

**Series: Love Your Enemies**  
**Sermon 3: Jesus and Judas**  
**March 20, 2016**

The week before Jesus was crucified is known as the Passion Week. The week was crazy. Jerusalem was busting at its' seams. For a little town of several thousand, it now had close to a million people. People were ecstatic over Jesus coming to Jerusalem for Passover. We also know that some were not excited that Jesus was coming. The religious leaders were trying to find some way to betray Jesus so they could arrest him. Every night Jesus went outside of Jerusalem toward Bethany. That is where he stayed, near the Mount of Olives. He had a perfect view of the city. Jesus didn't just see walls and buildings. He knew the heart of the city. We know that he even wept over Jerusalem, because he knew what was happening in the heart of the city during Passover.

I wonder if his blood pumped harder through his veins, thinking about the upcoming Thursday and Friday. Did he get a tightness in his chest because of the dreadful anticipation? Did his hands shake? I think he felt every bit of dread that one could feel knowing what was to come.

Let me take you to Thursday. I think the disciples got up and began to talk among themselves and ask, "Who is going to make dinner tonight?" This was the night of the Passover Feast. With all that had gone on in Jerusalem, I bet the disciples thought that Jesus hadn't had any time to get things ready. That wasn't the case. I believe they may have asked Jesus, "Where are we going to have the Passover meal?" He looked to Peter and John and said, "I already have a place for us to have the meal I need you two to go and prepare the meal for us." I'm sure Peter and John may have said ok but I'll bet they questioned Jesus' decision. Usually, this task would have been done by women, so they may have wondered if this was the best use of their time.

The Passover was a fairly elaborate meal. The tables would have been set in a U shape. The tables would have only been 6- 12 inches off the ground so that one could recline on their elbow with their feet away from the table. Peter and John had to prepare bitter herbs, bread made without yeast and a lamb roasted over a fire. These elements at the meal had helped the Jews remember what God did in Egypt 1200 years ago. The bitter herbs called Maror. Just the smell of these would bring a tear to your eye. That was the purpose...to bring tears to your eyes over the bitterness of slavery in Egypt, the bitterness of death that occurred on the last night of the 10 plagues and the bitterness of an innocent lamb's blood being put over their door.

The bread was still made without yeast because the Israelites were reminded of Pharaoh telling Moses to take his people and leave in the middle of the night.

Every part of the meal had so much symbolism. But the meal had no meaning without the lamb. Peter and John had to take an innocent lamb, without blemish and prepare it for the meal. Peter and John had no idea the impact preparing a lamb for the Passover would have on them. I imagine Peter and John slowly getting it. Later that night at their meal, Jesus would take on the Father figure of a family and recount the story of what happened in Egypt. Peter and John got to hear Jesus telling of the last plague in Egypt, where all first born would die, but the Israelites were told to kill an innocent, unblemished lamb and put its' blood over the door so the angel of death would pass over the Israelite home. The Lamb of God telling about the Passover lamb.

Do you know that Peter and John are the only disciples to write about Jesus being the lamb of God? It is no coincidence that they prepare the lamb for their meal and they write about the Jesus, the lamb of God. Peter writes, "We have been redeemed...with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect." (1 Peter 1:19) John references the lamb 30 different times in Revelation. Revelation 5 gives this picture in heaven of lamb, Looking as if it had been slain. It is right in the center of the throne of heaven and the elders and angelic beings surrounded the lamb singing, "With your blood you purchased for God persons for every tribe and language and people and nation." (Revelation 5:9)

Today, we are going to talk about the last week of Jesus' life, specifically Thursday night during the last Supper. We know Peter and John prepared all the elements, but in all the Gospels there is no mention of the lamb that was prepared for the meal. There is mention of bread and wine, but no lamb. I think that is because Jesus was going to ask us to remember the lamb of the new covenant whose blood would be shed for many.

Let's go right to Thursday evening. This is the day of the Passover Feast. The dinner has been prepared and everyone has arrived. They individually would have done some ceremonial washing, but because of walking to the meal their feet would have gotten dirty. As everyone arrived, there would have been someone, whose main job was to wash the feet of the dinner party. Jewish historians tell us the foot washing was reserved for Gentile slaves, wives or children. This role wasn't for Jewish men and especially not a rabbi or teacher.

