**Series – Dr. Luke’s Perspective on Jesus**

**Text – Luke 21:37-22:13**

**Message 87 - (June 2, 2019)**

 **PREPARING FOR THE PASSOVER**

***37And every day he was teaching in the temple, but at night he went out and lodged on the mount called Olivet. 38And early in the morning all the people came to him in the temple to hear him. 1 Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called the Passover. 2And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to put him to death, for they feared the people. 3Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve. 4He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them. 5And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. 6So he consented and sought an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of a crowd. 7Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. 8So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it.” 9They said to him, “Where will you have us prepare it?” 10He said to them, “Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters 11and tell the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ 12And he will show you a large upper room furnished; prepare it there.” 13And they went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.***

**Introduction**

1. Luke gives us a little background before he explains what happened on Thursday, the day before Jesus was crucified. What happens on Thursday begins in 22:7. For an undisclosed period of time, Jesus would go to the temple early each morning and teach and then He would walk to the Mount of Olives to spend the night there.
2. Luke also tells us what was going on behind the scenes with the chief priests and scribes and Judas Iscariot. All of that was significant for what was about to unfold.
3. Here is what I want us to see today. I want us to see the outworking of evil against the Lord, but I also want us to see the sovereign working of God that actually incorporates the evil intentions of men and Satan, to bring about God’s purposes. While the disciples were preparing for the Passover, evil was being prepared for Jesus.
4. Luke pulls back the curtain and allows us to see evil at its worst, and mercy and grace at its best, all in the context of the Passover.
5. Nearly fifteen hundred years earlier, the children of Israel had been saved out of Egypt literally by the Passover lamb. The lamb was prepared, slaughtered, and its blood was spread on the doorpost. When the death angel passed over Egypt to take the lives of the firstborn, Israel was spared by the blood of the Passover lamb. The miraculous escape from Egypt was made possible by obedience to God in relation to the blood of the Passover lamb. Now, Jesus is preparing to recline and eat the Passover meal with His disciples. Let’s begin with the…

**I. PREPARING FOR EVIL (1-6)**

A. The extremities of evil

1. In regard to the religious leaders - ***the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to put him to death.*** This was not new news; this had been brewing for some time. What is surprising is that this was coming from the theologians, the respected religious leaders of the day. This was shocking. These leaders were careful students of Scripture. They were masters of the Law, but they are plotting the murder of the One who is claiming to be the Messiah. They hadn’t yet done the dastardly deed because they were afraid of the people – but apparently not afraid of God! Evil against God was at the heart of Judaism.

2. In regard to an apostle of Jesus - ***Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve.*** Think about Judas. He was one of the twelve, one who had the title of “apostle”, but he would be the ultimate betrayer! It is one thing to realize that evil is all around us. It is another thing to realize that there can be evil among us.

B. The heart of evil - ***Then Satan entered into Judas –*** That is a strange and frightening statement that Satan could enter into the heart of a person. What does that mean?

1. The role of Satan in the heart of the unbeliever – It is true that Satan is the prince of the power of the air, the god of this world and thus he has some authority to rule. That rule is limited by a sovereign God, but there is a measure of authority to carry out evil intentions. People cannot blame their evil behavior on Satan, and the Bible places the blame for sin entirely on the one who sins, but Satan has great persuasive powers to steer unbelievers in a direction far away from God. That’s generally true in the hearts of unbelievers.

2. The role of Satan in the heart of Judas – Sometimes for specific purposes, Satan is permitted to take up a special place of influence in the heart of an unbeliever to do great evil. How that comes about we are not really told, but we are given an example of it here - ***Then Satan entered into Judas.*** John would refer to what Luke described and then elaborate. ***2During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him,*** (that’s what we just read in Luke)***3Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God…***( He then washes the disciples’ feet including Judas)… ***21After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, “Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” 22The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. 23One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side, 24so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. 25So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, “Lord, who is it?” 26Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.” So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. 27Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “What you are going to do, do quickly”*** (John 13:2-3, 21-27). This was not like demon possession as we have seen in Luke’s Gospel from time to time. This was something else. It was the direct action of Satan to fill Judas’ heart with pure evil to destroy the Lord of glory!

