

Mark 14: 17-25

17 When it was evening, he came with the twelve. ¹⁸And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.' ¹⁹They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, 'Surely, not I?' ²⁰He said to them, 'It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me. ²¹For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.'

22 While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, 'Take; this is my body.' ²³Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. ²⁴He said to them, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. ²⁵Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.'

Meditation: The atmosphere around the table is charged! Jesus is making accusations: 'Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.' Well who is it? We the readers know, but those around the table do not. They need to question themselves and each other? Am I betraying Jesus? Am I sharing this meal with him while my heart is tainted? Jesus adds a warning and a curse. He is human, after all, and he feels this betrayal very personally...

And then he takes a loaf of bread, blesses, breaks and gives it to them. 'Take; this is my body.' Then he takes a cup and after giving thanks to God he passes it around for all to drink from it. 'This is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many.' This is Jesus last supper with them in the flesh. Only when the kingdom of God is fully come and God's will fully done on earth as it is in heaven, will Jesus eat and drink among them again. Yet he has given them what they need until then. In eating and drinking bread and wine in a spirit of inward remembrance, they will be receiving none other than Christ himself afresh within them.

What actions in your life open your heart to receive Jesus so that his spirit shines and energizes your spirit ever more brightly? And what actions betray this Jesus who seeks to enter you heart and soul? When we think of Judas and we think of what Jesus is asking of us in the last supper, it's all about being truthful with ourselves and others, being genuine and authentic, with compassion rather than judgement, even when we need to speak truth and advocate for justice. How do we speak truth and advocate for justice in our relationships and in response to what we are witnessing right now in the world around us? What does it mean for us to be authentically compassionate rather than contemptuous of others, even those who may betray us?

Prayer: We want to be on the right side of things, O God... but what is it that lives in our hearts? Are we betraying ourselves before you in being less than truthful and authentic with where we're at? You know what is in us, O God, not only the beauty, but the ugliness as well, not only the faith and hope, but the doubt and despair as well, not only the love we have to give and to share, but the resentment, the indifference, even the

frustration and hate... Have mercy on us, O God... lift us out of the pit we are in...
cleanse us, renew us and give us a way to genuine peace of soul with a gentleness we
may share with others in these times of harshness... We pray this way in Jesus' name;
Amen.