They all were standing around waiting for the foot washer. Why didn't Jesus just ask the disciples, "Hey would one of you care to serve everybody else by washing our feet?" Jesus had already talked to them about serving in this way. In all the gospels, Jesus turns to Jerusalem and tells his disciples that he is going to be arrested, beaten and killed. Right after that James and John want to know who is

going to be the next in command. They get their mom to go ask Jesus if her boys can sit on Jesus left and right when he comes into his kingdom. This sparks a divisive debate among the disciples, not just who is going to be on his right and left, but who is the greatest disciple? Jesus steps in and talks to them about the difference between worldly leaders and Godly leaders. In Mark 10:42-45, Jesus says, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." So, on this Passover evening, a perfect opportunity was in front of them, to see if that conversation had made a difference. A chance to serve; a chance to take the actual place of a slave and be the first one to jump in! But the disciples just stood around making small talk like a sports team waiting for a referee or airline passengers waiting for a flight crew. The really important stuff can't start until the simple stuff has been taken care of. Dusty and dirty feet are going to be near the table, so somebody has to come and do the dirty work so we can get this show on the road.

I think Jesus made some small talk, but then he may have stepped back and observed. I wonder if he was giving some time to see if anyone had gotten it when he said, "Whoever wants to be great, must be servant of all." Nothing. No arguing over who gets to be the greatest servant. So, I think Jesus quietly slipped away.

John gets very specific about the last Supper. In John 13:3-5, it says, "Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him."

I think the disciples probably heard something and some may have thought "Finally! It is about time that guy got here." But slowly they recognize the identity of the servant. It is not a Gentile slave. It is their master, their rabbi, the one they believe to be the Messiah. Can you imagine the tension? Can you imagine how quiet it got? I'll bet all you could hear here was the sound of Jesus dipping a rag in water and wringing it out. Words would not be necessary for this lesson.

Jesus begins washing the disciples' feet. He's going along and comes to Peter and Peter protests, "You will never wash my feet", but Jesus says, "Unless I wash your feet you won't belong to me." Then Peter says, "Then wash all of me." Listen to what Jesus says, "A person who has bathed all over does not need to wash, except for the feet to be entirely clean. And you disciples are clean, but not all of you."

Wow! Did you hear what he said, "You disciples are clean, but someone in the room isn't?" He stunned them by coming out and washing their feet and now they are even more stunned. I hope something is starting to click in your mind as we have talked about this Passion Week and specifically the events of this Thursday.

We have been going through a series focused on loving Your Enemies. The first week Doc asked us to make two columns: on one side it said "People I despise..." and the other column said "People that despise me". He read from Matthew 5:43-44 "You have heard that it was said, 'love your friends, hate your enemies.' (Yeah that makes sense,) But now I tell you: love your enemies (too) and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may become the children of your Father in heaven." That is so contrary to what seems natural or what society says to do. During this series, we have had to acknowledge that there are some people that we have strong animosity toward. Toward some, we have become bitter and maybe we would say we hate them. What we learned is that God doesn't exclude anyone from his love and we shouldn't either, even our enemies.

last week we learned what not to do to our enemies from the life of David. Saul was fixated on killing David. When David had opportunity for revenge, he didn't take it. We learned how hard it is to show restraint when you would rather take revenge and punish them. God made it very clear..."Don't repay evil with evil."

This week, in the midst of a meal with his best friends, Jesus teaches what to do to our enemies. last week—what not to do. Don't repay evil for evil. This week—what to do. Let's see what we can learn.

It is no surprise that Jesus had enemies, but who did he consider his enemies? Who was he tempted to despise? I can think of several people. I think his enemies would be the religious leaders. They were always trying to, not just trick him, but trap him so they could kill him. I think of some of the leaders, like Pilate. He held the authority to Let him go. Herod would be a good enemy. He had been jealous of him since he was born. Or what about the soldiers that would beat him and lead him through the streets of Jerusalem? All are good candidates, but I don't think these people were on Jesus list on this night. On this night, his enemy was already identified. Jesus knew who it was.

I like it when Jesus has to deal with things that I do. When Lazarus died, Jesus had to deal with the death of a really good friend. Paul tells us to have an attitude like Jesus and he shows us how Jesus left heaven and came to earth. He didn't just come to earth, but experienced the cruelest type of death, yet he had an attitude of sacrifice and humility. Today, Jesus shows us what to do to our enemies, **when they sit at our table**. You know who we are talking about. You probably knew when I started talking about the last Supper. You knew it was

Judas. He is the one that Jesus was talking about when he said, "And you disciples are clean, but not all of you."

