

Wednesday

Today's story is focused on Jesus, Judas Iscariot and betrayal. The scene is that of a group of friends gathered together in a single room sharing a meal. They are celebrating the Passover, usually a joyful occasion but this time there are many undercurrents, things playing in people's minds. There's Palm Sunday and the triumphant entrance which may already seem to have been a long time ago. The Jewish authorities are looking for Jesus and, Jesus keeps talking about the end and his own death. There must have been a certain tension in the air even before Jesus begins to talk about betrayal.

Hidden just off centre, clearly visible but slightly out of focus is the apostle John (the one whom Jesus loved).

John is asking himself all the questions that the other disciples are asking; Who does he mean? Does he mean me? What kind of betrayal? Could anyone here really let Jesus down at a time like this? Will I be the one that breaks his trust?



When John refers to himself as "the one whom Jesus loved" what does he mean to tell us?

- Did Jesus not love the others?
- Did he love John more than the others?
- Did he love him in a different way?

As you read today's passage, think what it means to say that you are loved by Jesus?

The Last Supper

²¹After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me."

²²His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. ²³One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. ²⁴Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him which one he means."

²⁵Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?"

²⁶ 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. ²⁷ As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him.

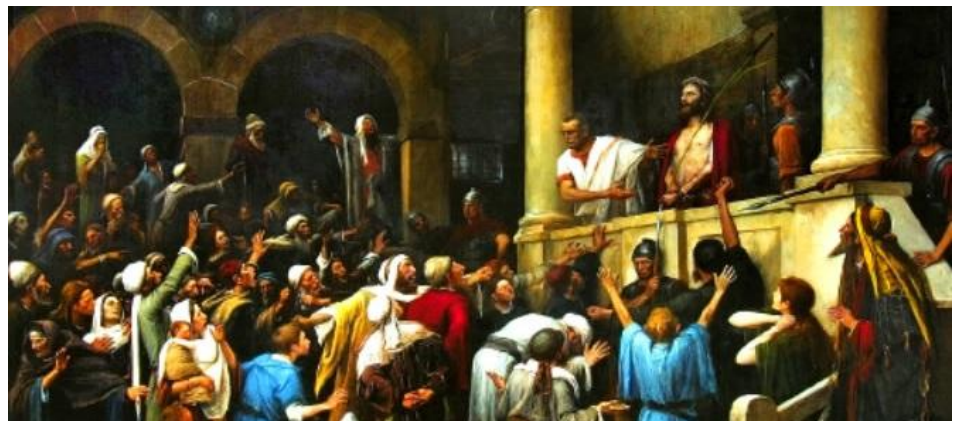
So, Jesus told him, "What you are about to do, do quickly." ²⁸ But no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. ²⁹ Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the festival, or to give something to the poor. ³⁰ As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.

³¹ When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. ³² If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.

John 13:21-32 New International Version (NIV)

Jesus loves all of his disciples, not just this but like his Father in heaven Jesus' love extends to all people in every place and in every time. When Jesus sacrifices himself on the cross, he does this so that anyone who believes in him can be forgiven, made right with God. He is offering forgiveness for those who will the next morning, call for his death.

He loves those who would be his enemy just as much as he loves John and he will suffer and die for them just as much as he will for John.



John refers to himself as the one whom Jesus loved not because he questions Jesus' love for other people or because he sees himself as special but, because he knows himself to be loved by Jesus.

As John and all the others wonder who will betray Jesus, John's hope is in his certainty of Jesus' love for him. His hope is firmly in the strength of Jesus'

love rather than in his own ability to get things right and stay loyal to Jesus when things get tough.

We need to have faith in Jesus' love for us even (or perhaps especially) when we can't trust our own ability to remain faithful to him.

Let's Pray

Lord Jesus,

I thank you that you love me and have always loved me.

I am sorry for all the things I have done wrong,

And I recognise that these are the things that led you to the cross.

Help me to put my faith in you and to accept your love as a gift that cannot be earned,

So that my hope will always be in the strength and certainty of your love,

Instead of the uncertainty of my own strength. Amen.