

Mark 14:12-22  
Betrayer's Bread  
April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Good Friday

Good Friday is an epic story of betrayal. In my remarks last night and this afternoon I began to look at betrayal. This message is another facet of that topic.

As you know Jesus shared a special meal with his disciples. It was the high holy days of the "Festival of Unleavened Bread." The disciples were unaware this was going to be the Last Passover they shared with Jesus. Special preparations had been made in secret; so that Jesus could share some vital last teachings with his closest disciples.

He had already told them he was going to suffer and die. This they could not comprehend, or accept; so they began the evening arguing over their pecking order in the Kingdom of God. Then Jesus dropped a bomb on them when he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me."

You can imagine the kind of impact a statement like that would have. To share a meal with someone in the Jewish culture was an expression of acceptance, care, and even protection. To be betrayed by someone in your inner circle was particularly awful.

Jesus and his disciples were reclining at the table, as was their custom. They were on the floor around a low table eating with their hands. A loaf of bread was passed among them, each breaking off a piece. It wasn't a big fluffy chunk of white bread, because remember it was the Feast of Unleavened Bread. So it was probably more like a large tortilla or piece of Pita Bread.

Anyway, they were eating with their hands and the bread was dipped into a communal bowl filled with stew. We received Holy Communion in this manner last night and this afternoon.

But who was the betrayer?

They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, “Surely, not I?” He said to them, “It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me. For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed: it would have been better for that one not to have been born.”

The gospel of Mark points to a single betrayer, but I like the way Jesus puts it in the Gospel of Matthew, “**The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me.**” Because it casts a wider net.

But Jesus knew Judas was going to betray him. He warned him not to do it. He stated how miserable he was going to be for having done it, but Judas persisted, and Jesus persisted in his love for he still extended table fellowship through the bread to Judas.

But for Judas, this wasn't the body bread, the bread of fellowship and life; it was the bread of betrayal.

The point I made in my earlier talk we return to here. It wasn't only Judas who betrayed Jesus that day. Later, Jesus prophesied that all the disciples would desert him, even Peter would deny him 3 times. So in a real sense they all betrayed him by deserting, and denying him.

Tonight we sang the hymn “Were You There?” with the question of being were you there when they crucified my Lord. The answer on one level is of course “No”, Jesus was crucified almost 2000 years ago, but the question challenges us to probe our hearts and minds.

In the Old Testament the Jew had a confession of faith they were told to make. Deuteronomy 26:5-9 reads, “**you shall make this response before the Lord your God: “A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us,**

we cried to the Lord, the God of our ancestors; the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression.

The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

Did you notice the shift from third person singular “he” to first person plural “we”, “us”. This confession of faith, about the central salvation event in the Old Testament, is written in the historical present. In other words as it is confessed it is not just an ancient historical record, but the history of every Jew, past, present and future.

So if a Jew is asked, “Were you there?” when God delivered Israel from Egypt, every Jew would answer with a definitive, “Yes!”

This is exactly how the Bible presents the central act of salvation in the New Testament, which of course is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is not just ancient history; it is “our story”. To answer the hymn writer’s question in this way of thinking, we were there when they crucified our Lord.

We were there when they nailed him to the tree and laid him in the tomb. We were there when he rose from the grave and when he ascended into heaven “**taking captives in his train.**” Paul tells us that in our baptism we were joined to Christ’s death and resurrection.

In fact Paul wrote, “**Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?**

**Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.**

**For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.”** Romans 6:3-5

Yes, we were there. Christ’s story is our story.

And we weren't just there at Jesus' death, passive spectators watching bad people do evil things to our Lord. We were the ones who betrayed and crucified him. We were the ones who shouted "Crucify him, Crucify him."



We were the ones who arrested him, who mocked him, and spit in his face. We were the ones who whipped him and drove the nails into his hands.

