

90. Selfishness of men and sacrifice of God

August 20, 2017

We all have a chance to see Leonardo Da Vinci's masterpiece "The Last Supper". As if Jesus and the disciples posed for a photo opportunity, they were all lined up behind a dining table and sitting on the New England style high back chairs. This set up was inaccurate biblically and historically. The table Jesus and His disciples used was a low U shape and they had to recline on their left elbows and eat with their right hands. Double and triple dipping into the community sauce bowl was not only encouraged, but it was something nobody thought twice about.

To paint Jesus in his masterpiece, Da Vinci looked long and hard for a most godly looking person who could serve as the face of Jesus in Rome. Finally, he was able to locate a man who worked for a church in Rome. His name was Pietro Ventinelli.

The painting went on unfinished for quite some time due to other things Da Vinci had to take care of. Several years later the artist turned his attention back to this painting and finished everyone's face except one – Judas. He wanted to find a person whose face would portray the sin and wickedness of Judas. Eventually he found a beggar from the street of Rome. His face was so etched with villainess and vile of his life that Da Vinci even trembled when he first looked at him. He hired the man to be a model for Judas' face on his canvas.

As Da Vinci was about to dismiss the man upon the completion of the betrayer's face, he asked, "I have not asked your name yet. What is your name?" The beggar replied, "My name is Pietro Ventinelli. I also modeled for you as Jesus."

Listen, sin can change any one of us from Christ-like to Judas-like. We should not think so lightly about Peter's and Judas' accounts that we would never do such a thing like denial or betrayal against Jesus. Actually, we all are capable.

This morning we are going to study three examples of selfishness of men and the sacrifice of God in chapter 22.

A. THE PREPARATION OF JUDAH'S BETRAYAL

Luke 22:1-6 Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover. 2 And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people. 3 Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. 4 So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them. 5 And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. 6 So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude.

The four Gospels that we've been studying are moving toward these climactic final moments in Jesus' life. If my calculation is correct, He now had less than 48 hours from His death on the cross. In the last four chapters of the Book of Luke, the author, Dr. Luke zoomed in to reveal the details of Jesus' final days.

These chief priests and the scribes were like the beasts which smelled the blood, they were lurking around and looking for an opportunity to kill Jesus without people's uproar. The problem was that this was the Passover time and the popularity of Jesus was still very high.

The feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles were the three most important feasts on the Jewish calendar. All the Jewish men were expected to go to Jerusalem at least once a year to celebrate. Thousands of excited pilgrims crowded in and around Jerusalem during that week, causing the Romans officials to always be nervous about possible riots.

The opportunity to kill Jesus came from within the core group of Jesus. Much to their surprise, Judas was willing to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver which was the price of a slave. They were more than willing to pay far more, but they were not going to say, "No" to a cheaper price.

One may wonder why Judas who witnessed all the miracles and power of Jesus would betray Him. It was because he had his own selfish agenda – wanting to be a high official of the earthly kingdom of Jesus. But Jesus was talking about dying on the cross like a common criminal. Judas didn't want any part of it. So he wanted to cash in before this came to an end.

I don't believe for one moment Judas was a believer of Jesus. We have every reason to believe that Judas had been given the same spiritual authority from Jesus as the other disciples and that he had preached the same message and performed the same miracles. It shows how close a person can come to God's kingdom and still be utterly lost. Some liberal scholars try to portray Judas as a helpless victim of God's sovereign will. He was truly having a form of godliness but denying its power.

We studied the story of Mary, who anointed the feet of Jesus with her expensive, fragrant perfume. But as the scent filled the air, Judas said indignantly, "*Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?*" I am sure that Judas looked like a very benevolent person. But according to the apostle John, he was nothing more than a thief who had the money bag and was skimming off the top. Outwardly, Judas appeared to be so religious, so caring, so compassionate, and yet he was the worst traitor of mankind.

I really doubt that Judas had any intention to betray Jesus when he joined the group of the twelve. But as the time went by, Judas didn't like the way the things were happening – instead of the crown of Israel, it was more evident that Jesus was heading for the crucifixion by the Romans.

Like that, it might start out with a few little white lies for you. And then after a while, you can't remember what is true anymore. It might start with a little flirtation with someone you aren't married to. It might start out with some area that doesn't seem to be that bad. But the next thing you know, you've fallen headlong into sin. Stop right now; repent from it this moment; turn from it and confess your sins to the Lord.

B. THE LORD'S SUPPER

Luke 22:7-23 Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed. 8 And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat." 9 So they said to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare?" 10 And He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters. 11 Then you shall say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, "Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?" ' 12 Then he will show you a large, fur-

nished upper room; there make ready." 13 So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover. 14 When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. 15 Then He said to them, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 17 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; 18 for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." 19 And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 20 Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you. 21 But behold, the hand of My betrayer is with Me on the table. 22 And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!" 23 Then they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing.

