

April 8th, 2020 Daily Devotional

The lectionary text for this Wednesday of Holy Week, tells us the story of Jesus telling his disciples that he knows one of them will betray him.

After saying this Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, 'Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me.' The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking. One of his disciples—the one whom Jesus loved—was reclining next to him; Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, 'Lord, who is it?' Jesus answered, 'It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.' So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, 'Do quickly what you are going to do.' John 13:21-27.

There is an inevitability to Jesus' words. He knows that betrayal, suffering, and death are coming. He knows that one with whom he shared the meal will betray him, he even knows exactly who it is. Yet, I am always struck that Jesus does not exclude Judas from the meal. All of their worlds are about to change dramatically, Judas included. I wonder how Judas felt in that moment? Maybe it was an out of body experience for him. It's like he lost his way, something pulled him into a darkness he didn't want. Frankly, my heart breaks for Judas.

On the Wednesday of Holy Week last year I gathered with the woman in the rehab where I was a Chaplain and we shared communion together. As we told the story of Judas we shared the ways addiction had betrayed them and what it had taken from them. Then we listened to John Prine's song "Summer's End". The music video tells the story of the opioid crisis through the eyes of an eight year old. Last night, John Prine lost his fight with coronavirus complications. The refrain of this song includes the words,

"Come on home
Come on home
No you don't have to
Be alone
Just come on home"

At the end of the song one of the woman said, "You know, I can hear Jesus saying that to Judas - 'just come on home, it's going to be ok.' I hear Jesus saying that to me tonight. The betrayal happened, but now it's over. Let's all come on home to new life in recovery."

Friends, will you pray with me?

Gracious God, who walked a path of suffering and of hope, we thank you for all the ways you meet us. Thank you for meeting us in music, in phone calls, in joy, and in sorrow. As we walk through this holy week of uncertainty, hold us close. Draw us in to your story - the whole story - the story that will lead us through pain, but will ultimately lead us to life more abundant than we can imagine. Amen