

# Luke 22:1-6, 13-22

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 13 July 2014

Preacher: Paul Levy

[ 0 : 00 ] So Luke 22 is the longest chapter in what are very long chapters in Luke's Gospel. I don't know whether you've noticed that as you read the Bible in a year. You get to Luke and you think great and you've got these long chapters haven't you? But it's a chapter which at every point, from whatever angle you take, takes you to the crucifixion.

It's a chapter that comes to the end of the journey really, the long journey. You remember chapter 9 and verse 51. That verse where it spoke about Jesus set his face towards Jerusalem and it's been a slow and a long journey.

But now the temperature goes up. The exchanges become heated. There is a sense in one way where there's a sense of panic in this chapter. Almost breathing from the verses here.

And suddenly it would seem from one angle that everything in Jesus' life is out of control and that is why chapter 9 and verse 51 and what we'll see later on in tonight from later on in the chapter is so important.

Luke tells us that Jesus taught his disciples about the suffering he would experience at his death in Jerusalem and we're told that Jesus steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.

[ 1 : 20 ] He understood that the days for his being taken up were drawing near. And those verses in the past function as a control. They function to alert us to the fact that nothing is out of control.

That nothing is out of control of our heavenly father in Jesus' life. He knows that the time for him not to be taken down but the time for him to be taken up is on the horizon.

And he does not die accidentally if you know the gospels at all. The Lord Jesus sets his face to go to Jerusalem. And so he is conscious, on the one hand of his own profound commitment to die for our sins and to rise for our salvation.

The Lord Jesus is conscious that he has said he will die for his people's sins. But he's also conscious that his sovereign father's hand is superintending everything that will now take place. And it was well that it should be so. Because from the human point of view, it simply looks as if things are spiralling out of control. That things are being taken out of the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 2 : 36 ] And it seems, doesn't it, at the start of Luke chapter 22 that he is being put into the hands of his enemies. And many cruel hands come in at the start of Luke 22, literally to take hold of Jesus.

And what I want to do this morning is very simply to just look at three of those hands that are specifically mentioned. The first, Jesus is put into the hands of the religious leaders.

And then he's put into the hands of one of his apostles. And then thirdly, we see the hands of Satan. Three hands joining in the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We're told here, aren't we? We're looking for his tomb. But the chief priests and the scribes, who had long been looking for an opportunity to put Jesus to death.

They were plotters and schemers. They were shrewd politicians. And probably cowards to boot. And they were afraid of the crowd. Such was the level of Jesus' popularity.

[ 3 : 38 ] They feared the people. And you notice at the end of the passage, Judas sought an opportunity to betray him to them. In the absence of the crowd.

The high priest, the chief priest, there was one family that dominated the high priesthood of Jerusalem at the time. One of them was Annas. He'd been high priest for about 20 years until he'd been removed by the Roman government.

And while he'd been removed from office, he still wielded so much power that five of his sons became high priests. And the present high priest was his son-in-law, Caiaphas.

And they were the Sadducees. They were liberals, theologically. We know from the Gospel, they denied a supernatural religion. They were opposed to the message of the resurrection.

They were opposed to the message that Jesus had preached. And interestingly, here we are told that the leading priests and the scribes, who were both Pharisees and Sadducees, are now plotting together.

[ 4 : 41 ] They are now plotting together the destruction of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's an interesting phenomenon, isn't it? Later on in Luke's Gospel, we're told Herod and Pontius Pilate, sworn enemies, became friends that day.

And you actually see that in ordinary life. And you see it in religious life. When those who are opposed to one another link arms and make a common enemy out of someone.

And in this instance, they want to get rid of a common enemy, the Lord Jesus Christ. Those different religious groups, they join hands to do away with the Lord Jesus.

It's one thing for Pontius Pilate and Herod to become friends. But here is a very, very sinister grouping of religious leaders. And now everything in their religious agenda takes second place to having the Lord Jesus Christ put on the cross.

