

## Chapter 3

# Holy Thursday

*(Leader's Guide)*

Luke 22:1-65

- 1 **Read Luke 22:3-6.** What do we catch Judas doing in this passage?

We find Judas in the act of betraying Jesus. We are told that Judas betrayed Jesus for only 30 pieces of silver (Matthew 26:15). Even in Jesus' day, this wasn't much money. Judas' heart was bought out for an embarrassingly small amount.

- 2 We often betray God for things that are fleeting and insignificant. What are some of those things we choose every day over God?

Use examples from your own life here and try to get the students talking practically about this. **Ask:** What are specific things college students struggle with in this area?

Examples: School (grades), sports, boyfriend/girlfriend, friends, images we give to ourselves (parties, drinking, sex).

- 3 Read stories of Judas, **Luke 22:3-6, Matthew 27:3-5**, and Peter, **Luke 22:54-62, John 21:4-7**. What similarities do you see in Peter and Judas? What are the differences?

- 4 What was the major difference between Judas and Peter? Do you think the same forgiveness was available to Judas as was to Peter, or was Judas' situation different? Why or why not?

*Entering into Christ's Passion:*

**Questions 3 and 4:** The simple similarity between Judas and Peter is that they both betrayed our Lord. They may have done it in different manners, but the basic intent of both was putting themselves before God. Judas chose himself over God with monetary gain and looking good in the sight of others. Peter chose to protect himself from harm rather than risk danger and trust that God would care for him if he put God first. You might want to share this passage from the Catechism, which suggests that all sin is essentially rooted in the same thing:

*“Man, tempted by the devil, let his trust in his Creator die in his heart and, abusing his freedom, disobeyed God’s command. This is what man’s first sin consisted of. All subsequent sin would be disobedience toward God and lack of trust in His goodness.”*

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When we sin, we essentially lose trust that our God wants our best and we choose to follow after the things that we want rather than the things God wants for us.

**The difference** between Peter and Judas was their response upon realizing their sin. Peter “wept bitterly” upon this realization. But later, when Jesus returned, Peter rushed to His Lord as quickly as he could. He knew that Jesus would take him back if he asked, or at least he wanted to try. Judas, on the other hand, saw no redemption for himself. He chose suicide because he saw no way God would take him back. Judas let his trust in his Creator die twice; first, by not believing that Jesus was worth more than the 30 pieces of silver and the respect of the church leaders, and secondly by not believing God had enough love to forgive him.

The forgiveness offered to Judas and Peter was the same. It’s also the same forgiveness offered to all of us. **Emphasize the significance of this!** Though the effects of our sins are all different, God wants to forgive us *no matter what we’ve done*. Judas, like all of us, could have had forgiveness if he had asked for it. **Are we ever too ashamed to ask God for His forgiveness?**

- 5 **Read Luke 15:2 and 5:29-30.** Meals play a significant role in Luke's Gospel and in the ancient world. Here we find Jesus dining with people who many would have found to be less than desirable diner companion. Why exactly do you think the Pharisees are so appalled by Jesus' choice of dining companions?

Jesus is making a tremendous familial statement about His relationship to these people by eating with them. By dining with sinners, Jesus is inviting them to a family bond with Him. As a popular teacher and Rabbi, the Pharisees see Jesus going directly against Jewish teaching about whom one could and could not eat with. He seemed to be completely abandoning the Jewish law.

It's commonly assumed that the Pharisees were criticizing Jesus because they were self-righteous snobs. This may well be true, but some Biblical scholars suggest there might be more to the story. Though a little hypocritical, the Pharisees may have had some good intentions. The main thrust of Pharisee thinking was this: Israel had gone astray and abandoned God time and time again. This caused the whole nation to lose favor with God; thus resulting in their slavery to the Romans. If the people lost favor with God by breaking the commandments and the law, then the Pharisees deduced that the only way to gain back acceptance was to keep the Old Testament law *to the letter*, exactly the opposite of Israel's checkered past. Without the light of Divine Revelation from Christ, all the Pharisees had to go on was their knowledge of the law and the people's failure to keep it.

As for dining practices, the law instructed against eating with sinners for the simple reason that Israel tended to give in pretty easily to peer pressure; that is, when the people ate or dwelt with sinners, they usually fell into the same sin. The dietary laws were put in place to help Israel keep out of trouble.

The Pharisees knew their history and firmly believed that the only way Israel could get their place back in the Kingdom of God was to hold *strictly* to the law.

- 6 Do you think it's difficult for our culture to understand the significance of meals in the time of Christ which the above passage discusses? Why or why not?

*Entering into Christ's Passion:*

We live in a “fast food” culture in which few of us ever really have time to sit down for a meal. Most of the time we eat on the go. **Ask:** How many of the students were raised in families in which sitting down together for meals was a priority.

Jesus says that it is the sick who need a doctor-essentially that He has come to heal.

- 7 **Read Luke 5:31-32.** Jesus explains why it is that He is dining with the people He is. What is His explanation?

Initially, God gave Israel the responsibility to be His representative and messenger to all of the nations. At one time, the people of Israel were *supposed* to be dining with and hanging around sinners so they could introduce them to God. The problem was, as we have seen, the people were too weak and too easily influenced. Jesus was different. He was God. Jesus didn't need to worry about falling into the sins of the sinners and tax collectors. He came to do the job that Israel couldn't do--to bring news of healing to the sick, sight to the blind and freedom to the captive. By sharing the Gospel with the sinners and the sick, Jesus was fulfilling the commission originally given to Israel and reuniting the family.

- 8 Go back to **Luke 22:14-15.** In light of the three previous questions, why do you think Jesus is so desirous to eat the Passover meal with His disciples?

Jesus is about to institute the Eucharist. This act will invite all of us from that time on to not only dine with Jesus but to receive Him as our food. The meals Jesus eats in Luke's gospel are not isolated incidents. They are foreshadows of the Eucharistic meal He “eagerly desires” to eat with all of us. We are all the sick that Jesus came to heal. Ask the students what they think about the invitation Christ presents to all of us to dine with Him in the Eucharist. Go back to the Tim Gray quote and show that this means His desire is to truly draw us into His family and unite Himself to us in a tremendously powerful way.