C. The manifestation of evil

1. Action in the pursuit of evil – (This would be true for the chief priests and scribes, and for Judas) - ***the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to put him to death…he consented and sought an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of a crowd.*** Why would the religious leaders sell Jesus out? They were jealous. They didn’t like the claims Jesus was making. They were afraid they might lose the position or power they had. Jesus was a rival and they were not going to allow Him to alter their ministry. And why would Judas do this? Was it for the money? Maybe. John exposed him as a thief who had been pilfering the purse. Thirty pieces of silver was not a great sum, but when one’s heart is evil, one’s values are distorted. Judas had invested months of his time betting on a position of power in a promised coming kingdom. When it became obvious that Jesus was not who he thought He was, and the kingdom was not what he thought it would be, Judas decided to cut his losses and sell Jesus out and maybe recoup a little of what he had lost. How could this happen? J. C. Ryle wrote, ***“You know at best, we have but a faint conception of the deceitfulness of our heart.”***

2. Delight in the pursuit of evil – ***they were glad, and agreed to give him money.*** Judas had asked the leaders what they would give him. Matthew records, ***14Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests 15and said, “What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?” And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. 16And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him.*** Judas was the ticket to the religious leaders’ dilemma. Judas was the mole. He was insider who could make this happen. They were glad to pay him. They offered 30 pieces of silver and he took it. He may have bargained; we don’t know. They would have probably paid more; he may have taken less. His heart was fixed on evil. It was all set. Judas would let them know soon when and where the evil deed would take place. He would arrange a time when the crowd wasn’t around (v. 6) – that arrangement would be made in a few hours. (That was the preparation behind the scenes for evil.

**II. PREPARING FOR PASSOVER (7-13) –** Luke puts a time stamp on this verse, ***“Then came the day of Unleavened Bread.”*** There were preparations to be made.

A. The preparations to be made by the disciples for the Passover meal

1. A lamb had to be secured and sacrificed. Jesus sent Peter and John to secure the lamb. That apparently had to be done in accord with the priests at the temple. The lamb would need to be sacrificed and prepared. They knew the drill, but they did not know where to make those preparations. (It’s a little gross, but it went something like this: The lamb would be taken to the temple in the afternoon. Those bringing the lambs would join one of three lines to have the lamb slaughtered (probably the owner would slaughter his own lamb). Priests would catch the blood to offer as a sacrifice. The carcass would be passed along where the entrails were removed and then the animal would be returned to the owners for roasting). Isn’t it interesting that nothing is said of Jesus and His disciples eating the lamb at the Passover meal? Instead it is bread and the wine which were symbolic of the real Passover Lamb.

2. A place had to be secured and set up. Because the Passover Feast was to be eaten that night followed by the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread and this was a very important feast day in Jerusalem for the Jews, the city would be full of people. Homes would be overcrowded. Where would one go for a meal involving 13 people? Listen to Jesus’ instructions in verses 10-13! Duncan writes, ***There are hundreds of thousands of people in Jerusalem, so we're just going to walk into Jerusalem and there's going to be someone carrying a jar?” …In those days, typically women carried jars, men carried wine skins. So it was a little bit unusual that a man would be carrying a jar of water… Peter and John go into Jerusalem and it's just like Jesus said… (T)hey follow him back to the house and they say…, “The Master needs a room to celebrate the Passover tonight. Is your guest room ready?” And the man says, “Why, yes it is. Let me lead you upstairs.” And everything is furnished and ready for the Passover. All they have to do is go over to the temple, get the lamb that has been prepared by the priests, and bring it back and set it out on the table. Everything has been prepared for them just like Jesus said... “They went and found it just as He had told them.” In other words, the emphasis is — the table has been spread for them. Everything that they have needed has been prepared for them ahead of time… everything has already been done for them.*** But there was far more going on here.