It was for your sin, my sin that Jesus died. You and I crucified our Lord. As I said in my Maunday Thursday service and this afternoon's service we all dipped our bread into the bowl with Jesus and betrayed him.

It wasn't just Judas who betrayed Jesus. We were there you and I. It was your sins that drove Jesus to the cross and drove the nails through his hands. We are the betrayers eating the betrayer's bread with our Lord. We dipped our bread into the bowl with him.

There's another story of betrayal in the popular children's book, "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe" by C. S. Lewis.



Many popular story series have made a lot of money putting in secular fictional form the Biblical Salvation story of God sending a "chosen one" who after much difficulty saves the day if not the human race.

Series such as: The Matrix series, the Lord of the Rings series, the Star Wars series and more. The Biblical salvation story is such a positive part of our culture that many have picked it up and used it, some simply for money, and some to help Christians translate salvation history into the modern times, which is what C.S. Lewis did.

In "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," two brothers and two sisters enter the magical Land of Narnia. Three of the siblings, Peter, Lucy and Susan were unaware their brother Edmund had been there once before, and had met the White Witch who bewitched him.

Caught in the Witches snare, Edmund betrayed his brother and sisters to the White Witch. Eventually he was rescued from the Witch's grasp by the followers of Aslan, the great Lion, the Christ figure. But the White Witch showed up at Aslan's camp demanding her rights.

Here is that scene: *"You have a traitor there, Aslan," said the Witch. Of course everyone present knew that she meant Edmund...*

*"Well," said Aslan. "His offense was not against you."*

*"Have you forgotten the Deep Magic?" asked the Witch.*

*"Let us say I have forgotten it," answered Aslan gravely. "Tell us of this Deep Magic."*

*"Tell you?" said the Witch, her voice growing suddenly shriller.*

*"Tell you what is written on the very Table of Stone which stands beside us?... You at least know the magic which the Emperor put into Narnia at the very beginning. You know that every traitor belongs to me as my lawful prey and that for every treachery I have a right to a kill... That human creature is mine. His life is forfeit to me. His blood is my property."*

*"Come and take it the," said the Bull with the man's head in a great bellowing voice.*

*"Fool," said the Witch with a savage smile that was almost a snarl, "do you really think your master can rob me of my rights by mere force? He knows the Deep Magic better than that. He knows that unless I have blood as the Law says all Narnia will be overturned and perish in fire and water."*

*"It is very true," said Aslan; "I do not deny it."*

The White Witch knew the deep magic quite well. Betrayal was a crime that demanded punishment. But Aslan offered her a trade. Instead of Edmund, Aslan would surrender himself.



The Witch gladly accepted the offer, and in a heartbreaking scene, she puts Aslan to death. What the Witch didn't know, though, was that there was a deeper magic from before the dawn of time.

It said, "When a willing victim who had committed no treachery was killed in a traitor's stead, the Table would crack and death itself would start working backward."



That is indeed what happened. The Table, representing the deep magic cracked, and Aslan was raised from the dead. The demands of the deep magic on Edmund's life were satisfied, and he was released from his guilt.

Edmund's story is our story. Judas's story is our story. Jesus gave himself up for us on the cross. "God proved his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Rom. 5:8

If Good Friday is a story of betrayal, it is also a story of forgiveness. Betrayer's bread was eaten, but also the bread of life and forgiveness.

This forgiveness would have even covered Judas's sin if he had asked for it, but he became his own judge, jury and executioner.

As our scripture says, "While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, 'Take; this is my body.'" Mk 14:22

Jesus gives his body even to traitors and betrayers,... like you and me. It is the bread of life for the forgiveness of sin. And so we celebrate life and forgiveness in the face of the evil of sin. We remember the

sacrifice of God's only begotten son that whosoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life.

We remember this on the day Jesus died and all hope was seemingly extinguished. We remember that as we follow the Christ candle and the acolyte out into the darkness of this world.

In Jesus' name, amen.