Finding a man carrying a pitcher of water is like finding a man who has a set of pink hair rollers on his head and a pair of puppy dog sleepers in a shopping mall. Men rarely carried pitchers of water during that time, because this was the task of the women.

John, on His right, Judas, on Jesus' left, reclining as they were, Judas occupied the seat of highest honor and trust – at Jesus' back. To the very end, Jesus lovingly appealed to Judas to change His mind, both with the position of honor and the morsel of food He gave.

This was not a "Farewell" dinner to the Son of God. It was a glimpse of the supper we are going to have in heaven based on Jesus' own sacrifice as the perfect Lamb of God according to v16. The supper we are going to have with Jesus after the Kingdom is fulfilled is known as the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in Revelation 19. That is what Jesus longed for.

Under the old covenant, the blood of animals temporarily covered the sins of the people who brought the sacrifice. Now Jesus established a new and better and permanent covenant. As both the Chief High Priest and God's Passover Lamb, Jesus offered His own blood as an atonement, obtaining for us a permanent eternal redemption.

There is a doctrine called "Transubstantiation" by Roman Catholics. It is the teaching that during the Mass at the consecration in the Lord's Supper, a.k.a. Communion, the elements of the Eucharist – bread and wine, are transformed into the actual body and blood of Jesus and that they are no longer bread and wine, but only retain their appearance of bread and wine.

Without an apology, by the authority of the Bible, I say that it is a wrong doctrine. Here are five reasons why:

- 1) There is no indication in the Bible that these elements were meant to be literal.
- 2) There is no indication in the Bible that the disciples taught us that the elements changed into His body and blood.
- 3) There is no indication in the Bible that the disciples worshipped the elements.
- 4) The supper was instituted before Jesus' crucifixion. The bread and blood merely represent Jesus' crucifixion ordeal.
- 5) The Roman Catholics view is a violation of Levitical law in Leviticus 17:14.

Leviticus 17:14 for it is the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, 'You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off.'

Every time Jesus is misrepresented by us, we have forgotten Him. Every time we rebel against the One who bought us with His own sacrifice, we have denied Him. Every time we look to ourselves instead of Jesus Himself, we have betrayed Him.

C. ANOTHER ARGUMENT TO BE THE GREATEST

Luke 22:24-30 Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. 25 And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.' 26 But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. 27 For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves. 28 But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. 29 And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, 30 that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Jesus didn't rebuke them for wanting to be the greatest. He taught them by washing their dirty feet as the lowest servant would do. That is the Heavenly Kingdom protocol – if you want to be the greatest, be the servant of all.

What you are doing on earth is like putting credits in heaven where you can receive rewards from the Lord Jesus when you get there. The more you put in here, the more you will get in heaven. If you don't serve the Lord and His people here, you ain't gonna have anything coming when you get to heaven. A simple heavenly math that many Christians don't want to learn.

D. THE WARNING FOR THE DENIAL OF PETER

Luke 22:31-34 And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, (1) Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. 32 But (2) I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." 33 But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death." 34 Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."

We need to notice a couple of very important things here:

1) Satan cannot do anything without permission from God.

If the Lord says, "He or she is off limit from you, satan," there is nothing for him to do other than back off. Satan is on a short leash from our God.

2) Jesus intercedes for us

What comfort it is for us to know that Jesus who is our Lord God prays for us!

Peter's self-confident boasting is a warning to us that none of us really knows his own heart and that we can fail at the point of our greatest strength. Abraham's greatest strength was his faith, and yet his faith failed him when he went down to Egypt and lied about Sarah. Moses' strength was in his meekness, yet he lost his temper, spoke rashly with his mouth and struck the rock instead of speaking as God commanded, and was not allowed to enter Canaan. Peter was a brave man, but his courage failed him and he denied his Lord three times.

1 Corinthians 10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

E. IT IS THE TIME FOR US

Luke 22:35 And He said to them, "When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?" So they said, "Nothing." 36 Then He said to them, "But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. 37 For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: 'And He was numbered with the transgressors.' For the things concerning Me have an end." 38 So they said, "Lord, look, here are two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough."

Jesus was telling them that it was time for them to start to prepare themselves for the work of God. Like these disciples, we must use our faith and God-given wisdom to serve the Lord. This is a good warning to zealous people who foolishly get themselves into tight spots and then expect God to perform miracles for them.

Did you notice how calm our Savior Jesus was on the eve of His arrest, torture and death on the cross? It is He who was, is and will be in control, not satan or us.

F. APPLICATIONS

- 1) Sin can change any one of us from Christ-like to Judas-like. We should not think so lightly about Peter's and Judas' accounts that we would never do such a thing like denial or betrayal against Jesus. Actually, we all are capable.
- 2) Every time Jesus is misrepresented by us, we have forgotten Him. Every time we rebel against the One who bought us with His own sacrifice, we have denied Him. Every time we look to ourselves instead of Jesus Himself, we have betrayed Him.