

Pastor Matthew Ude
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Maundy Thursday
INI - SDG

Lord, Is It I?

Matthew 26:20-22 ²⁰ When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. ²¹ Now as they were eating, He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me." ²² And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, "Lord, is it I?"

It is always bad to be betrayed, but how much worse when it is your close friend, one whom you thought you could trust. There is so much more anger, so much more pain when it is your spouse, your friend, your sibling who stabs you in the back.

Psalm 41:9 Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me.

Jesus is aware that it is one of his own handpicked apostles who will betray him this night. Matthew indicates an intimate, close, atmosphere. You will remember how Jesus himself expresses His desire to join his apostles in this meal.

Luke 22:15 With *fervent* desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer

Yet this intimate close relationship is seemingly shattered when Jesus makes the pronouncement, "one of you will betray me."

"They were exceedingly sorrowful."

Jesus is the one who will be betrayed yet it is not Jesus whom the scriptures speak of at this point as "being filled with sorrow" but rather the apostles.

As terrible as it is to be betrayed, it is worse to know that you are the one who has done the betrayal.

Matthew 26:24 "The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born."

And so it is that we find just before receiving the Lord's supper that each one of the apostles begins to examine their own thoughts, their own actions, considering that all important question: is it I? Is it I who will betray the Lord?

The Holy Spirit through the evangelists recorded Christ's words so that you would hear them as well.

One of you will betray me. The apostle Paul reminds us that Jesus words are not for the Apostles alone.

They are spoken to you so that you might join the apostles in that all important question. Is it I?

1 Corinthians 11:28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

It was Judas who betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, but there is more than one way to betray the Lord of Glory. Peter denied. Peter, James and John failed to pray with him in his hour of need. All the disciples fled.

Is it I? We too join the disciples in examining our hearts.

To help us with this task we turn to Luther's table of duties, which can be found in the first part of your catechism.

Have I been faithful in listening to Jesus word? Have I been faithful in coming to Church, in home devotions, in daily prayers, in not just reading or listening to God's word but taking it to heart?

Colossians 3:16 "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" Is it true of me that God's word has dwelt richly in my heart? Is it I who has betrayed Jesus and caused his death because His word did not abide in my heart?

Have I been faithful to the government which God has given to me? For the Lord has made it clear that those who will not honor and hear the government, are refusing to honor and obey God himself?

Romans 13:2 ² Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

Is it I who has betrayed and dishonored those whom Lord has appointed?

Have I been faithful as a spouse, daughter, son, mother, or father? When was it that I last sought my own desires above that of my family and my spouse? There is no greater earthly gift the Lord can give other than our family. Is it I who has sought only my own good? When did I last appreciate and thank God for these gifts? Is it I who has betrayed the Lord with my attitude towards my family and lack of appreciation?

Lord is it I who has betrayed you? YES, it is I.

Because each one of the disciples is rightly afraid that "it is I" Christ institutes the Lord's supper, so that they might be reassured that it is for them that Jesus died, so that they might partake of His holy supper. What better way is there to reassure some one that all is forgiven than to invite them over, to sit down and dine with them? Jesus does not leave the apostles or us as "exceedingly sorrowful." It would seem like Jesus cast a pall over the evening with his question. Yet he only cuts open our hearts so that He might heal.

Is it I who betrayed the Lord? The answer is yes. But also Is it I for whom Christ died? The answer is again yes.

In order that we might know that His death is for us. That we are forgiven our betrayal and our sin. Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper. Is it I for whom Jesus died? The Lord's Supper makes it clear that yes it is for me.

Is it I who receives the very body and blood of the Lord? The answer is again YES, It is I.

1 Corinthians 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

So intimate, so personal is the Lord's supper that without YOU there is no sacrament. He gives you His body and blood when you receive and eat the bread and wine. Unless you take and eat it there is no sacrament. It is only bread and wine.

Three things are necessary for the sacrament. First the word of God through which Jesus comes to You personally and says, "You take and You eat so that You may be forgiven." Second the earthly elements, bread and wine, through which Jesus tells us this is for you not just in words but in way that we can touch and taste and smell. And third You to whom Jesus says, "take and eat."

The sacrament of the altar is not a lunch buffet where the food sits all day under a heat lamp and whoever wants can come along and take it. In the Lord's Supper the Lord comes to serve you personally. Without the taking and eating and drinking there is no sacrament, but with it you have receive the very body and blood of Christ and the forgiveness of sins through His death.

Is it I? Yes indeed it is I who betrayed the Lord, It is I for whom the Lord died, and it is I who receive from the hand of Christ himself His true body and blood.

Jesus calls us to join the disciples in that examination of our hearts which caused the apostles to ask one another, "is it I?" So that we might also join them in the sweet fellowship divine by which we know it is I for whom Christ died and has received His very body and blood. Amen