

Judas—A Moral Warning Tuesday of Holy Week March 31, 2015 8:15 AM
Is 49:1-6; **Jn 13:21-33, 36-38** (John is seeing the horror of the Cross as a victory of love, a victory of mercy, a victory of forgiveness.)

Reading the various accounts of the passion we can see that in general the evangelists agree, but they have different emphases. Now **John** makes a special case of Judas. He **has quite a bit more to say about Judas than the others**. But the real question is: **What did Judas really do? He betrayed Jesus, but what does that mean? In Mark's Gospel** for example, which we read on Sunday, he pointed out to the guards from the temple who Jesus was. Well, was that a help? You mean they didn't know who he was? Jesus was a very famous person. He had been acclaimed as the Messiah by crowds of people. **It's very unlikely that the temple guards needed someone to point out who he was.**

So what does this betrayal consist of? Nothing objectively helpful to the opposition actually. But **it is a sort of emotional cut off**. Somehow Judas decides not to be part of Jesus' life and ministry. And this is different from the failure of Peter to acknowledge his relationship to Jesus; it's different. **Peter fails whereas Judas deliberately chooses to cut off his relation**. And here John says Satan entered him, and he left, and "it was night." **It's an embrace of darkness**. It's something very willful, something very deliberate. Why do the evangelists bring this up? Because it is possible for people to associate with Jesus, to know him, to experience him, and still reject him. It is possible. We have free will. We can be seduced by Satan. We can embrace darkness. It is possible. So in a way **Judas is given to us as a sort of moral warning**. And **the question in the mouth of the disciples: "Is it I, Lord?" is something every follower of Jesus really needs to ask.**

Now in a way John seems to be implying that in his own odd way Judas is doing a favor to Jesus by leaving. And that's another side of the story. Those who quit Jesus, Judas and all

others, in a way also aid the process because what **God needs is people who are really willing**. And those who are halfhearted or three quarters hearted aren't really that helpful. So **to exercise the option and to leave in a way purifies those who remain**. And that's why, at least in John's mind, Jesus has this statement directly after Judas leaves. He says, "Now is the Son of Man glorified." **Now that there's been some clarification of will, "the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him."**

Now this strange view that John has, that is, the Fourth Gospel, that all along the way from this moment onward it's pure triumph for Jesus. That is an interpretation which requires a great deal of faith and a great deal of love to understand, because factually in the world of facts **what happened to Jesus was horrible**. And it's wrong for us to pretty it up or make it nice. That's not really what **John** is trying to do. He **is trying to see through it**. He is not denying the horror of the Cross. **He is seeing the horror of the Cross as a victory of love, a victory of mercy, a victory of forgiveness** over all the other options that are available to the human heart, which we all know very well. And **Jesus had a human heart**, a perfect human heart with all the options that we have, all the feelings and all the emotions and all the affections for better and for worse, positive and negative, attractive and repulsive, loving and hating, accepting and rejecting. All of that Jesus had. **But he chose in his human nature, in his human will to accept even his enemies, even his betrayers**. This is the mystery and the power of the Cross. And that's what John was trying to get at.