In order that they might get rid of him. And I say it's sinister because this isn't the first time that this happens. You remember right at the start of when we started preaching on Luke's Gospel.

[ 5 : 54 ] Jesus after his first sermon. That because Jesus says, I actually am the focus of the Old Testament Scriptures. They hate it. And they want to destroy him. And these religious leaders, they have waited.

And they have waited. And they have waited patiently for three years. They have waited for their opportunity to arrive. And I want to say this to you this morning. Religious leaders who do not love the Lord Jesus Christ often have amazing patience.

Amazing patience. Because they know that their opportunity will come and they will get rid of the Lord Jesus. And we should take note of that.

In the Christian church, the thing that distinguishes these religious leaders from the Lord Jesus is not the Bible. They both have the Bible.

The same Bible. They both read the same Bible but they saw very, very different things in it. These leaders, by and large, they saw their Bible full of laws which they would lead the people to understand.

[ 7 : 05 ] But the Lord Jesus read his Bible, his Old Testament Scriptures. And Jesus saw a mirror of his own life and ministry and destiny.

They were marvelously reflected to him. And there was a huge difference between the way that the leaders used the Bible and the way that the Lord Jesus used the Bible.

The leaders used the Bible for all practical purposes to maintain their leadership. Their ministry was being the leaders of Israel. Jesus' ministry was saving sinners.

And it is perennially true. It has always been true. And in the history of the professing Christian church, down through the ages, all over the world, that when men and women are in a position of religious leadership, without a passion and a compassion for the salvation of sinners, there will come a point, however subtly they cease, they will speak warm words of the Lord Jesus, they will want to do away with him.

We will see that today in the General Synod. We will see very, very warm words about the Lord Jesus. And yet they will cease to do away with him.

[ 8 : 25 ] And do away with his words. And it happened locally, at the beginning of the Gospels, and now it happens nationally, at the end of our Saviour's ministry. And then something happened.

That must have taken these chief priests and scribes by surprise. It was the opportunity for which they had long been waiting. But out of the very heart of Jesus' disciples, crept Judas Iscariot.

To seal a bargain. To seal a deal to portray Jesus with a handshake. And then later in the garden with a kiss. And if they had been contemporary religious leaders, do you know what they would have said?

Do you know what would have been reported in the religious magazines? It would have been described like this. It would have been described as a remarkable providence of God. It would have been described as God led us in this wonderful way.

Some of you have been in denominations where that is true. Where there is hostility to the clear teaching of the Bible. And people will cover it over by this.

[ 9 : 39 ] They'll say, well, we were led by the Spirit. The Spirit moved. And we were led to make this decision. Oh, the providence of God. God worked in a wonderful way in the meeting. And this is

what we were led to believe.

And we need to follow the guidance of God. But at the heart of the issue is this. They want to do away with Jesus. Are we really committed to the Lord Jesus?

To the salvation of sinners? To their salvation? To their transformation? Or at the end of the day, with these religious leaders, we would rather crucify him than bow to him.

We would rather do him away than trust him and love him. And being a religious leader is no security, is it? And so this is a really sobering reality, isn't it?

That it was the hands of the religious leaders that crucified our Saviour. And the opportunity they were given as the hands of the religious leaders stretched out to shake hands with the hands of an apostle.

[10:51] An apostle. Let me say it again. An apostle. The most, the highest office that there's ever been in the Christian church.

Majestically higher, if it is possible for you and I to believe, than being the minister of IPC even. Or being the moderator of the denomination. The office of an apostle reserved for those who have been eyewitnesses the Lord Jesus Christ.

Judas who betrayed him was an apostle. And you might think, why am I calling him an apostle?

Well, because the New Testament does. He was numbered among the twelve. And not only numbered among the twelve, but it is only in my vaguest, vaguest moments that I think that I would have been able to recognise him as a betrayer.

