

Man Plots, God Plans**Luke 22:1-6**

There are a lot of things I don't understand.

Cricket and rugby

Quantum physics, black holes, bird migration

Foreign languages

The IRS tax code

If I didn't believe in God's sovereignty I would not understand today's passage. I'll explain what I

mean as we go through our text. With that, turn to

Luke 22:1-6.

A deplorable plot

A diabolical person

A definitive plan

I. A DEPLORABLE PLOT – vs. 1-2**A. Their Hypocrisy – v. 1**

A very special event was about to occur. Both Mark and Matthew state that the Passover was two days away. It was special because it was a celebration observed annually on the 14th day of their first month. It would be equivalent to our March/April timeframe. The Passover was really two events. The first event was the Passover meal and the second event was the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It began on the 15th and went for seven days. Over time both events came to be known as the Passover.

There are certain days of the year I look forward to - Christmas, Easter, my twin brother's birthday, my anniversary, family birthdays, and family vacation. Each has a certain degree of heightened eagerness and expectation.

For the Jew, Passover was an event they looked forward to. In a way, it was their 4th of July. The men were required to attend the annual celebration, but often would take their family for the festival. The events that surrounded the celebration were tied to the exodus that occurred when Israel was thrust out of Egypt on the heels of the 10 plagues God

brought on the land for their oppression of the Israelites. The last plague was the straw that broke the camel's back when Pharaoh ordered them out of the land. That last plague brought the death of every first born in Egypt who did not have the blood of a lamb placed on the top and both sides of the doorframe of their homes. When the angel of death flew throughout the land if he saw the blood on the doorframe he passed over that home, but if it was absent he struck the first born in that home – both people and livestock. Death in that home came regardless of age, gender, or social status.

As a way of remembering their exodus from Egypt, they were to eat the Passover meal in the same way as on that first occasion. It was a way of remembering that the angel passed over the homes where blood had been shed by a lamb and put on the doorframes. It would be like our celebrating communion as we think about the death of Christ and what it accomplished for the person who has figuratively applied His shed blood to the door of our heart. We remember and we celebrate.

I would suggest to you today that in the same way we are called to a time of self-evaluation before we take communion where we reflect on the work of Christ on the cross for us, so the Jew was to reflect on the Passover lamb whose blood allowed the angel of death to pass over their home on the night of the exodus.

The Passover meal Jesus was about to eat with His disciples was a picture of the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world. The disciples hadn't fully grasped that they were about to eat the Passover meal with the One who was the Passover Lamb.

So why talk about the Passover in relation to the hypocrisy of the religious leaders? It's very simple. They taught one thing in regard to keeping the law and lived an entirely different way. They were more concerned about adhering to the rites of the

ceremony than they were in recognizing that the One standing before them was the One who came to take away their sin. They were religious hypocrites. Seven times in the Matthew 23 Jesus says to them **“Woe to you, teachers of the Law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!”**

They believed that righteousness came by living according to the law. We would call that legalism today. Paul wrote that the law does not and cannot make someone right with God. The law was merely a teacher showing us not how to become righteous but instead showing us that we are sinners in need of a Savior, that Savior being Christ alone.

Paul also wrote that salvation is not in keeping the law but by God’s grace through our faith.

The religious leaders were preparing to observe the Passover feast, but had no real relationship with God that would have any impact on their spiritual life. They were more interested in observing the traditions passed on by man than in keeping the law as given by God. They added regulations that became more important to adhere to than the law.

This reminds me of how careful we must be that we observe communion as God intended. How important it is that our observation of communion not become a ritual we do once a month, or that we take it because every one else around is. We don’t want to be singled out for not taking it. Let’s make certain that we are in a right relationship with God and others by confession of sin and restoration of broken fellowship. Communion isn’t about a ritual, it’s about a relationship.

