

March 29, 2018
Holy Thursday
Mark 14:12–26

I.N.I.

Sermon preached by the Rev. Richard A. Lammert at Zion Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, IN

Theme: “Jesus Did It All *For You*”

In the name of ✠ Jesus. **Amen.**

You hear the words every Sunday. Sometimes, like this week, you hear them several times during the week: “Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when he was betrayed . . .” That night, the night on which our Lord Jesus Christ was betrayed, was Holy Thursday, tonight. Tonight is the night that we remember each time that we celebrate Holy Communion.

In the sentence just before our reading tonight from St. Mark, Mark reports that “[Judas] sought an opportunity to betray [Jesus]” (Mark 14:11). As the disciples were eating the Passover meal, Jesus told them, “One of you will betray me” (Mark 14:18). From a human viewpoint, this is certainly not something to keep remembering. But Jesus was betrayed for you. We consider our Gospel reading with the theme “Jesus Did It All *For You*.”

We have two indications in our text that Jesus did it all for you. After telling His disciples that one of them would betray Him, Jesus said, “The Son of Man goes as it is written of him” (Mark 14:21). The Son of Man, Jesus Christ, was set to go down the path laid out for Him from the foundation of the world. Thus it is written; thus it shall be.

God the Father had proclaimed to Adam and Eve—and all their descendants—that He would send the Messiah to pay the penalty for their sins. To go down the path written of Him means that Jesus was doing this *for you*. He did not need to go down any path of death; He did not need to go down any path bearing sins. Jesus Christ was the sinless, immortal Son of God. The path He was taking was taken only for you. This is the first indication in our text that Jesus had *you* in mind with His actions.

In teaching and shaping His disciples as future pastors and apostles of the church, Jesus had told them that He *must* go to Jerusalem, be handed over to the authorities, and be crucified. The disciples certainly didn’t like the idea. We have the story of Peter actually telling Jesus that he would prevent all of this from happening. Jesus had to call him out, telling him, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me” (Matt. 16:23). “The Son of Man goes as it is written of him.” Jesus’ death—and,

yes, resurrection—was foreordained to free mankind from the power of the devil, the world, and our own flesh.

As we hear and read the Bible, we must remember that the narratives are not only stories of something that happened in the past. The narratives tell us not only who and what and when. The narratives are not only about someone else; they are also about *us*; they are *our* story.

We cannot stand back from Holy Scripture and simply observe; we must be drawn into the Scripture. Notice that Jesus makes the statement, “One of you will betray me.” St. Mark does not tell us that Jesus directly answered the question when the disciples asked “Is it I?” Jesus *does* say “It is one of the twelve” (Mark 14:21). And we know that the betrayer was Judas Iscariot.

That doesn’t mean you can wipe your brow, and say, “Whew, that leaves me off the hook.” No, it doesn’t. Now, I now that the original word in our text for *betray* means “to hand over for punishment,” which is exactly what Judas did. *Betray* can be and is used in a wider sense, and I am admittedly stretching the original sense of the Greek word to include the broader use we have in English with the word *betray*.

But it is certainly biblical that each of us has betrayed the name *Christian* that God bestowed on us in our baptism. We have not lived up to that name in our thoughts, words, or deeds. We have betrayed that name and our Lord by our sins.

There is no one better—outside the Bible—to guide our thinking here than Dr. Martin Luther. Luther tells us exactly how we should approach confession:

Consider your place in life according to the Ten Commandments:

Are you a father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, or worker?

Have you been disobedient, unfaithful, or lazy?

Have you been hot-tempered, rude, or quarrelsome?

Have you hurt someone by your words or deeds?

Have you stolen, been negligent, wasted anything, or done any harm?

Let me add just one more question that doesn’t come from Luther: Have you heard the theme of this sermon, “Jesus Did It All *For You*,” and decided that since this is the theme of *every* Lutheran sermon, you could tune this one out because you’ve “been there, done that, heard that”?

Anyone who seriously approaches these questions and knows what God demands in the Ten Commandments must honestly say, “Yes, I have not done what I should and must; I have done what I should not and must not do. I have betrayed that name that God put on me in my baptism, and betrayed my Lord in so doing.”

“One of you will betray me.” “Is it I?” Answer heartily and with an acknowledgment of your sin, “yes, it is I,” but answer with a repentant attitude that looks to your Lord Jesus Christ for forgiveness. For indeed, Jesus did it all *for you*, going to the cross because of your betrayal of that precious name of *Christian*.

Jesus followed up His statement that “the Son of Man goes as it is written of him” by referring to Judas: “But woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is

betrayed!” (Mark 14:21). Because Jesus was treading the path set out for Him by God the Father, we could finish Jesus’ statement in an entirely biblical way by saying, “The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, and blessed is the man who believes that what I am doing is *for him*, for that is precisely why I am going to the cross.”

