

THE FIRST 15

Thursday, May 2, 2024

Today is Thursday, May 2 and we are studying the Gospel of John chapter thirteen.

OPENING PRAYER

Lord God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as I begin a new day, I seek your presence. Before the events of today begin I focus myself completely on you. I invite you into the intimacies of my thoughts and feelings. Examine my intentions, guide my motivations, inspire my plans, and accompany my comings and goings. Remind me that you are close by my side every step of the way. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me." His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him which one he means." Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. So Jesus told him, "What you are about to do, do quickly." As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night. John 13:21-27,30

REFLECTION

As the Last Supper continued Jesus became more troubled in spirit, the cross was looming before him. Jesus knew the course of the crucifixion would be set in motion with the betrayal of someone he loved, one of his own. As the twelve disciples gathered round the table, he revealed the person's identity. Judas's feet had been lovingly washed and dried with a linen towel. The betrayer enjoyed the fellowship of the last meal with Jesus. He heard his words and teaching.

Jesus shared one final intimate gesture with Judas. At the end of the Passover Meal, it was customary for the host to dip the last morsel of bread into the sauce of the Paschal lamb and offer it to one guest as a sign of love and friendship. Jesus dipped the last morsel of bread and offered it to Judas. A divine offer of love and friendship. The morsel was definitively rejected. The final events of Christ's last day of earthly life fell into place. The choice was made. The door was shut. Judas Iscariot sold out his leader and friend for thirty coins of silver. He turned his back on the Light of the World and walked into the dark night set on treachery and treason.

Betrayal is an ugly thing. Jesus was betrayed. The Son of Man was handed over to be crucified for the benefit of a broken world. He was handed over to be crucified for me. I benefited from this treachery. He knew he was going to the cross to endure the torture of unthinkable punishment and he did this to save my soul. I consider who I most associate with in the story. Maybe it is the disciples who are told about the impending betrayal and wonder who it could

possibly be. Is it me? Maybe it is Judas offered the morsel of bread. Maybe it is Jesus who is troubled in spirit.

Have I ever turned my back on Jesus? Have I turned my back on someone else? I recall places in my life when I participated in an act of betrayal. Have I ever betrayed my family, my spouse, my friend, my parents, my employer, my scruples, my principles? Perhaps I am the one (like Jesus) who has suffered from the betrayal of another. I recall places in my life when I have been betrayed by someone I loved and trusted. I remember the grief I experienced as a result of that betrayal. The wounds deep within my soul.

Ask: When have I betrayed someone for my own gain or benefit? When have I felt the pain of betrayal by another?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, thank you for your loving kindness and willing sacrifice for me. Forgive me when I have betrayed you and others, repair any damage I have done through careless words and harmful actions. Work all things together for good and restore relationships that have been broken. Jesus, my heart has been hurt by the betrayal of others. Heal the wounds upon my soul caused by damaging deeds and unkind words. Comfort my grief and send me the consolations of your loving spirit. Amen.