Throughout His ministry Jesus confronted them with their hypocrisy. They were more interested in giving the appearance of righteousness than in actually being righteous. That’s one of the arguments people use today for not going to church. There are too many hypocrites. Those who think that way don’t understand that when you get saved,

you don’t automatically become perfect. Though we strive to be like Christ in character actually becoming perfect won’t happen until we see Christ (I John 3:2-3). The religious leaders were hypocrites. Instead of humbly admitting they were wrong and needing to change, they opted to get rid of the trouble maker. Jesus had to go. In verse two then we see their hatred for Jesus.

B. Their Hatred – v. 2

It’s no secret that throughout His ministry they had disdain for Jesus.

They didn’t like that He openly spoke against them. They didn’t like His popularity with the people. They didn’t like that He challenged their authority and their interpretation of the law.

They tried to catch Him doing something that was contrary to the Law.

They tried to catch Him off guard by testing Him about what the law said.

They hoped to discredit Him.

They accused Him of blasphemy when He asserted that He was equal with God. That was grounds for the death penalty.

That and many other reasons are why we read in verse 2 they were looking for some way to get rid of Jesus. In Matthew 26:3-4 it says that **“they plotted to arrest Jesus in some sly way and kill Him. ‘But not during the Feast,’ they said, ‘or there may be a riot among the people.’”**

Their growing animosity and hostility toward Jesus culminated in their desire to find some way to secretly get rid of Jesus permanently. Their intent was to kill Him. **What prompted their desire?**

I believe it was pride. Their pride led to resentment. Resentment is the petri dish of bitterness and then hatred and then if we are not careful it leads to murder.

Ephesians 4:31 “Let all bitterness, and wrath (rage), and anger, and clamor (brawling), and

evil speaking (slander), be put away from you, with all malice.”

Malice is active ill will toward another, the desire to inflict some form of punishment up to and including murder.

How careful we must be not to allow resentment toward another get to that point.

Hebrews 12:15 “Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing trouble you and thereby many be defiled.”

NIV “See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.”

The writer of Hebrews exhorts us to look diligently for two things.

The first is in regard to the grace of God. We are to look for opportunities to share the gospel so that those who hear it can respond to God’s saving grace. Otherwise those who fail to accept God’s grace will fail to receive salvation.

The second thing we are to look diligently for is to prevent bitterness from taking root in us.

This type of person becomes a corrupting influence that can cause much harm to others by leading them astray. That certainly sounds like the religious leaders who had allowed their pride to blindly keep them following a system flawed by their own doing and they insisted that others follow them. They had certainly defiled many with their bitterness and hatred toward Jesus. Consequently their bitterness and hatred led them to consider some way to put Jesus to death, but they didn’t want to do so until after the Passover festival when the crowds would head for home. They wanted to avoid a riot because the people at that time still held Jesus in high esteem.

Theirs was a deplorable plot to get rid of Jesus built

on hypocrisy and hatred. Verse two indicates that their hatred was so strong they were considering every possible means to put Jesus to death.

While they were plotting when they could seize Jesus, the answer came knocking. At their door was a diabolical person.

II. A DIABOLICAL PERSON – vs. 3-6

I think I would have liked to have been a fly on the wall when Judas was announced. I wonder what went through the minds of the religious leaders when it was announced in their chamber that a disciple of Jesus wanted to meet with them. Perhaps they met him with a certain amount of suspicion.

Perhaps they met him with a bit of disdain because he was, after all, one of Jesus’ followers.

Why would someone who had been a part of Jesus’ earthly ministry for over three years choose a course of action Judas was now pursuing?

He had heard Jesus teach.

He had seen His many miracles.

He had witnessed the response of the people.

He had traveled with Him observing everything about Him.

He was sent out with the other disciples to proclaim the kingdom of God. I don’t think he went out sharing the message of God’s kingdom with a disclaimer that he didn’t really believe it.

I think the reason is clear from our passage. We see it in verse 3.

“Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve.”

A. A Satanic Impact – v. 3

What does it mean then that Satan entered Judas?