The Son of Man came down from heaven, took on human flesh and blood, and allowed Himself to be betrayed, so that He could suffer horribly, be crucified, and die, being separated from God, His Father, abandoned by God. Jesus did this all *for you*, so that you need not suffer the abandonment by God in hell, because Jesus had already done it for you.

Jesus did it all for you. But none of us is stuck with merely contemplating these words of Jesus, “the Son of Man goes as it is written of him,” and being thankful for what our Lord has done for poor penitent sinners. For the at-least-weekly repetition of the words I mentioned earlier doesn’t stop with Jesus’ being betrayed. These words continue, “Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when he was betrayed took bread . . .” Our Lord doesn’t ask us merely to think about Him, but to eat His body and drink His blood.

In Holy Communion, our Lord has given us a sacrament of His body and blood, instituted for us Christians to eat and drink. Because Jesus Christ instituted this sacrament on the night He was betrayed, tonight, Holy Thursday, it is right and proper to consider the great blessing we have received from our Lord.

We have in Mark the words of institution, although they are a little briefer than we are accustomed to hearing, which are based primarily on what St. Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians. Here is what we hear in Mark: “Take; this is my body” (Mark 14:22); and “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many” (Mark 14:24). Even in this slightly shorter version of the words of institution, we have a solid indication that the Lord is doing this for you: “poured out for many.”

Don’t get hung up on the word *many* here, as if our Lord was pouring out His blood for many, but not for everyone. *Many* means here what it always does: a great, large number of people. Our Lord poured out His blood, shed His blood on the cross of Calvary, for the great, large number of sinners who have lived, who are living, or will live in the future. Anyone who is a sinner is included in the word *many*. And since the Bible teaches clearly—in many places, I might add—that all people are sinners, then all people are included in those for whom our Lord poured out His blood.

This is the second indication in our text that Jesus did it all for you. He willingly let Himself be betrayed by Judas Iscariot; He willingly went under the scourging of the authorities; He willingly took up His cross; He willingly took His place upon the cross; and He willingly died upon that cross of Calvary. And He did it all for you.

In the Lenten hymn “O dearest Jesus, what law hast Thou broken,” we proclaim in song that our Lord was suffering all that He did suffer because of us. The third stanza clearly points the finger—not to somebody else, not to some vague “sin” that someone has done—but directly to us: “Whence come these sorrows, whence this
March 29, 2018—Preached by the Rev. Richard A. Lammert. Page 3

mortal anguish? / It is my sins for which Thou, Lord, must languish; / Yea, all the wrath, the woe, Thou dost inherit, / This I do merit" (*LSB* 439:3).

Our Lord Jesus Christ not only suffered *for* us, as we have been saying; He also suffered *because of* us, suffering what we ourselves have merited because of our sin. Our Lord took *our* penalty upon Himself, and suffered and died *for* us.

He poured out His blood for many, that is, for you and me. Jesus Christ instituted the Lord's Supper on this evening to give His body and blood to us, even after His suffering, death, and resurrection. St. Paul writes in the Epistle we read earlier: "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? (1 Cor. 10:16).

The word that the English Standard Version translates as "participation" is translated in other versions as "communion." The word can range in meaning from "fellowship" to "share with someone in something." Dr. Gregory Lockwood states the following about this verse, after giving "sharing, fellowship, communion" as possible translations: "[H]ere Paul is not talking about fellowship as 'warm fuzzy' feelings. Rather, *through the sacramental bread and wine there is direct oral reception of the Lord's crucified and glorified body and blood*" (1 Corinthians, 341; emphasis original).

If you stop to think about this—which we are going to do right now—this is quite phenomenal. Here we are, you and I, those who have made the suffering and death of Jesus Christ necessary, because we are not able to pull ourselves out of the morass of sin. Here we are, those who have betrayed the name that our Lord put on us in baptism by our sinful actions and sinful lack of actions. Here we are, those who alienated themselves from all that is holy, listening to the devil because of the sin that still adheres to us as poor, sinful beings.

Here we are—and our Lord, bruised, scourged, and *dead* because of us, desires to share something with us: His body and blood. Our Lord Jesus graciously offers Himself to us, giving us His body and blood as if we have always been honored table partners with Him.

Our Lord Jesus Christ does that because He has done it all *for you*. Because Jesus suffered and died for you, you share in His holiness through faith worked by the Holy Spirit. Through faith, you are honored guests of Christ who invites you to His table.

Through His ignominious suffering and death Jesus gives you a share in the kingdom of God. Through His suffering and death, Jesus has buried all your sins in His tomb, never to be seen again.

Jesus now invites you to a foretaste of the feast to come, giving you His body and blood, sharing with you what is now yours through your baptism into the death of Christ. Come, eat and drink, for our Lord desires to share this meal with his beloved brothers and sisters, sons of the same heavenly Father.

In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**
March 29, 2018—Preached by the Rev. Richard A. Lammert. Page 4