**A Better Covenant**

**By Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Mark 14:17-31**

**Wednesday Evening**

**August 28, 2019**

**17 In the evening He came with the twelve.**

Saints, on that evening (Wednesday or Thursday), Jesus arrived in Jerusalem with the twelve disciples. The meal was not to be eaten until after sunset and was supposed to be finished by midnight.

**18 Now as they sat and ate, Jesus said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you who eats with Me will betray Me." 19 And they began to be sorrowful, and to say to Him one by one, "Is it I?" And another said, "Is it I?" 20 He answered and said to them, "It is one of the twelve, who dips with Me in the dish.**

Saints, as Jesus and the disciples were eating, Jesus spoke the stunning words,

**“One of you will betray me”**

Saints, the betrayer was one of his own chosen twelve disciples, one with whom the meal was being shared. Jesus’ words caused quite a stir among the disciples. They had heard Jesus tell them three different times that he would soon die, but that one of them would actually betray Jesus saddened them greatly.

**Matthew 16:21**

“From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day”

Although the other disciples were confused by Jesus’ words, Judas knew what he meant. Apparently Judas was not the obvious betrayer. After all, he was the one the disciples trusted to keep the money.

**John 12:4-6**

4 Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, 5 Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" 6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

So the disciples asked Jesus who the betrayer was;

**“I’m not the one, am I?”**

and each one asked in turn. Matthew records that even Judas asked this question

**Matthew 26:25**

Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, "Rabbi, is it I?" He said to him, "You have said it."

**21 The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born."**

Jesus would indeed be betrayed and would indeed die as he had already told his disciples. His death would not occur merely because of the betrayer, for the Son of Man had to die to complete God’s plan and fulfill Scripture (for example, Psalms41:9-13; Isaiah 53:1-6).

**Psalm 41:7-11**

7 All who hate me whisper together against me; Against me they devise my hurt. 8 "An evil disease," they say, "clings to him. And now that he lies down, he will rise up no more." 9 Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me.

10 But You, O LORD, be merciful to me, and raise me up, That I may repay them. 11 By this I know that You are well pleased with me, Because my enemy does not triumph over me.

Saints, how terrible it will be for the one who betrayed Jesus. Jesus knew that Judas was going to betray him, and he also knew that Judas would not repent.

Luke wrote that “Satan entered into Judas Iscariot” before he went to the religious leaders (Luke 22:3).

**Luke 22:3**

“Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve.”

However, Satan’s part in the betrayal of Jesus does not remove any of the responsibility from Judas. In God’s sovereign will and according to his timetable, he uses sinful men. But that doesn’t excuse their sin.

All people will be held accountable for their choices and actions. Whatever Judas thought, Satan assumed that Jesus’ death would end Jesus’ mission and thwart God’s plan. Like Judas, Satan did not know that Jesus’ death and resurrection were the most important parts of God’s plan all along.

**Matthew 12:36-37**

36 But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. 37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

**22 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." 23 Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. 24 And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many.**

The celebrations in the Christian church such as Communion, have first a sharing of bread

**“This is my body”**

and then a sharing of wine including Jesus’ words,

**“This is my blood, poured out for Many”**

Saints, what did Jesus mean by a “new covenant”? In Old Testament times, God had agreed to forgive people’s sins if they would bring animals for the priests to sacrifice. When this sacrificial system was inaugurated, the agreement between God and human beings was sealed with the blood of animals.

**Exodus 24:8**

And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, "This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words."

But animal blood did not in itself remove sin, and animal sacrifices had to be repeated day by day and year after year.

Jesus instituted a “new covenant,” or agreement, between humans and God. This concept is key to all New Testament theology and forms the basis for the name of the New Testament portion of the Bible. Under this new covenant, Jesus would die in the place of sinners.

The old covenant was a shadow of the new, pointing forward to the day when Jesus himself would be the final and ultimate sacrifice for sin. Rather than an unblemished lamb slain on the altar, the perfect Lamb of God was slain on the cross as a sinless sacrifice so that our sins could be forgiven once and for all.

