When we arrive at John 13, in less than twenty-four hours Jesus would be dead and buried. *“His hour had come.”* The Feast of the Passover was about to be celebrated and Jesus was with His chosen twelve, including Judas Iscariot who the world forever remember as the betrayer. We read the beginning of Christ’s “final hour” starting at John 13:1.

> "1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. 2 And supper being ended [or, during supper], the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray Him, 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, 4 rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. 5 After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded."

It was after supper that the washing of the disciples’ feet began. Peter objected to having his feet washed but a short comment from Jesus was all it took for Peter to repent. Peter, *“If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.”* As usual, with great flair, Peter then urged Jesus not to stop with just his feet but also to wash his *“hands and [his] head.”* Not only Peter’s feet were washed but the feet of all the Apostles were washed – including the feet of Judas Iscariot, the betrayer. We can only imagine what was going through the minds of both Christ and Judas as Jesus knelt before the feet of Judas to cleanse the betrayer’s feet. How Christ must have sorrowed for
Judas! He knew what Judas was. As far back as John 6:70 Jesus knew, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?"

After taking the "cup after supper" He said in Luke 22:21, "...the hand of My betrayer is with Me on the table." We can only hope that Judas was engaged in a fierce final struggle within himself whether or not to go through with what he had already planned to do. The devil had "put it into" Judas' heart "to betray Him" but until theastardly deed was done he could have repented and stopped himself. But he didn’t.

Verse 21 says that following the supper and the washing of His disciples' feet Jesus "was troubled in spirit." He "testified and said, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.’" The reaction of those in the room was what you would expect. "Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke. Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke. Then, leaning back on Jesus’ breast, he said to Him, ‘Lord, who is it?’. If it were not written in the holy and sacred writ of Matthew 26:25, one could hardly believe it - even "Judas, who was betraying Him" had the unmitigated and hypocritical gall and hardness of heart to ask Jesus, "Rabbi, is it I?"

Jesus answered the disciples’ question. ‘It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it.’ And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered

him.” Did Judas actually eat "the bread?" How could he? How could he have swallowed it? He surely must have choked on it. But wait. Are there not times when we come to this sacred Table and, while holding the loaf and the cup in our hand examining ourselves, that we sometimes find it difficult to eat and drink knowing how we betrayed our Lord in some way during the past week? "Then Jesus said to him, ‘What you do, do quickly’...Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night."

The devil attended that supper in John 13 also. He was alive and well before, during, and after this supper. You can be sure that his surrogates have been present at every Lord’s Supper since - not to remember Jesus, but to interfere. If he was able to put thoughts of betrayal into the "heart of Judas Iscariot" we ought not to think that he cannot do the same with Christ’s disciples who come to the Lord’s Table on the Lord’s Day.

John 13:2 says that "the devil already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray Him." Twenty-four verses later in John 13:27 it is written, "Satan entered him." Something happened between verse 2 and verse 27. The diabolical thought had been placed into Judas’ heart in verse 2 but the actual, living diabolos, Satan, "entered him" in verse 27. Was his entrance into Judas’ heart while Jesus washed Peter’s feet? Was it while Jesus washed John’s feet? Or, was it while Jesus washed Judas’ own feet? On this side of eternity we will never know. Perhaps we will not even know the answer to this question on the other side. It really doesn’t matter.
Jesus knew just as He knew that it was Judas who would betray Him. He knew that Judas had already received his "thirty pieces of silver" in payment for His betrayal. But, He washed his feet anyway. As He washed Judas' feet He knew that the man whose feet He was washing was going to lead "a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees...with lanterns, torches, and weapons" while He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. But, He washed his feet anyway. He knew that Judas would that night give him a kiss of betrayal. But, He washed his feet anyway. The suffering servant's final appeal to the betrayer not to be the devil's servant was rejected. There was no turning back now. He "went out immediately" walking into the darkness of the night on feet that had just been cleansed by the hands of his Messiah. Truly, as it is written in Romans 3:15, his "feet were swift to shed blood."

We need to take a sober look at ourselves. Before our conversion to Christ can we say that we were any better than Judas? It is difficult to throw a stone at Judas without bruising ourselves. It was while Judas was thinking about betraying Jesus that his feet were washed. But it was "...while we were still sinners" that He "died for us." The only difference between Judas and us who have a place at this Table is that our hearts that were once ruled by Satan were convicted of our sins and by God's grace repented and obeyed the gospel of Christ. The only difference between us and Judas is that it was not our dirty feet that were washed and cleansed but it was our inner man, dirtied by all of our sins, that was washed; we were washed by His blood not to put back on a pair of sandals but to put on His righteousness.

After Judas "received the piece of bread" from the hand of Jesus it is written in John 13:30 that "he then went out immediately." But it is the four words written after those words, almost like a footnote, which carry so much symbolical meaning. "And it was night." The Holy Spirit didn't have to add these four words from John's quill for us to understand what took place next but He added them for the sake of emphasis. "...it was night." Concurrent with darkness filling Judas' heart, darkness also overshadowed Jerusalem and the whole world that night. What Judas did was the personification of evil. It was John 3:19 - "And this is the condemnation that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." "I am the light of the world," said Jesus in John 8:12. "He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." Judas didn't "walk in the light" that night; he preferred darkness. He never repented. He got his wish. He will spend all eternity in "outer darkness." For Judas it has been "night" ever since the "night" of his betrayal of Christ.

We are at this table because we have chosen to follow "the light of the world" while the world has chosen to "walk in darkness." It is each person's choice to make you know. Judas chose "darkness." How can we but not help feel sorrow for Judas as we do for all who have made the same choice he did? But lest our eyes be distracted, let us not forget that we are told in holy writ to "examine ourselves" at this table.
Have we come to the table after carelessly or even knowingly walking "in darkness" last week? God forbid! Will we commit ourselves to follow "the light" this week? May God help us not to leave "the light" to go out into the darkness of the night. We have been washed in His blood. And because of that we are now ready to receive not only the loaf of His body but also the cup of His blood because, in spite of our sins, He washed us anyway.

**PRAYER**

Our gracious God and Father in heaven it is sobering to be at this sacred Table of our Lord Jesus Christ. Especially after having been reminded of Judas' horrible betrayal of Christ, we tremble at the thought that we could do or have done the same. So we pray that you will deliver us from the evil one and that you will build a hedge of protection around us so that he will never, ever have any access to our minds. Keep us from ever even entertaining the thought of betraying our Lord. Father, this Table reminds us how much it cost Him for our salvation. We desire to honor Him now by remembering His sacrificing Himself for us. As He did on the night that He was betrayed, we ask that you bless this loaf which is His body and receive our thanks for this cup which is His blood. We are forever in Your debt and praise You for Your grace shown to us in the cross of Calvary. It is in His name that we pray to You. Amen.