

March 24, 2019 Crosswords Pt. 3 Luke 22:35-38

Once again we are looking at a portion of Scripture that makes clear that Jesus knew what was going to happen to HIM. And it is important that we take note of this: Jesus embraced HIS destiny.

What we call the Last Supper had just occurred. The Gospel accounts are clear about the fact that Jesus shared many meals with HIS disciples, an elastic term that covers the 12 who were HIS closest friends and most intensely trained students. But it is also a term that covers that group of up to 120 who followed HIM from place to place, witnessed the miracles of His healing ministry, and paid close attention to what Jesus had to say, HIS teaching. They make up a majority of those (120 followers) who gathered in the upper room behind locked doors on the Sunday eve of HIS resurrection. They are the core of the infant Christian Church.

The Last Supper was in fact Jesus celebration of the Passover meal. You will remember when the dinner had been eaten Jesus took the left over bread and wine and instituted what we call the sacrament of communion. Broken bread that HE said was the symbol of HIS body to be broken on the cross. The wine as a symbol of HIS blood to be shed to save those who believed in HIM, from their sins.

Immediately following such a holy moment there is a dispute among the 12 disciples as to who will be greatest in Jesus Kingdom. I take that very personally as an

encouragement, that there are moments in the midst of the journey of faith when we just plain get it wrong. People like Peter and John and Andrew, for whom this church is named, failed to understand fundamental things.

I want to focus our attention this morning on what Jesus said just before HE led the disciples to the Mount of Olives, to the Garden of Gethsemane, to the place where HIS arrest and betrayal would occur. In Luke chapter 9 we find the episode where Jesus sent the 12 out on a tour of duty in HIS name and under HIS authority. He reminds them here in the upper room, of that experience. He had told them at the time not to take a purse, a bag or sandals. He assured them that their needs would be met along the way. He reminds them that they were fed, they were lodged, clothed if there was further need. The fact is they had wanted for nothing.

He tells the 12 at this point that everything is about to change. If they have money they are to carry it, because they are going to have to pay their way. If they have a bag they are told not only to carry it, but the inference is to pack it. They are going to need to be self reliant in a world that they cannot assume will welcome them. The stories of the martyrs are historically sound. Peter was martyred in Rome. Thomas was killed in India. Jesus said they would need to carry a sword, that if they did not have one, they should sell a cloak and buy one. He was not urging them to wage war. The history of the disciples is that they did not. There was need for

protection from wild animals. Jesus was saying do not venture naked into the world naïve of the consequences of travelling in the wilderness.

Jesus was telling them that everything was about to change. HE would be physically gone from their presence. His ability to provide for them and care for them, would be replaced by life in a hard and sometimes unkind world. The challenges before them would be real. They needed to keep their ears and their eyes open. Walk by faith, and dependent on God? Yes of course. But faith is not the same thing as being naïve, or even blind to reality. And Jesus said something else. These are crosswords, that is, words about the cross and his coming crucifixion, death and burial.

“It is written,” said Jesus, “He was numbered among the transgressors, and I tell you, this must be fulfilled in me.” So what is a transgressor? You know me by now. When I ask a question like that I turn to the Oxford Dictionary. It is not a theological book. It tells us what words mean. A transgressor is one who has violated, infringed or gone beyond the bounds set by commandments, laws, or limitations. Jesus was saying as clearly as was possible, it is written he was numbered with the lawbreakers...and I tell you this must be fulfilled in me.”

The reference is to Isaiah 53, that chapter which John Calvin called “The Gospel according to Isaiah 53” in fact he preached a series of sermons on that chapter during the Lenten season, under that title. Listen to the 10<sup>th</sup> verse. “Therefore I

will give him a portion among the great...(that is why we are still talking about Jesus)...and he will divide the spoils with the strong...(that is no matter what happens to HIM HE will be victorious)...because he poured out his life unto death...(HE died at Calvary, Golgotha, the place of the skull)...and was numbered with the transgressors...(there is that word, and it goes on to say)...for HE bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. (and there is that same word applied to us) people who have gone beyond the boundaries set by commandments, laws, who crossed the line.

The point is that after they had shared that Passover meal, because it was the foundational Jewish holiday season in the sense of a holy day, the celebration of God's liberating the Jewish slaves from Egypt in the time of the Exodus, crossing the Red Sea on dry ground, Jesus reminded his most committed followers, the prophets had written about this moment and that HE is the one in the prophetic text. Regardless of his guilt, HE would be tried, found guilty, and sentenced to death by crucifixion, and HIS death and resurrection would be all about saving transgressors from their sins. God's plan to save people. God's redeeming love for people who have made mistakes. Crossed boundaries. "This must be fulfilled in me," said Jesus, broken bread for broken body, wine poured out as HIS blood would be.

And to make sure that Peter and John and Andrew and the others heard him Jesus said it again. "Yes,

what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment.” And they missed the point entirely. One of the disciples piped up, I have a sword. And Peter said me too! And someone said, “So there we have two of them.” And Jesus shook his head with tears in HIS eyes and said, “Two swords are enough.” And Jesus led them across the hill to the Mount of Olives...to Gethsemane where HE would pray. Where Judas would betray HIM with a kiss. Where Peter would try to save Jesus, slicing off the ear of the high Priest’s servant, a man named Malchus. Jesus would say, “Enough!” And HE would heal the man. And then they would take HIM into custody, and the disciples would run. Jesus is identified as a transgressor. HE knew it would happen. He embraced HIS destiny. Out of love for you. Out of love for me. To save us.

Let us pray;

This morning’s prayer is based on a single verse from an old hymn of praise, number 677 in our hymn book.

Heavenly Father, Lord Jesus, Holy Spirit of God present and among us:

Our faith looks up to thee, Thou lamb of Calvary.  
Saviour divine. Now hear us as we pray. Take all our sins away.  
O Let us from this day, be wholly, completely, thine. In Jesus  
name we ask. Amen