

God's plan in the last supper

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[0 : 00] Good morning. It's good to be with you all once again. Thank you for joining us at BMKC.

This morning's Bible passage in the Gospel of John is a familiar one that refers to an event in Jesus' life called the Last Supper.

The Last Supper has been immortalized over the centuries in numerous paintings and sculptures. Probably some of you have seen paintings of the Last Sculpture.

The most famous of those that you may have seen is the one by Leonardo da Vinci, an Italian artist, done about 500 years ago.

And that painting has become one of history's most influential works of art. At the Last Supper, Jesus took time to talk with his disciples away from the crowds that have been following him, adulating him and celebrating him.

[1 : 18] That comes as no surprise, because just a few days earlier, Jesus had raised a man who had been dead for four days from the tomb.

That man's name was Lazarus. And Lazarus, dear friend of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have celebrated Easter three Sundays ago.

And in some ways, this morning's passage is a walk through the events running up to that first Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

Easter marks the joyous and triumphant resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave 2,000 years ago.

It is the most significant date on the Christian calendar. Jesus' enemies, the Pharisees and Jewish leaders saw the death of Jesus Christ on Good Friday as a culmination of their conspiracy to kill off and forever destroy a rival.

[2 : 33] But that conspiracy turned out to be the single greatest and important event since the creation of the world. Jesus' death, Jesus' death by crucifixion 2,000 years ago, has become the sole means of reconciliation between a fallen and sinful world and its gracious and loving creator.

Judas Iscariot saw Jesus' death as his mission accomplished in exchange for 30 pieces of silver. About 2,000 years ago, about 2,000 years ago, about 2,000 years ago, in today's money.

Jesus' disciples saw Jesus' death as the loss of a teacher, a master and a leader, until they saw him alive again on the evening of Easter Sunday.

Which of these got it right? This morning's Bible passage holds the answer. Before we look at the scripture this morning, let us pray.

Heavenly Father, creator of heaven and earth, you have loved your creation from the very beginning. Even when mankind has chosen to intentionally turn away from you and ignore you, we ask you this morning to be with us by your Holy Spirit, to enable our understanding of the Bible passage, so that our eyes may be opened, our wisdom increased, and our lives changed, to obey your word forever.

[4 : 24] We pray for our friends who are hearing about Jesus Christ for the first time, that they may know you as the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

This we pray in Jesus' name. Friends and fellow believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, If you have your Bibles with you, please turn with me to the Gospel of John, the fourth Gospel, chapter 3, beginning at verse 1, and we shall be considering the verses until verse 20.

This passage was read to us earlier this morning. It was just before the Passover festival, Jesus knew, that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father.

Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. It is worth noting that the coming of a Saviour to the Jews had been spoken about by the prophet Isaiah 700 years before Jesus was born.

Jesus was born 2,000 years ago. So it was prophesied 2,700 years before today.

[5 : 55] When the Apostle John wrote his Gospel, he wanted to show that that Jesus was the Word, the Messiah, and the incarnate Son of God, who was to come and to reveal his Heavenly Father and bring eternal life to all those who believe in him.

John begins his Gospel with the following words. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was with God in the beginning. John chapter 1, verses 1 and 2. When John referred to the Word, he meant Jesus Christ, who became a man, grew up in Israel, and at the age of 33, was crucified, not for any offense that he had committed, but for the sins of every man, woman, and child that had ever lived and that ever lived.

The Passover festival is one of the most important religious festivals in the Jewish calendar. The Jews celebrate Passover to commemorate their liberation prayer.

They were led out of Israel by Moses. The Jewish Passover meal is always celebrated in person. It was not just an incidental event, but a part of God's plan for the world.

[7 : 35] A plan that was set in motion when this world was created. So too, the events in this morning's Bible passage are an unfurling of a divine and eternal plan to liberate you and me from the sure and terrible consequences of sin.

Permanent separation from a loving Heavenly Father that dotes on His creation that He would not spare His own Son, Jesus Christ, so that all who believe in Jesus would have forgiveness of sin and eternal life in the presence of a Creator God.

The immeasurable joy, security, and assurance of being in the presence of God may be illustrated from a slice of my own childhood.

When I was about five or six years old, we lived in a wooden house by a river. At the time, I had a younger sibling, about two to three years old.

