

Jesu Juva

“Grace Big Enough For You”

Text: Mark 14-15

Jesus is betrayed with a *kiss*. An action of intimate union, of friendship, used to betray. Judas didn't have to choose that. He could have said: the one I speak to, or the one I will point to, or the one I embrace. But no - it was a kiss.

And as if that weren't bad enough, consider the timing. Jesus had just spent *how long* in the agony of prayer to His Father. He knew what was coming - not just the crucifixion, but the weight of the world's sin upon Him, the wrath and condemnation against that sin, and His Father forsaking Him who became sin for us. And so *take this cup from me, if possible*, Jesus prayed. But it was not possible. And Jesus would not betray His Father. He goes as it is written. *Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.*

And *immediately, while He was still speaking* those words, Mark tells us, Judas and his crowd appears and His betrayer kisses Him. How Jesus' heart must have ached for him at that moment. He knew it would be Judas. He knew it would have been better for him had he not been born (Matthew 26:24-25). But still we know that God desires all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4). *And that includes Judas.* How Jesus' heart must have ached for Judas when his lips touched Him. That sin of betrayal would be upon Him on the cross too, for all sins - from the biggest to the smallest - would be upon Him. *If not, how could we ever be sure that all of our sins were upon Him?* But Judas would not believe, he could not believe, God's grace could be that big, and so not receive that forgiveness by faith. His kiss of betrayal, he thought, was too great, too much to be forgiven.

But there is no sin too great or too much to be forgiven. For that would mean that sin is greater than God Himself. And so that cannot be. If Jesus had been a mere man, then yes. But since it is the Son of God Himself that hangs on that cross for you, that bears your sins for you, then all sin is done, atoned for. Your sin is done. And so your sin, no matter how big or how frequent, is forgiven. **God's grace IS that big.**

Which is a very good thing, because what do *you* do with *your* lips? Judas used his to betray Jesus. Do you do the same? Your lips confess the name of Jesus and call Him teacher and friend, and your lips touch His Body and Blood in the Supper. And then what do they do? Do they then lie and gossip? Do they confess falsehood through failing to speak the truth? Do they curse and not bless? And then go through the rest of your bodily members, too, so graciously given to you by your Creator and sustained by Him. What do you do with them, or fail to do with them? Your mind, your hands, your feet, your heart . . . Are you betraying the One who gave these to you and redeemed these for you and desires that you use them for His service and life? How often do your actions - or

inactions - confess the exact opposite of what Jesus prayed in the garden? How often do our lives confess: not *Thy* will but *mine* be done?

This season of Lent is about recognizing that reality of sin in our lives, but even more also learning once again how BIG the grace of God is, and that even our vilest sins, our most oft-repeated sins, our little sins and big sins, yes even our Judas sins, Jesus took upon Himself so they wouldn't be on you. Yes, it was hard. Yes, the burden was more enormous than we can imagine. Yes, it was a most difficult cup to drink. But Jesus would not stop until He did it, and nothing could stop Him. He would not betray His Father and He will not betray you. **He came for your sins and He was not leaving without them.**

Do you believe that? Judas couldn't. Wouldn't. Many today cannot either, thinking they are too bad to come to church; thinking they have to do *something* in addition to Jesus and His sacrifice on the cross. But this week, this Holy Week, speaks a most emphatic **NO** to that. Jesus did it all. He drank the cup, He died the death, and He rose from the dead. *It is finished* (John 19:30).

That's how BIG the grace of God is. That's why satan doesn't want you to see it or believe it. So he'll try to minimize your sin, that you think it not so bad and that you can deal with it. You're doing better than most. Or he'll get you to deny that you're a sinner at all - and think that all that stuff the Bible says doesn't apply to you. That's pretty popular today, it seems. Or if that fails he will try to minimize that grace and magnify your sin. He try to get you to despair of your unworthiness instead of rejoicing in Jesus your Saviour's worthiness. That's what he did to Judas. *What kind of disciple are you, you worthless sack of . . . manure! You betrayed with a kiss! Look at you! Look at your heart! There's no way you could ever be forgiven for that!*

But satan is a liar. Always. The truth is just the opposite of all that. Yes, you are a sinner, and no, you're not better than most. *But this too*: there is no sin and no sinner greater than our Saviour. Was God's grace big enough for Judas? *Absolutely*. And it's big enough for you and me and all the world.

And so today we heard and we'll hear again that that very body Judas handed over in betrayal to death, Jesus hands over to us, in love, for life. *Take and eat, take and drink*, He says. This is the new covenant, the new testament, My promise of forgiveness and life for you. All your sins forgiven, and a new life given you. A new life, that you confess and not deny, that you love and not betray, that you forgive and not withhold this greatest gift you could ever give another. That you, as Paul said, have and live not the lies of satan, but have the mind of Christ.

And so just as Jesus rode into Jerusalem humbly on a donkey to accomplish that forgiveness and life, so now He comes here to this humble place in the same humble way, in water, in words, in bread and wine, to give Himself and His gifts of forgiveness and

life to you. It is not beneath Him, for the King of all to come here and be with you, with sinners. It is His joy, for you are His joy. He will not betray you. **For where you are is where He wants to be, and where He is is where He wants you to be.** Forever.

So dear children of God, rejoice! Rejoice! This week we will again remember the awful events that took place - the mocking and stripping, the whipping and beating, the humiliation and death of the cross. But we do so with a solemn joy, for we know Jesus underwent all this **for you and me.** This is His love for you.

The apostle John put it this way, in His Gospel, saying right before those last few hours of Jesus' life: *having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end* (John 13:1b). This is the week we see the end and we see that love. Sadly, Judas died with his sin. Thankfully, Jesus died for your sin. This is His love **for you.** This is the grace of God **for you.** This is the week of His victory **for you.**

So let us too cry out our ***Hosanna!***
Lord, save!
Me.

And hear again: My Body, My Blood, **for you.**
I forgive you.

In the Name of the Father, and of the (+) Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.