

GROWTHguide

"The Betrayal"

February 18, 2018



THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

Genesis 2:7 and 3:14, Daniel 9:3-6,
Matthew 26:14-25, Exodus 21:32, John 12:1-8,
John 13:1-17

DAY 1

As we begin this season of Lent, we are called to a time of reflection, honest self-appraisal, humility, and repentance. It is also a season when we journey with Christ through the days leading up to his crucifixion. Each week of Lent, we will hear the story of significant events that took place during the week we have come to call Holy Week. Our hope is that you will try to put yourself into each story, so that together, we become more aware of how we are susceptible to the same behaviors, emotions, weaknesses, and temptations that led the disciples and religious leaders to betray, abandon, deny, falsely accuse, and ultimately condemn our Lord.

- **Make a commitment to pray each day during this Holy season so that it can be a time of repentance and renewal centered on your relationship with Jesus Christ.**

Pray for the Holy Spirit to open your mind and heart to honestly compare your own actions, thoughts, and sins with those who interacted with our Lord during his final days on earth.

DAY 2

[Read Genesis 2:7, 3:14 and Daniel 9:3-6](#)

The stories about creation and Adam and Eve's original sin remind us that God formed humanity from the dust and that we are destined to return to dust after death. Although we now understand that we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ who redeemed us, dust remains a symbol of our human mortality and death. Wearing sackcloth and ashes was customary during biblical times as a sign of mourning or repentance. When we celebrated Ash Wednesday, we received ashes with the words, *"remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."* This is a rite that instills in us a sense of humility and repentance.

- **It is customary to "give something up" during Lent. Many people give up a favorite food or pastime as a sign of sacrifice. Since Lent is a time when we are to repent of our sins, it might benefit our spiritual lives to give up something that causes us to sin.**
- **Think about ways that you repeatedly sin against God, those you love, or your neighbor. Ask God to reveal something you should give up that will allow you to be more faithful, a more loving family member, or a better neighbor. It might be something as simple giving up having the "last word" in every conversation.**
- **Perhaps you could sacrifice some TV time to mow a neighbor's lawn each week, to read to your children, or to volunteer to do a chore for someone else. Perhaps you could be intentional about giving up a costly personal indulgence so that you can donate the savings to a St. Paul ministry that serves our neighbors.**

Sometimes we can grow more by what we do for others in Jesus' name than we can grow by giving something up. Pray for guidance on how you can grow through Lent.

DAY 3

Read Matthew 26:14-25

Judas Iscariot is often seen as the worst traitor in biblical history, if not the worst in human history. The story of Judas Iscariot's betrayal is the most terrible of many stories of betrayal we find in the Bible. We can see from scripture that Judas' treachery was made worse by his deceptive attempt to cover up his guilt when confronted by Jesus during the Passover Meal. It is very easy to forget doing the right thing when doing the wrong thing brings personal gain or acclaim. Remember, when we harm a brother or sister by placing ourselves ahead of others or by failing to treat others according to the Lord's example, we betray Jesus as surely as Judas betrayed him. Our betrayals may be less obvious, but Jesus knows of our failures and bad deeds, just as he knew about his betrayal by Judas.

- **Take some time to sit quietly and reflect on the past year. Focus specifically on times when conflict, greed, competition or special status dominated your heart and mind.**
- **Have there been occasions when you hoarded your resources or compromised what you knew was right for financial gain or to enhance your status or reputation?**
- **Have you ever deceived anyone in order to cover up wrong-doing or to get ahead of others when competing for a job, a good grade, or an award?**

Pray for God to strengthen you so that you are able to stand strong against temptations that would result in a betrayal against another person or against God. Pray the Lord's Prayer and dwell on the words "lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil."

DAY 4

[Read Exodus 21:32, John 12:1-8 and John 13:1-17](#)

Mary gave Jesus her very best when she poured expensive perfume on his feet. Judas criticized her for wasting resources and then betrayed Jesus for the sum of thirty pieces of silver. The passage from Exodus teaches us that 30 pieces of silver was the paltry price paid for a slave that was killed by a bull. Isn't it ironic that Judas would sell Jesus for the price of a slave on the same night that Jesus took on the role of a servant or slave as he washed his disciples' feet? Chances are, each of us have behaved like both Mary and Judas on different occasions.

- **Are you more like Mary or Judas? Are you generous toward others or greedy?**
- **Think of a time when you gave generously to love and honor another without any personal benefit. How did that make you feel?**
- **Think of a time when you compromised another person for a small personal benefit. How does that make you feel?**

Sit quietly in God's presence. Ask God's forgiveness for the times you have been more like Judas than Mary and for the Holy Spirit to empower you to be more like Mary. If you have harmed another person by being greedy and that person is still available to you, ask for his or her forgiveness as well.

DAY 5

During Sunday's message we heard the following poem from Herbert Lockyer's book *All the Apostles of the Bible*. Read the poem and reflect on its meaning.

*It may not be for silver, it may not be for gold,
But yet by tens of thousands the Prince of Life is sold.
Sold for a godless friendship, sold for a selfish aim,
Sold for a fleeting trifle, sold for an empty name.*

*Sold in the [name] of Science, sold in the seat of power,
Sold at the shrine of fortune, sold in pleasure's bower,
Sold for your awful bargain none but God's eye can see,
Ponder, my soul, the question, shall He be sold by
[me]?*

*Sold! Oh God, what a moment! Stilled is conscience
voice;
Sold! And a weeping angel records the fatal choice,
Sold! But the price accepted to a living coal shall turn,
With the pangs of a late repentance deep in the soul to
burn.*

Many of us have heard the saying that "everyone has a price." While that may not really be true for everyone, many of us compromise what Jesus taught us to do for a wide variety of reasons. Many of those compromises are bad-bargains that betray the Lord.

If any of the prices listed in the poem remind you of yourself or a time when you bargained against the Lord, Lent would be a perfect time to repent and be transformed. Pray and pray again.

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St. Paul United Methodist Church
1199 Highland Ave. | Largo, FL 33770
727-584-8165 | church@stpaulumc.org

www.stpaulumc.org



St. Paul United Methodist Church, 1199 Highland Avenue, Largo, FL 33770

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