Every now and then, our mother would go to town for groceries for which she would need to cross the river by a canoe. It was an era before cars or e-hailing or e-purchases.

[9 : 09] My youngest sister and I would be left at home alone with the usual instructions that mothers give their young ones. No going out, don't be naughty, and of course, for me, being the older sibling, look after your younger sister.

Dad would be out at work. We were a single-income family then, as was the norm. Despite assuring us that she would be home from the market very soon and that there was nothing to be afraid of, our little hearts sank into silent fear the moment our mother's slight silhouette disappeared from sight towards the river bank.

The two of us would spend the entire duration of her absence sitting unmoving on the wooden stairs of her house, longingly looking at the river bank and waiting to see our mother.

her but the moment we could hear her and see her walking up the river bank, our hearts were filled with torrents of joy, security and assurance.

we knew that all was safe, our mother was home. That, my friend, is a foretaste of living in the presence of a loving God and we can all understand that feeling since we've all been children once, I hope.

[11 : 05] Jesus knew exactly why he had come to this earth. He knew that he had come from the Father and at the Last Supper he knew it was time to return to his Father.

This was his Father's plans. After stating that the occasion was the past over meal, the Gospel writer John goes on to show that Jesus was not being pushed along by a series of events like pebbles rolling at the bottom of a fast flowing river.

Jesus was in control of what was to happen to him including his cruel and vicarious death on the cross for your sins and mine.

Jesus knew his death was imminent and he would soon return to his heavenly Father from this unkind ruthless and harmful world of suffering.

He knew from the very beginning that this suffering surely came upon him at the appointed time and that appointed time was close at hand.

[12 : 27] All that was to happen to him culminating in his crucifixion one the conspiracy by the scheming Jewish leaders of the time the betrayal by Judas Iscariot the mockery of justice in the several rigged trials that he was put through.

My friends nothing was a coincidence of events. Make no mistake Jesus Christ was in control.

The evening meal was in progress verse 2 and the devil had already prompted Judas the son of Simon Iscariot to betray Jesus. 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 outer clothing and wrapped the towel around his waist. After that he poured water in the basin and began to wash his disciples feet drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

Verse 6 He came to Simon Peter who said to him Lord are you going to wash my feet? Jesus replied you do not realize now what I am doing but later you will understand.

[13:57] No said Peter you shall never wash my feet. Jesus answered unless I wash you you have no part of me.

Then Lord Simon Peter replied not just my feet but my hands and my head as well. Jesus answered those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet their whole body is clean and you are clean though not every one of you.

For he knew who was going to betray him and that was why he said not everybody was clean. In verse 2 and verse 10 of the passage I just read the author of John's gospel gives you a hint of Jesus betrayal to his death.

It was preordained and preplanned. In verse 2 the devil had already prompted Judas the son of Simon Iscariot to betray Jesus and in verse 10 and 11 while explaining the need to have feet washed John records that for he knew who was going to betray him and that was why he said not everyone was clean.

Friends betrayal is abhorred in any code of conduct so bad that the name Judas has become synonymous with betrayal.

[15:46] Judas is a term used for somebody who betrays you while pretending to be your friend. The classic example being Judas the apostle who betrayed Jesus in the Bible Judas betrayed Jesus under the guise of being a friend.

The 30 pieces of silver that Judas received for his betrayal has become the contemptuous expression for someone who has sold out or taken money or high office for personal gain in exchanging for betraying a person or an important cause.

That phrase of course comes from the Bible. This is not saying that Judas was not responsible for his actions.

A heart that is already inclined to evil will happily oblige the prompting of Satan. The devil and Judas were in an evil conspiracy to send Jesus to the cross.

John took the trouble to record for us that Jesus washed his disciples' feet, including Judas' feet, at that Passover meal.

[17:19] And it's only John's gospel that records this feet washing. feet washing. Why did John record it? Feet washing was a common and a mundane event in the life and the culture of the time.

The dry weather and a short walk on dusty roads would get any pair of feet dirty and needing to be washed.

the significance of the feet washing lies in who would be normally engaged in feet washing.

In those days, when guests arrive, the host would arrange for their feet to be washed and that task was given to the lowest ranking servant or slave of the household.

