

**'Betrayals'**  
**by Rev. Frances Savill**  
**Sunday April 16, 2023**

**Luke 22:47-65**

This morning I want to back up a little and reflect on some of the details of Jesus' passion.

Our Lenten devotional readings from St. Andrew's Hall on Palm Sunday asked us to reflect on Judas' betrayal and the words: "*Surely you don't mean me, Lord?*".

When Jesus was at table with His disciples on the evening of the Passover meal, they were remembering how God had rescued and saved the people out of Egypt, out of the hands of their enemies that began their journey to the Promised land and being formed as God's people.

On that night, Jesus told them that one of them would betray Him. All the disciples said, "*Surely, you don't mean me, Lord?*".

During our Palm Sunday service, we as a congregation, read that line: "*Surely, you don't mean me, Lord?*".

When we think of who betrayed Jesus, we think first of Judas, the betrayer, who delivered Jesus over to the soldiers, and into the hands of religious authorities for money, but there were many others who betrayed Jesus.

There was the crowd of followers.

On Palm Sunday they heralded Jesus as their King, and proclaimed Him the Messiah of God, but they denied and betrayed Him before Pilate, asking for a murderer to be released and Jesus of Nazareth to be crucified.

There was Peter who denied that he even knew Jesus, just as Jesus said he would.

The soldiers were mocking Jesus, telling Him to prove that He was a prophet by identifying which one of them was beating Him while He was blindfolded. While at the very same time, Jesus proved again He was a prophet, as Peter denied Him for the third time before the rooster crowed.

All the disciples scattered when Jesus was arrested, just as He knew they would.

The trials that Jesus underwent were a betrayal of justice – the Sanhedrin brought Him up on trumped up charges, with witnesses that couldn't agree. Pilate knew he was innocent but did what was expedient.

In the reflection questions from the devotional, it asked us to reflect on some or all of these things:

- **Jesus knew Judas' betrayal, but He did not turn away from His disciples.**

Jesus knew that all the disciples would scatter, that Peter would deny Him, Judas would betray Him, still Jesus showed His love for all of them at the last supper. He gave them the symbols of His body broken for them, and the blood of the new covenant poured out for them, and for us all.

- **The deemed value of Jesus' life was 30 pieces of silver, a price of a slave.**

Jesus of Nazareth, Teacher, Rabbi, Healer, Messiah, Son of Man, Son of God, sold for 30 pieces of silver (according to Matthew's gospel). The one who set us free from sin and death, on the Passover night, when they remembered how God rescued them from slavery. Jesus was sold for the price of a slave.

- **They say everyone has their own "price." What might tempt me to betray my Lord? Cowardice, fear, love of money, selfishness, rebellion...?**

I'm pretty sure that I have turned away from Jesus and His ways for all those reasons at one time or another.

Jesus was crucified, He died and He was buried.

Easter morning the disciples discovered the tomb was empty, Jesus was risen!

But what of us?

What of us who have denied and betrayed and turned away from Jesus?

Jesus did not turn away from any of His disciples at the Last Supper, and when He greeted them His first words were: "*Peace be with you!*"

Peace, shalom, wholeness, healing, forgiveness, are all contained in that wonderful word.

Jesus knows our sin, our rebellion, our denials, our betrayals, and He offers us shalom, newness of life, life in its fullness, life that does not end.

The hymn we're going to sing in a few minutes says, "***ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven.***" That is the shalom, the peace that Jesus brings to us and to our world.

Sometimes we think it's a long road back from our betrayals and denials, but it isn't really. Jesus doesn't turn away from us. He is always waiting for us to turn back to Him.

Do you remember the story of the prodigal son?

He denied and betrayed his father in every way possible.

When he finally came to his senses, he realized that he had to go home and beg the forgiveness and mercy of his father. Maybe his father would take him in as a servant. And so, he turned towards home.

When he was a way off still, the father saw him, and the father ran to greet him. The son started his apology speech praying for mercy, but the father was restoring him to the family, celebrating that his son who was dead was alive. The father was just waiting for his son to turn back to him, so that he might forgive and restore, and throw a party in his honour.

For all of us who denied, betrayed, and turned away from Jesus, there is a party waiting to happen with our name on it.

All of heaven is waiting for you to turn towards home, the open arms of our heavenly Father await.

If you remember the story of the prodigal son, you'll remember that there were two sons. The first was the betrayer, the younger son.

But there was an older brother – who was very angry when his younger brother was welcomed home again. He refused to join the party - though the father went to him also, he could not accept that his father was so merciful, so willing to forgive.

Peter, who denied Jesus three times became the rock on which Jesus built His church. Disciples who were heading out of town were commissioned by Jesus as His witnesses.

Every Sunday we share an assurance of forgiveness, because the mercy and grace of God is so difficult for us to accept and to believe.

Every time we turn towards Jesus, His words to us are: "*Peace, Shalom, Wholeness, Healing, Life in abundance be with you.*"

And then we are invited to share that new life with the world.

**Thanks be to God.**