B. The preparations being made by God for the Passover Lamb

1. All of this, the evil plans of the murderous priests, the Satanic intrusion into the heart of Judas, the offer and gleeful acceptance of the planned betrayal and all that would follow – that was all orchestrated by a sovereign God who was making preparation for the offer of the Passover Lamb.

2. Ligon Duncan wrote, ***The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, or as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 5:7, “Christ our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed.” It's all being prepared for them by God because this is the only way that they will be spared the judgment of God*** (Aug. 7, 2011).

3.A number of years ago, J I Packer was asked***, “Dr. Packer, could you summarize the New Testament in three words?”… “Yes,” he said, “Adoption through propitiation.” He said, “We are forgiven and welcomed as children into God's family through the propitiation of Jesus Christ”*** (Aug. 7. 2011). In other words, we are brought into God’s family through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who is our Passover Lamb.

**III. PREPARING FOR LIFE (21:38; 22:13)**

A. Coming to hear Him

1. At the beginning of our text, we were introduced to people coming to Jesus to hear Him. That’s how we are prepared by God for life.

2. It was in hearing the Word that we discovered our lost condition. It was in hearing the Word that we believed – faith comes by hearing. The Word teaches us about the character of God and the plan and purpose of God and the glory of God and about the Lamb of God who takes away our sin and grants to us eternal life.

3. We hear the Word when we gather for the public reading of Scripture, but we also hear the Word when we open the book and begin to read. If we are to be prepared, we must come to hear Him.

B. Learning that everything is just as He has said

1. At the end of this text, as John and Peter followed the Lord’s instructions, they found that everything Jesus had said was absolutely true! Everything was just as He said.

2. God prepares us for Himself not only through salvation, but also through sanctification. That’s the goal of salvation – that we might be holy and blameless before Him! Moving us along in that progression involves preparing us by His Word to understand and believe and live out what He says. Everything God has said about Himself is true – everything! If we are getting our marching orders from somewhere else, we are in trouble.

**Conclusion**

1. This would be Jesus and His disciples’ last Passover, not just the last Passover of His earthly ministry but the last Passover. The purpose of the Passover has been fulfilled.
2. Ligon Duncan wrote, ***Very often, early Christian preachers would preach on Christ's death and resurrection from Exodus 12*** (the story of the Passover)…***Now why in the world would early Christians do that? Because they’d listened to Luke and they’d listened to Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:7 and they’d listened to the rest of the New Testament that connected Jesus with the Passover and saw Jesus as the true Passover Lamb to whom all the other Passover lambs had pointed… (The) early Christians understood that. A few years ago we discovered a sermon that had been preached in Asia Minor in the city of Sardis, somewhere in the middle of the second century — so eighteen hundred and sixty years ago. On or about the time of Easter Sunday, a pastor named Melito of Sardis preached a sermon called “On Pascha.” (The Greek word pascha)… can refer to Passover…the Passover festival… the Passover Lamb… to Easter, or it can refer to Jesus...And here's how he ends this sermon:***

***“’I am the One,’ says the Christ, ‘I am the One that destroyed death and triumphed over the enemy…and bound the strong one and carried off man to the heights of heaven. I am the One,’ says the Christ. Come then, all you families of men who are compounded with sins and get forgiveness of sins from Me, for I am your forgiveness. I am the pascha of salvation. I am the lamb slain for you. I am your ransom. I am your life. I am your light. I am your salvation. I am your resurrection. I am your king. I will raise you up by my right hand. I am leading you up to the heights of heaven. There I will show you the Father from ages past. It is He who made the heaven and the earth and fashioned man in the beginning, who is proclaimed through the Law and the prophets, who was enfleshed upon a virgin, who hung upon a tree, who was buried in the earth and raised from the dead and went up to the heights of heaven, who sits at the Father's right hand, who has the power to save every man through whom the Father did His works from beginning to eternity. He is the Alpha and the Omega. He is the beginning and the end, beginning inexpressible and end incomprehensible. He is the Christ. He is the King. He is Jesus. He is the captain. He is the Lord. He is the One who rose from the dead. He is the One who sits at the Father's right hand. He carries the Father and is carried by the Father. To Him be the glory and power forever. Amen.’”***