forgiven, washed clean and made new, we rise and seek out those who have need to come into your presence. Use your church and all its members Lord, send us so that we may reach out to those burdened with life, to help them to seek their freedom and blessings in your healing word. Empower us to carry within us the spirit of your love so that we may share it with all the world, in everything we do.

Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer

Almighty and everlasting God, we each know of many in this world that need to feel your healing presence in their lives this day. Many people are weighed down by physical or mental anguish, by pains from guilt, from sickness, from fear, from anxiety and worry. Lord comfort all those who are in need this day. Grant your healing spirit to lift up the afflicted, to strengthen those facing adversity, to stand beside those who are alone, to give hope to those who are depressed. Be with all those that will be dealing with physical and mental anguish and grant them healing. We lift up all those needs and remember before you all those who are hospitalized, shut-ins, hurt and forgotten, lifted them up before you and remembering them as we pray their names before you this night.....

LORD IN YOUR MERCY, hear our prayer.

Into your hands, o Lord we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.