You see, earlier, the disciples had been arguing among themselves as to who would have senior and preferential positions in the kingdom that Jesus had been talking to them about.

[18:40] And Jesus answered that with an object lesson in humility service so that anybody seeking leadership in God's kingdom needed a model to follow.

And Jesus gave them that model of servant leadership. In Matthew and Mark's gospel, disciples had requested that they be given posts and leadership positions.

And they were given response from Jesus. Jesus quashed their notions of high office and authority by saying, you know, the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.

Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be the first must be your slave.

Just as the Son of Man did not come to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. Matthew chapter 25, chapter 20, verses 25 to 28.

[20 : 03] And now Jesus was giving them a demonstration of the sort of leadership that he had espoused. Humble servant leadership. The disciples would have been happy to wash Jesus' feet, but could not conceive of washing each other's feet.

You see, peers do not wash each other's feet, except in very, very special situations. The reluctance of the disciples to volunteer for the task was culturally understandable, but the disciples were taken aback and shocked at Jesus volunteering, not because they were embarrassed by their leader and teacher, but their sense of appropriateness was shattered. You see, it was just not a done thing. Jesus reversed the roles. His act of humility is stunning and at the same time a display of love and a saving, cleansing from sin.

God gave us a model of Christian conduct. Friends, take a moment and imagine the scene.

[21 : 29] the disciples reclining on their mats around a low table. Jesus suddenly pushes himself up from his own mat, takes off his outer clothing, wraps a towel around his waist and thus adopting the dress of a low and menial servant.

it was a dress that was looked down upon in society, both Jew and Gentile. While most of the disciples were stunned to silence, Peter, with the best of intentions, protested at his Master and Lord wanting to wash his feet.

And Jesus answered him, Unless I wash you, you have no part of me. Friends, unless the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, washes you from your sin, you have no benefit of the cross of Jesus Christ.

You will have no benefit of the vicarious death that Jesus died for you because of your sin.

The washing of feet had a two-fold message. The first was of humility and Christian service, and the second was the symbolic washing away of sins.

[23 : 11] Turn with the verse 12. Let's look at it. When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place.

Do you understand what I have done for you? He asked them. You call me teacher and Lord, and rightly so. For that, for that is what I am.

Now that I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you should also wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

Very truly, I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

just to make sure that the disciples understood what he had done. Just ask them if they understood and he proceeds to answer the question for them.

[24 : 22] He reminded them that they called him teacher and Lord. He washed their feet, an unthinkable act, and there was every reason why they should wash each other's feet.

And there was no conceivable reason that they should refuse to wash each other's feet. Their teacher and Lord had done it. And no servant should consider any task menial when their master has already performed it.

therein lies some of the principles that undergird and fortify the Christian community service throughout the world till today.

You would only need to look at this country for the numerous outstanding examples in the field of education, medicine, social concerns, and the annals of Christian service, a legend throughout the world.

verse 18 to 20. I am not referring to all of you. I know those who have chosen.

[25 : 40] But this is to fulfill this passage of scripture. He who shared my bread has turned against you. I am telling you now before it happens so that when it happens, you will believe that I am who I am.

truly I tell you, whoever accepts anyone I send, accepts me, and whoever accepts me, accepts the one who sent me.

After washing the disciples' feet, giving them an object lesson in healing and service, Jesus stuns them. He tells his disciples that one of them is a betrayer.

Already in verse 10, it has been hinted to us that there was a betrayer among the twelve. even much earlier, in chapter 6, John records that one of Jesus' disciples was a devil.

Jesus was referring to Judas Iscariot, but he did not name him. When the idea of a betrayer among them was announced by Jesus, it caused a bitter heart.

[27 : 09] Soon after this is recorded for us, in verse 27, 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, son of Sinus Iscariot. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him, so Jesus told him, what you are about to do, do quickly. You see, Jesus knew, not an accident, not the work of a conspiracy, but Jesus knew what was going to happen.

Jesus knew that his heavenly father's will and the redemption land from the beginning of the creation of the world, and he informed his disciples of the coming betrayal.

I'll come back to the original inquiry. Was Jesus' death on cross a successful conspiracy by the Jewish leaders of the time working with Judas Iscariot?

