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Lent Day 37: The Plot

4-5 minutes

Matthew 26:1-5, 14-25 (ESV)

When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, “You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.”

Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. But they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.”

Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, “What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?” And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him.

Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Where will you have us prepare for you to eat the Passover?” He said, “Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.’” And the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover.

When it was evening, he reclined at table with the twelve. And as

they were eating, he said, "Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another, "Is it I, Lord?" He answered, "He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born." Judas, who would betray him, answered, "Is it I, Rabbi?" He said to him, "You have said so."

Even when Jesus' life was slipping away from him, he remained remarkably in control. He predicted his arrest and crucifixion before the religious leaders met to conspire against him. He knew that Judas, one of his trusted apostles, would betray him. How disturbing that must have been to Judas to know that Jesus could see right through his charade. Though humans have their plots and schemes, it is God's plan that always prevails. Nothing can interfere with what he has purposed to do. And nothing is more central to God's eternal plan than that Jesus, the Son of Man, would be delivered up to be crucified. His final meal, the Passover, carried symbolic import and pointed to the purpose for Jesus' death. The Passover was an annual celebration of Israel's exodus from slavery in Egypt. Jesus' death would be the new Passover. Those who trust in him experience the ultimate Exodus — deliverance from the slavery of sin. As a result, they enjoy the privilege of living in the freedom of his love forevermore.

When life seems chaotic, when things seem not to cohere, great comfort may be found in remembering Jesus' own experience at the end of his life. Though humans plotted against him and succeeded in executing their plan, nevertheless they could not thwart the plan of God. What comfort there is in knowing that

nothing can interfere with the plan of him who is in control! He is at work in all the particulars for his good purposes. By looking to Jesus, particularly his death for us, we discover what is central to God's plan for us: through Jesus' death we find life, through his blood shed for us, we experience the exodus from enslaving sin and the freedom of living in his love.

Prayer

Gracious Father, thank you for being in control of our lives, especially when we feel desperately out of control. Center us in the one who is central to your plan for the ages. Enable us, Holy Spirit, to trust in Christ that we might experience the true Exodus. And having experienced the forgiveness of sin, may we live daily in the freedom of your love, wholeheartedly devoted to you. In Christ's Name, Amen.

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