First off, let’s keep in mind that just by virtue of his following Jesus did not make him a true believer in Jesus. There will be many who will stand before God claiming to be Jesus followers who will not be

granted eternal life in heaven because the Lord doesn't know them. They never placed faith in Christ for salvation. Oh, they may have been good people, devoted in their religion, generous in their giving and moral in their behavior, but they never confessed with their mouth Jesus as Lord and believed in their heart that God raised Him from the dead in order to be saved. They did not call on the name of the Lord to be saved.

Judas probably followed the Lord because he was an opportunist. He was looking for Christ to set up an earthly kingdom and wanted in on the action that would come with it. There would be honor extended to him because he was with Jesus from the ground floor. He wanted the status and benefits that would come. He was never a true follower.

How many opportunists are there today in the church who hope to benefit from saying they follow Jesus when their heart is not changed?

When Jesus predicted the betrayal by Judas, he was called a devil by the Lord. In the Greek it's a word that translates as diabolical. We are told here and in the passage when he leads the guards to arrest Jesus in the garden that Satan entered Judas. They are two separate occasions leaving us with the understanding that Judas had the opportunity to repent and inform the group what he had done, but did not. Satan did not just plant an idea in his head, but actually entered in and directed him to take an action that he had already thought about.

If the religious leaders were going to put Jesus to death he wanted to profit from it. His traitorous thoughts became the unlocked door by which Satan was able to gain access and spin his diabolical plan. It wasn't something that just happened overnight. That Satan entered Judas means only one thing – Judas was not a true believer, because a true believer cannot be possessed by Satan or any of his

horde. We may be harassed and even influenced but not possessed.

For a long time Judas had turned away from the truth. When the truth is denied, there is a greater opportunity for Satan to work in and through someone. It's possible that without this entering in by Satan that Judas would not have betrayed Jesus on His own, but he did and he became a diabolical person. That led Judas to a sadistic impulse.

B. A Sadistic Impulse – v. 4

With Satan now directing him, Judas went to the place where the religious leaders were meeting and informed them of his intentions to betray Jesus. He was tired of waiting and wondering when Jesus was going to make His move.

Jesus had the perfect opportunity when He rode triumphantly into Jerusalem but didn't seize the day to usher in the kingdom.

Maybe Judas thought that Jesus missed another opportunity when the Temple was cleared of the merchants and money changers. He could have walked into the Temple and declared Himself king, but He didn't. That may have been the final nail in the proverbial coffin for Judas. Disillusioned and filled with doubt he was will to sell Jesus out.

Fed up and now possessed by Satan, he laid out a plan with the religious leaders and Temple guards.

But before we jump all over Judas for what he did thinking we could or would never do anything like that let's pause for a moment and consider something. I want to suggest something this morning that maybe we have never considered. Is it possible even conceivable to think that when we sin, we are in effect betraying Jesus who died for the sin we just committed.

I say that because the word betray literally means to give over or to give up. Isn't that what we do when we sin, we give up or give over to it? Satan will do

all he can to make us ineffective for Christ by placing stumbling blocks along the way. He knows our propensities, our weaknesses and dangles them out on string, so that in reaching for them we fall. That's just a thought to ponder.

The impulse of Judas was sadistic – betray the Lord. The plot of the religious leaders could now be set in motion. Their discussion led to a suggested implementation.

C. A Suggested Implementation – vs. 5-6

The plan was laid out and the price was established. Judas would profit from his decision. I would further suggest that the price we are paid for sin is the momentary pleasure we receive for it. It isn't much but we think the price is reasonable for a little pleasure. We'll find in the end as Judas did, that the price wasn't worth it.

I find it ironic that a thief who pilfered from the purse of the disciples could promise to keep his word or that the religious leaders who stole from the pockets of the people through their money making business in the temple courtyard selling animals for sacrifice would keep their word and pay Judas. There is no honor among thieves and yet both were so committed to Jesus' demise that they were willing to go through with their agreement – one to betray and one to pay, one who sought money and who sought murder.

We read that Judas began to look for an opportunity to hand Jesus over when the crowds were not around. Most likely it would have to be at night since the previous chapter ended by noting that many people went to the Temple each day to hear Jesus teach, but in the evening He would spend the night in the Mount of Olives.