[28 : 24] the answer must be a certain no. The reasons are that Jesus knew his death was part of God's plan to redeem men from the sure punishment of death, of sure punishment for sin.

My friends and fellow believers in Jesus Christ, make no mistake, God punishes and will punish sin. There is no way a just, a righteous, and a holy God can turn a blind eye to sin or be bribed to look the other way.

Jesus did not go to the cross as a helpless victim. Judas merely served the redemptive purpose of Jesus' mission.

He told his disciples of the impending betrayal so that when it happened they would not be surprised and it would confirm to them that it was Jesus' plan, God the Father's plan, the eternal plan of redemption.

[29 : 43] It was not a happenstance or an accident or a coincidence. This disclosure by Jesus stood the disciples in good stead after their initial despair when Jesus died on the cross.

The good news was clear to them on the resurrection and the ending of the Holy Spirit. God said, it confirmed to them once and for all that Jesus, their Lord and Master, was the Son of God.

He was the Son of God who came to save sinners from the inevitable promised punishment of death. They were convinced.

Are you convinced? God's plan to restoration into the original relationship with Him has been met by our disobedience to His word, a wanton estrangement from Him.

We have followed the world, popular business and political leaders of all stripes and persuasions. We have chosen pleasure, possessions, power as our first choice and the priority of our lives.

[31 : 16] My friend, if that is you today, may I ask that whether these have offered you the level of confidence and confidence for the future that your heart craves for.

All those things away from God give you the comfort that your heart is crying for. We live under this illusion that we think we have a pretty high control of events around us.

We control our bodies, our schedules, our businesses and even our churches. But it is an illusion. The truth has been uncovered for us in the last few weeks.

years. It wasn't a big flash in the sky. It wasn't an earthquake. It was a tiny microscopic invisible to the naked eye coronavirus that is now raging the world and painting a more real picture of the world.

world. The real picture is we are not in control. While you are sitting at your home or your office, you may be forgiven for thinking that the COVID-19 pandemic is the biggest problem facing mankind today.

[33 : 09] No doubt the crisis of the moment that is occupying the minds and resources of nations and international leaders is the COVID-19 pandemic.

But I would like to suggest to you today that the ultimate pandemic infecting every son of Adam and Eve and Doctor of Eve is sin.

You and I are children and descendants of Adam and Eve. and carry the curse of sin in our genes. It is a deep and universal and fickle illness and we all carry the germ and its working is lethal.

There is no political solution or scientific remedy or educational program that can cure or contain the pandemic of human sin.

Yet many if not most people do not recognize their cancerous condition or grasp its deadly diagnosis.

[34 : 22] possessions or pleasure is the first choice and priority of your life, I beg of you to take it again.

Will it hold you up and give you life when you are called to face the glaring truth of your sin? and the due punishment of eternal separation from a loving God is surely your sentence.

Surely you would delight to seeing a face that you love assuring you of salvation and giving you an immeasurable and eternal security in it.

Jesus Christ. Then your heart would be filled with the torrents of joy and comfort and assurance just like that five year old felt when he saw his mother walking up the river bank that I spoke about earlier.

Jesus warned that you cannot serve two masters. You cannot serve God and money. The Bible I can speak to idolatry.

[35 : 56] God and all is send out and each of you goes through the door called death.

God and I can be told that all of us it would be great comfort to have Jesus as your guide your savior and your eternal assurance.

take comfort in the promise of Jesus Christ and the Bible. There is only one way the God of heaven to say I am the way the truth and the life.

no one comes to the Father except through me. If you are a visitor to this morning's service or heard about Jesus Christ for the first time let me invite you and encourage you to consider Jesus Christ as your savior in this uncertain and tumultuous times.

These may be hard times calling for hard decisions. For you my friends it will be much harder if when you find yourself in the divine court without the advocate Jesus Christ speaking for you and without the benefit of having such a loving father to be your permanent companion all the days of him.

[38 : 00] God bless you. Shall we? Heavenly Father we thank you for your word that has been preserved for us and the assurance of your eternal and permanent promises that Jesus is the only way back to you and the only resolution and answer to sin is Jesus' death on the cross.

We pray for all those who hear him and who trust in it that they may continue to hold on to it and enjoy its assurance.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.