I think that the other disciples, they didn't like people rising to the top, did they? You get that impression amongst them. They didn't like people rising to the top. And yet they made Judas the treasurer of the apostolic band.

And do you remember in John's Gospel, Jesus dismisses Judas from the room. And John says this, do you know what we were all thinking at that point? We all presumed that Judas had gone out to do some kind of work of charity.

[12:16] Around Passover time. That he was going to give our money away to save the poor. The truth of the matter was, Judas was an apostle. But his heart was false to the Lord Jesus Christ. What happened to the man who Jesus called?

Jesus knew all along he would betray him. Incidentally, we're told that in the Gospels, nothing takes Jesus by surprise. What happened to him? Try and think about what happened to him.

Try and get into the mindset. And I think we have to use the phrase that Paul uses in 2

Thessalonians 2, verse 7. That what you have in Judas is really the mystery of sin.

It's the mystery of rebellion against God. It's the rebellion of iniquity. The mystery of lawlessness.

And it is a sort of mystery here.

Iniquity. Sin is at work. Small iniquity. To start off with. Small sin. The kind of sin that you and I might say just doesn't really matter.

[13:25] So he was the treasure of the 12, wasn't he? And he put his mucky little fingers into the bag. It wasn't a great sin, was it? To borrow a little from the bag.

One day I'll pay it back. And yet the thing was this. That it was sin. And yet apparently he was never prepared to confess it.

To the Lord Jesus. Jesus is the only one who could have forgiven him. And spoken a word that would quieten his conscience. And bring back to him the joy that he once would have known.

And in being a disciple of the Lord Jesus. Instead of Judas. Opening his heart to the Lord Jesus.

And confessing his little sin.

What Judas did is he closed his heart against Jesus. And so inevitably that little sin. Grew bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger.

[14:29] To the point. That Judas then had a fundamental life choice. Didn't he? To make not just actually a life choice.

But an eternity choice. Either I will confess my sin to the Lord Jesus. Or I will end up betraying him. And do you know what?

Judas' first sin was no bigger. Than your first sin or my first sin. And Judas' first sin of taking money from the bag. Did not have cosmic significance in itself.

Than any sin I have done. Than any sin I have done. But if in my heart I refuse to confess to the Lord Jesus.

And I refuse to ask him for his pardon and deliverance from that sin. And for his power to change. That he is able to give to his people new life altogether.

[15:29] And the great tragedy of Judas. Surely is. Was that he refused to seek saving grace. He refused God's mercy.

In his life. And I don't think. I don't think I would have been able to recognise it. And I doubt very much whether you. Would have been able to either.

And that is why it's so important for you and I this morning. To recognise ourselves. Something. Some unconfessed sin. In your life.

Maybe you're a small. Maybe you're a child. Or you're a teenager. You're an adult. And you know there is some sin. That is unconfessed in your life. And you say it's a small thing.

It's forgivable. But that's not the issue. The issue is. Is it forgiven? And your sin.

[16:26] Is not forgiven. Because it is forgivable. It is forgiven only. Because I have confessed. To the Lord Jesus. And said to the Lord Jesus. I did it.

And I'm sorry. And Lord Jesus. Forgive me and help me. And instead of that. Eventually the hand of the apostles. Shook hands with the hands.

The hands of the religious leaders. And a man who began. By only deceiving himself. If I say it only affects me. Ended up. Deceiving the whole. Disciple band.

And betraying his saviour. And then there is the third hand. Isn't it? It's not sinister of all. You have the hands of the religious leader. You have the hands of Judas.

And then in amazing words. Can you see them in verse 3? You have the hand of the devil. Then Satan entered into Judas Iscariot. Who was of the number of the twelve.

[17:25] Now if you're a person that marks your Bible. If that's the kind of guy you are. Or the kind of person you are. Get your red pen out. And draw a line from Luke 22.

Verse 3. Right to the top of the page. And draw it right the way back to Genesis 3. Verse 15. Because Genesis 3.