Let me give you a little background on 2 things that occur during this Passover Week. Most of the week, Jesus is in the temple, but at night he heads back toward Bethany and stays near the Mount of Olives. One evening, Jesus was invited to a home for a meal. While they were reclining at the table, a woman named Mary came in and poured a very expensive jar of perfume on Jesus. The perfume was probably worth a year's salary. Judas said, "Why this waste? This perfume could have been sold at a high price and given to the poor." Jesus said, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. I tell you the truth, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

Mary got it. Judas didn't. You see, even though Judas had been with Jesus for 3 years, he had not become a Jesus follower. He was a Jesus tag-a-long. Somehow, none of this transformed his heart. Maybe Jesus was a good guy, but Judas just couldn't take "turn the other cheek", "love your neighbor as yourself", and now "love your enemies." I wonder how many times he rolled his eyes. I wonder how many times he thought Jesus was wasting his time.

Those thoughts led him to betray Jesus. This is the second thing that happened during the Passion Week. Do you remember what was read earlier in the service? "The chief priests and the teachers of the law were Looking for some way to get rid of Jesus. Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve. And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus."

Look how Jesus tries to love his enemy that is sitting at the same table with him. He washes Judas' feet. I think I know what he said to others. John, you are deeply loved. You are a child of God. I think that is why John writes so much about these ideas. Peter, your courage and faith are so strong. Let God grow and mature your faith. Andrew, you have such a sensitive heart. Thanks for caring enough about your brother to bring him to me.

What do you say to Judas? What do you say to the one who, not only doesn't believe that you are God's Son, but is going to sell you out? He is planning to stab you in the back? Maybe there weren't any words. Maybe their eyes just connected. I think Jesus was trying to break his heart.

There is another thing Jesus did that night to Judas. He washed his feet and he invited Judas to sit at a place of honor. John, one of his closest friends, sat on his right hand side and Judas sat on the other. The positioning at the table meant

something. The right and left hand seats were places of honor. It was by invitation only. I wonder how many times their eyes met. I don't think it was a quick glance. I think Jesus was staring into his soul and trying to break the hardness that had developed.

In just a few short hours, Jesus will be betrayed by this man with a kiss. He will be arrested and beaten. A crown of thorns will be shoved into his skull. He will be nailed to a cross. With his last meal, he washes the feet and invites his betrayer to sit next to him.

This is how hard this is for us. I can only tell you about me and how I would respond. If I knew that Judas had done these things, I would have avoided him like the plague. I am very passive aggressive. I am not going to verbally say anything mean to you, but I am going to be mean with my silence. What is already an awkward night, I am going to make it as tense and awkward for Judas as possible. I am going to be overly nice to everyone else, but my silence is going to scream at him. I want to be mean to my enemy. Jesus chose to love his enemy, who sat at his table, by serving him.

Some of the people, who sit around your table, are hard to love. In fact, some of the things they have done have put them at enemy status. Maybe a parent was never there for you or maybe they abused you. I know you feel betrayed. They cheated you out of something. Maybe you sit at a table with a spouse who has been unfaithful. Maybe you sit at a table with a child who seems ungrateful.

June Hunt, the author of ***How to forgive... When you don't feel like it***, says the most overwhelming test in her life involved her relationship with her father. She describes him as a man whose heart was as hard as flint and his anger could spark at the slightest annoyance. Her dad actually had two families and they were the second. She describes her family as full of secrets and dysfunction. You need to read the book to learn all the details.

As she grew up a friend told her, "I don't think you've ever forgiven your father." June said that she didn't appreciate being confronted, but she says that she needed it. She was challenged to own her part of the relationship. She prayed, she planned, she prepared for a conversation and then one morning she approached her father. He was sitting in the dining room eating breakfast and reading the newspaper.

"Dad, may I speak to you?" He peered at me above the reading glasses perched on the end of his nose. He said nothing. Still she began to talk. "I realize I've been an ungrateful daughter." I then proceeded to mention specific areas which I have been ungrateful because I wanted him to know that I realize I had taken him for granted. I genuinely wanted to lighten the load that I have been carrying. "Dad,

I've never thanked you for the roof over my head, food on the table, and books for school. So, I've come to ask, "Would you forgive me?" I paused, awaiting a response. Had this been a scene in a heartwarming family film, the newspaper would have fallen to the floor, my father would have sprung up from his chair with tears in his eyes, and he would've embraced his apologetic daughter. But this was no movie. This was real life, and there wasn't an ounce of warmth in his response. Stoically he replied, "The pleasure was all mine," as if just completing a business transaction. I stood there stunned and seemingly frozen in time.

