

March 19, 2020

John 13:21-32

21 After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, “Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me.” **22** His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. **23** One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. **24** Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, “Ask him which one he means.” **25** Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, “Lord, who is it?” **26** Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.” Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. **27** As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. So Jesus told him, “What you are about to do, do quickly.” **28** But no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. **29** Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the festival, or to give something to the poor. **30** As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night. **31** When he was gone, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. **32** If God is glorified in him,^[a] God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.

When we read this, we know that Jesus had already prepared the disciples for this and the coming events. However, they weren't ready for it. Even Jesus was “troubled in spirit”. They didn't understand what he meant – how could one of them betray him? They loved him. They had given up their lives to be with him and learn from him. They were stunned at his statement. And Jesus – he loved them – was the feeling he had knowing the pain they were going to go through in losing him? There was no turning back at this point. He sent Judas to do what he had to do.

I think we all are there at some time. Even in faith, we question. We are “troubled in spirit”. We betray Him in our own ways. Judas took the piece of bread from Jesus, but having despised the love that extended it, Judas, fully and finally persuaded by Satan to betray God Incarnate, obeys the sorrowful command not to delay in that which he had already planned to do. And then John says, “It was night”. Was this just about the time of day – or was the atmosphere in the room darkened by what had transpired? Jesus then begins his “final instructions” to the disciples before He goes to the cross. “God will glorify the son...”

When we take the bread, reminded of this night and the suffering to come, do we react like Judas or do we do as Jesus taught and go out into the world as His disciple? I know I am not always in the right frame of mind when I come to the altar. I have to ask God to forgive me and take away my betrayals. I sometimes need Him to bring me into the light to serve Him with humility.

Prayer: Father God, help me to betray you less, to be the person You desire of me. Guide me in the Light and away from the darkness that is so apparent all around me. Help me focus on the cross, but more so on what came after and what is to come. In Jesus name, Amen

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