15 is God's promise. Isn't it? It is God's promise. How it was all going to end. How it was all going to come to consummation. Genesis chapter 3.

In verse 15. Speaks of this age long conflict. There will be between the seed of the serpent. The evil one. And the seed of the woman. And that will come to grand climax.

When the serpent himself bruises the heel. Of the individual. The seed of the woman. And that individual. Having his heel bruised.

[18:24] He will crush the head of the serpent. And that is what is going on here. Satan is coming very near. And he is actually entering into the life of Judas Iscariot.

As an instrument of destruction. Does that mean. That Judas could have said. The devil made me do it. By the way.

Have you ever heard anyone say that to you? How the devil makes people do things. The devil made me do it. But when your five year old son says that to you.

You don't put up with that. Do you? You don't put up with that. You don't say. Well that's fine. The devil made you do it. He made you do it. You are completely out of control. You are a robot.

No. No. No. You don't say that. You say to them. Don't you. My son or my daughter. The devil is very powerful. But the devil can't make you do things against your will. You did this.

[19:21] You did it. Because at the end of the day. You were willing to do it. Don't let anyone ever say to you. Oh the devil made me do it. You have a responsibility. For complying with that temptation.

He has responsibility for whatever temptation he puts in your way. But you have the responsibility for complying with it. And doing it. And that was the mystery of sin.

The mystery of iniquity. But there was real sin here. There was real iniquity. Real rebellion. It began with something very very small. That he wasn't prepared to confess.

He wasn't prepared to own up to. He kept it quiet. And it ended like this. And actually you know. We need to take notice of that. Because it's so easy for you and I isn't it.

To regard Judas as some kind of extraordinary kind of individual. And we all need to know that. The beginning of backsliding.

[20:24] The beginning of sliding back as a Christian. And the beginning of complete apostasy. Where you turn away from Jesus Christ. The beginning of both things is exactly the same.

And there is no way to tell. When somebody begins to backslide from the Lord Jesus. That they are just backsliding. Because it looks or that just looks like backsliding.

It doesn't. When it began in Judas' life. This is where. This is where his.

Unconfessed sin eventually ended him up. So it is possible to be an apostle. To reject the Lord Jesus Christ. Actually Jesus had forewarned his disciples.

Didn't he? Do you remember that? Chilling end to the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew chapter 7. And it ends. Listen to this. With a picture of the day of judgment. When we will all stand before the Lord Jesus.

[ 21 : 23 ] And there will be church goers. And conference goers. And they will say to the Lord Jesus on the last day. Jesus I have done wonderful things in your name. I have cast out demons in your name.

I have done miracles in your name. I have spoken in the name of the Lord. And Jesus will say to me.

Get away from me. I never knew you. Now notice those words. I never knew you. Was that true of Judas Iscariot?

Think about it for a minute. In a sense it was true. Wasn't it? Of Judas. Why? Because when somebody hides themselves. As they really are from you.

You don't know them. There are people isn't it? There are people. And they keep you at arm's length. And people say. Do you know them? And you say. Well actually no. I don't know them. Because they keep me at arm's length.

[ 22 : 19 ] You never get to know them. Because you only get to know. What they want you to know. About themselves. And that is true here with Judas. He had never said to the Lord Jesus.

Lord Jesus. You know me through and through. And so in the most intimate way. Have all of me. Take every room of my life. Show me even more of my needs.

And my sins. Scratch away the surface Lord. So that I may be forgiven. In the very depths of my being. And I might know the wonders of your grace. And the joy of pardon.

And freedom. But instead. Do you know what he did? He kept Jesus at arm's length. And he defended himself. It reminds me of a really great illustration.

By C.S. Lewis. In Me and Christianity. It's so good. Let me read it to you. He says this. When I was a child. I often had truthache. Truthache. And I knew that if I went to my mother.

