

March 24, 2016      “Three Things”      Luke 22:1-24

Here at St. Andrew's, our Lenten Journey has been all about the cross. Jesus said it would come to this...that He would be handed over, and that He would die. He also told them he would rise three days later. (Mark 10:33-34). In Jerusalem on the Thursday evening Jesus gathered with His disciples to celebrate the Passover. It is fair to say, there was not a lot of faith in the Upper Room, where they met to eat. There were questions. There was a sense of dread as to what could go wrong in this city which was not Galilee. There was anger. And to some extent there was fear. This is where it all really starts. On the Thursday evening, the gathering around the table. Jesus takes leftovers from the Passover feast and He teaches them something, we have come to treasure.

In the brief time I allot to this meditation tonight I want to share three things with you. They all have to do with what happened at the Table. They all have to do with the relationship between Jesus and the 12. And therefore they all three have to do with the relationship between Jesus and us, for we are His followers, His disciples in this time in which we are living, serving, and believing.

First. It was on the Thursday night, at the table that Jesus took bread and gave thanks and broke it. And he passed the broken bread among the disciples to be eaten. He took the cup, His cup of wine and He passed it among them inviting them to eat and drink, and placing for all time this interpretation on what He and they were doing at the table. He said, this bread is my body...broken for you. This cup, is the new covenant in my blood which is poured out for you. On the Thursday evening before His arrest, before the trials that were part of Friday, before the verdict, or the whipping or the crown of thorns, and the cross. He told them what all of those details would

mean.

The last supper, becomes the Lord's Supper. And every time we eat the bread and drink the wine that are elements in this sacrament, we are participating in things that carry us to stand or sit at the foot of the cross. His body broken for us. His blood poured out and spent for us. To cleanse, to save, to redeem us. The bread and the wine are about Friday. About the way of sorrow and suffering. The perfect Lamb offered in our place. Sin, our sin, mine and yours being atoned for. This is the anniversary of the night on which Jesus gave us the Lord's Supper.

Second. The hand of him who is going to betray me, said Jesus, is with mine on the table. We know that Judas Iscariot was seated among those who participated in this rite, on the Thursday evening. But we know something else! Peter was there too, Peter who would deny Jesus, not once, not twice, but three times. We know that before they rose from this table where such sacred things are shared, Jesus would tell Peter what was going to happen. We also know that Peter would profess his devotion to Jesus in terms like these. I will go to prison with you. I would die with you.

And we know something else. There was a general hubub around the table. Andrew and James and John and Bartholomew and all of the rest of them were asking each other the question. Is it I? Am I the one who will betray you? Am I the one who will break and run, when they come with swords and spears and clubs to arrest you Jesus? It reflects this truth about us. We profess to be believers. We claim we are followers. We think of ourselves as Christian. Disciples. We too have questions we want to ask, and are afraid to ask. Our sinful nature battles with our faithful nature. And there are

moments when our weakness wins. And in that those who ran away belonged at the table....so do we. So do we.

This is serious stuff. There is a part of me that trembles everytime we take communion. This is a humbling place to be...at the table with Jesus on the Thursday night.

The third thing. The disciples start talking among themselves. This is a little surprising. It starts to get heated. I said at the beginning there is anger in the room. What is it they can be arguing about. It is not about the bread and the wine. And it is not about who the traitor in the midst is. What can it be? Surprise: what they really want to know, what all 12 of them want to know, is who among them is going to be the greatest. If Jesus is going to be King...who is going to be Prime Minister. Who is going to get the positions of authority. Who is going to sit to Jesus right and His left when the official portrait is taken? Which means?

They don't get it. Not one of them. They think things are going rather well. They don't expect at this point to be facing a detail of the Temple Guard. Arrest. Detention. They do not foresee or understand what tomorrow, Friday, will bring. What we need to understand and accept is that that is also true of us. There are moments in which we do, and did, and will simply miss the boat. We will not foresee and we will not stand firm upon the rock. And for that sin too...we will need to ask forgiveness. We are not better than these guys. We are not good. In fact we are so like them...we belong at the table with Jesus. At the Table Jesus teaches, greatness is found in being a servant, servant to all the rest. In fact being the least among many.

The most marvelous thing about this Thursday night, and

4.

being at the Table, is not about us at all...it is this. In spite of our sin and our sins, past, present, future, Jesus has chosen us to be here. To be His. To be servants to the rest of humankind, in His name.

Let us pray;

Help us Lord to remember, it is all about You and Your redeeming love. Let the bread and the cup reboot our faith. Help us to see our limitations and the reality of our ultimate weakness. Grant that we may give to you our lives to spend as you will. In Jesus name we pray. Amen