June Hunt's story is the same as Jesus trying to break the heart of Judas. During this supper, Jesus said some specific statements. "I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me." (John 13:21) The disciples are trying to figure out who he is talking about, and Jesus says, "It is the one 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." Jesus looked at Judas and said, "What you are about to do, do quickly." Judas left the meal without a broken heart.

Thinking about the evening, I wondered, how did Jesus do it? How did he love his enemy, when his enemy was one of his own? Even though we have talked about Judas, everyone around that table had enemy status. Peter would deny him, Thomas would doubt him, no one would stand with him.

He loved all of them by serving them. He did not avoid interaction with any of them. He washed their feet. He invited them to a meal with him.

The reason Jesus was able love them by serving them was that he had his mind on something bigger. Please know, this meal with his disciples was really important to Jesus. Jesus told his disciples in Luke 15:22, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." This was his last teaching time with his disciples. He had little time and very important matters to discuss. I also believe that Judas and all the other disciples were really important to Jesus. He wanted them to believe and know deep down that he is the Son of God.

But there was a most important thing to Jesus—going to the cross. Nothing could deter him from his mission. So, the second way Jesus loved his enemies, was that he remained focused on his mission.

When the brackets and seedings came out for the basketball tournament, some people thought that certain teams were incorrectly seeded. UK was a #4 seed. John Calipari was interviewed and he said it didn't bother him. He said the phrase, "There not going to steal my joy." UK can't be focused on their correct of incorrect seeding. They and all the other teams have to be focused on something bigger and we as Jesus followers have to be focused on something bigger.

I love the TV show Undercover Boss. Have you ever watched that show? The owner or CEO will go undercover, often disguising the way he or she looks, so he can go in "undercover" and work with some of his employees. In every episode, this multi-million dollar leader works with his employees and often times through conversations during breaks, learns a little about the employee's life. They learn about their families, their relationships, their health, their hopes and their dreams. By working amongst their employees, they are transformed from leaders and managers to humble servant leaders. They begin to see their employees differently and it's all because they got to know them by serving them and seeing them as fellow human beings.

I think this could be one of Jesus' greatest challenges to his followers. Love your enemies and here is what you do....you serve them. It may affect the relationship, but I think the primary hope is that serving may change us.

There is one other thing that Jesus does on that night. After the meal, he goes out into that same area that he has spent so much time, called the Mt. of Olives, and he prays. He prays for himself, he prays for all believers, but he specifically prays for the guys who are turning their back on him. In John 17:11, Jesus prays, "Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name." In John 17:13, "May they have the full measure of my joy within them." In John 17:17, "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth." Set them apart. May they be connected to you and your truth.

Have you ever prayed for an enemy like that? Have you ever prayed for their protection? Have you ever prayed that they would have joy, no matter what they are going through? Have you ever prayed that their heart would be so connected to God that he could use them for his purposes?

We thought we might end that way today. I told you of June Hunt's story about her dad. She said, "My father didn't change that day. But, as it turns out, something in me did. I knew I had done what was right in God's sight; therefore, I learned that Dad's response (or lack of response) should not be my reason for what I do. I had gotten a taste of freedom!" One of the ways she tried to serve her dad was by always knowing where his red address book was. He was always misplacing it, getting mad at himself and everyone else. She made a point to always know where it was, trying to help him out. She also, prayed for her dad.

On his 86<sup>th</sup> birthday, a preacher came by and tried to share the plan of salvation with him. Her dad said, "If anybody's going to speak to me about spiritual things, it's going to be my daughter June." June got to lead her dad to Jesus.

All the disciples turned their back on Jesus, but the resurrected Jesus had breakfast on a beach with Peter. Jesus, goes to his disciples and says, "Peace be with you!" Guys if you have been beating yourselves up, don't. I am here and I am

alive. That same day, Thomas said he wouldn't believe unless he put his hand in the place where the nails were. So, he tells Thomas to come over and touch where the nails were. Jesus was willing to do whatever it took to love his enemies.

We thought it might be a good idea to pray for our enemies today. I am going to ask you to bow your head. In your mind, look around the table you sit at. Think about who lives under the same roof. Who will you see at a holiday gathering?

1) Would you ask God to give you the courage and the strength to love this enemy? Tell God their name. He knows who they are.

2) Ask God to see something bigger than just what they have done to you? Ask God to see them with his eyes?

3) Would you choose one of the things Jesus prayed for: protection, joy and sanctification (being connected to God)? Ask God to do one of those things in their life?