Those who accept Christ’s sacrifice and believe in him receive forgiveness. Now all people can come directly to God through faith because Jesus’ death has made us acceptable in God’s eyes.

**Romans 3:23-26**

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

**25 Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."**

Saints, again Jesus assured his disciples of his victory over his imminent death and of a future in the Kingdom of God. The next few hours would bring apparent defeat, but soon they would experience the power of the Holy Spirit and witness the great spread of the gospel message.

**Revelation 19:9**

Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' " And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

**26 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.**

The hymn they sang was most likely taken from Psalms 116–118, the second part of the Hallel that was traditionally sung after eating the Passover meal.

**Psalm 116:1-7**

1 I love the LORD, because He has heard My voice and my supplications. 2 Because He has inclined His ear to me, Therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live. 3 The pains of death surrounded me, And the pangs of Sheol laid hold of me; I found trouble and sorrow.

4 Then I called upon the name of the LORD: "O LORD, I implore You, deliver my soul!" 5 Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; Yes, our God is merciful. 6 The LORD preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me. 7 Return to your rest, O my soul, For the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.

Saints, John included a lengthy discourse that Jesus had with his disciples (John 13:31–17:26) before he and the eleven remaining disciples left the upper room and went out to the Mount of Olives, located just to the east of Jerusalem.

**John 13:31-35**

31 So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. 32 If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately. 33 Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come,' so now I say to you. 34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Leaving the room did not surprise the disciples, for they had not been staying in Jerusalem at night and had left the city every evening to return to Bethany. This time, however, Jesus went only as far as the southwestern slope, to an olive grove called Gethsemane, which means “oil press.”

**27 Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered.' 28 "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."**

This was the second time in the same evening that Jesus predicted the disciples’ denial and desertion, which probably explains their strong reaction.

**Luke 22:31-34**

31 And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. 32 But 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."

That the disciples would desert him means that they would take offense at him and turn away. Fearing what would befall Jesus, they would not want to experience the same treatment. Jesus would go to the cross totally alone.

The disciples’ desertion would also occur just as it had been predicted in Scripture, specifically Zechariah 13:7. In Zechariah, God commanded that the Shepherd be struck down.

**Zechariah 13:7**

7 "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, Against the Man who is My Companion," Says the LORD of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered; Then I will turn My hand against the little ones.

Saints, as a result, the sheep will be scattered. Without a shepherd and on their own, the sheep would go through a period of great trial and be refined. The refining process would strengthen them and create a new, faithful people for God.

The disciples would be overwhelmed by what would happen to Jesus, but Jesus’ death would ultimately produce their salvation.After his prediction of their desertion, Jesus then predicted their reunion after he would be raised from the dead. Jesus promised that he would go ahead of them into Galilee and meet them all there.

**29 Peter said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble, yet I will not be." 30 Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that today, even this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times."**

Peter, always ready to speak up at inopportune moments, declared that his allegiance to Jesus would prove to be much stronger than the others. Jesus explained, however, that instead of being the only loyal disciple, Peter would prove himself the least so.

Not only would he desert Jesus, he would also deny him—not once, but three times. And this would happen in the space of the next few hours. Before the night was over, that is before the rooster crowed a second time, Peter would deny the Master to whom he claimed such loyalty.

Only Mark recorded a second crowing of the rooster (see also 14:72). If Peter was, in fact, Mark’s source for this Gospel, he certainly remembered this minor detail.

**31 But he spoke more vehemently, "If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And they all said likewise.**

Peter did not think it possible for him to actually deny any relationship with Jesus. Perhaps he was worried that he was the betrayer Jesus had mentioned during their meal (14:18).

Not only Peter, but all the disciples declared that they would never deny Jesus. A few hours later, however, they all scattered.

**Let’s Pray**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**