The stage is set.

The plot is in motion.

I began the message by noting some things that I

just don't understand, including this passage. **Why would a good God allow something so heinous to be done to His Son by the very Ones He created and loved?** We have considered a deplorable plot and a diabolical person. I want to conclude with a definitive plan.

III.A DEFINITIVE PLAN

There are three important and essential things that are also in motion here. They have been evident since before the foundation of the world was laid.

The first is God's sovereignty

The second is God's salvation

The third is God's solution

A. The Sovereignty of God

The principle meaning of sovereign is chief or supreme. It is a word that speaks first of position and then of power. When we think of the sovereignty of God in regard to His position, it means that He is the chief Being in the universe. When we think of the sovereignty of God in regard to His power, it means that He is the supreme power in the universe.

Genesis 1:1 – God created all things

Colossians 1:16-17 – God not only created all things, but sustains them and is supreme over them.

I Chronicles 29:11-13 – Because God created and sustains all things, all honor and glory belong to Him and He rules over it all.

There is no one else His equal and He is in control of everything that happens. When I consider a passage like the one that is before us today if God were not sovereign or supreme in everything and in every way then Satan could have free reign to do his will without interference by God. But because God is sovereign He allows actions to be done that may seem to imply from our perspective that He is not in control. As a result of this free reign of evil there are those who believe that God is ambivalent, incompetent, or even impotent when it comes to

handling evil in the world.

That is the premise of Rabbi Harold Kushner's book *Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?* Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people? Following the death of his son who had an incurable genetic disease, he began to muse why a good and benevolent God would allow bad things happen to good people. If the universe was created by a God whose nature is good and loving why is their suffering and pain in the world? It boils down a problem of evil in a world made by a God who purports to being omnipotent. His conclusion is that God does His best and attempts to comfort people in their suffering but is quite incapable of fully relieving them of the difficulties they experience in life. He sees God as incapable of preventing evil.

Someone may get the same impression reading this passage that God is unable to stop Judas and the religious leaders from carrying out this devious plot to assassinate Jesus.

But here is where we see the wisdom of God coupled with His sovereignty. The wisdom of God is defined as God always choosing the best goals and the best means to those goals. Let's remember that God's ways and thoughts are beyond our ability to ever comprehend so we don't have to understand, we only have to trust God that His plan is the best even if the means don't seem to be reasonable. God in His sovereignty was allowing this to happen for a purpose – His glory and our good.

God has a plan that He is in control of and that will not be altered by anyone or anything else, which is ultimately for the praise of His glory. Even though what is transpiring here in our passage is with evil intentions it will ultimately result in His glory and our good, even when we don't understand His methods.

Not only is the sovereignty of God seen in the

betrayal, His salvation is also evident.

B. The Salvation of God

The events that are now set in motion will fulfill the reason Jesus came – to save the lost. Their little plot is all part of the grand plan of God in which Jesus will in just two days become the Passover lamb whose sacrifice will pay the price for our sin and appease the justice of God.

All this is in demonstration of God's great love for us who loved us so much He sent Jesus so that belief in Him would lead to eternal salvation. It was God's plan all along something that had been planned even before the foundation of the world. It was God's plan that was introduced in Genesis 3 that a Redeemer would be sent.

Salvation is a gift through God's grace giving us something we don't deserve, but is offered because He loves us so much. *There will never be a greater sacrifice because there is no greater love.*

There is one final point I want to make. We can be saved and still harassed and influenced by Satan and his fallen angels. **I Corinthians 10:13** tells us that God has given us a way of escape. From this I see the solution of God.

C. The Solution of God

While there are others I want to leave you with two.

1. Be prepared with God

James 4:7 resist – to stand against or opposed to

2. Be prepared by God

Ephesians 6:10-18

Face the challenges of a new year by submitting to God, resisting the devil and putting on the armor of God. And by all means trust God fully in His plan. His plans will never fail because He is sovereign.