[ 23 : 17 ] She would give me something. That would deaden the pain for that night. And let me get to sleep. But I did not go to my mother. At least not until the pain had become very bad.

And the reason I did not go was this. I did not doubt she would give me the aspirin. And I knew she would do something else. I knew she would take me to the dentist next morning.

And I could not get what I wanted out of her. Without getting something more. Which I did not want. I wanted immediate relief from pain. But I couldn't get it without my teeth being permanently set right.

And I knew these dentists. I knew they started fiddling about with all sorts of other teeth. Which had not yet begun to ache. They would not let sleeping dogs lie. If you gave them an L.

Now an L is a measurement we don't use any longer. It's three foot nine inches. That's an L. If you give them an inch. They take three foot nine inches. Because they are determined that you will be well.

[ 24 : 14 ] Now do you see what he's illustrating? My dentist is an Iranian lady. She's kind. She's lovely. She's gracious.

She's sweet. She gives stickers to my children. But if you've got toothache. Or decay. Or gingivitis. She turns into a monster. That you have nightmares about. And even if your father is a dentist. Or your mother is a dentist. You may be very lovely people, isn't it?

But if you've got decay. Or gingivitis. Or toothache. They turn into a monster. And it's like that with us. You know, don't you, with Jesus.

If you confess this. He's going to take all of you. And apparently that is what Judas Iscariot was not prepared to give. There's something wonderful about this section of the gospel.

[ 25 : 17 ] As we see it. Something very moving. That as we go through Luke 22 and 23. I hope you'll be with us. Jesus takes more and more centre stage. And there are all sorts of people who gather round him.

With their plotting and their scheming. But there is a subplot of two disciples. Two of the apostle bands. Who start out as giants in story. In the drama.

And from one point of view. They both sin horrendously. And one betrays Jesus. And the other with words of blasphemy. Denies Jesus. And the one who betrayed Jesus.

When his eyes were opened to it. Instead of coming to Jesus. And saying to Jesus. Oh Jesus, Jesus. Please forgive me. He would rather die.

Than ask for forgiveness. He would rather die. Than ask for forgiveness. And the other man who was named Simon Peter.

[ 26 : 20 ] Went out into the darkness. When his eyes were opened to what he'd done. He went into the darkness of the Jerusalem night. And he cried like a baby. He cried like a baby.

That the Lord Jesus would forgive him. He denied his saviour three times. And you remember at the end of John's gospel. The Lord Jesus comes to him three times. And asks him Simon Peter. Do you love me? Do you love me?

Do you love me? To restore him. And that is the basic issue this morning. Do you really love Jesus? Do you want your sins forgiven? It's a no brainer isn't it? That question. But it's not. It's not if you are a hard hearer.

If you refuse to humble yourself. And actually you would rather die. Than ask for forgiveness.

[ 27 : 22 ] I cannot understand it. I cannot understand it. It is the mystery of sin. That some of you here.

Who maybe know. Something of the beauty and the glory. On the wonder of knowing the Lord Jesus Christ. And you know the glory of heaven. That will go on for eternity. You know that there is new creation.

You know what it is. You know the truth of a clean conscience. And yet you would rather die. Than have forgiveness. Thank God.

That he is the kind of saviour. That he is more full of grace. Than you are of sin. And the marvellous, marvellous thing. And this is beyond my ability.

And your ability. To express kind of adequate eloquence. In the midst of all these dark hands. In order to crush him. He is in the process of crushing the head of a serpent.

[ 28 : 22 ] The devil. In order that all of those who today. Will come to him and say. Lord Jesus I have failed. I have stumbled. I have fallen. I have sinned.

And I need you so badly. Could you please just possibly forgive me. Hear him say. Possibly forgive you. I died to save you from your sin.

I died so that you can be forgiven. And so we come this morning don't we. And we say. Have mercy on me.

Blot out all my sins. Wash away all my iniquity. And restore to me the joy. Of my salvation.

You are doing that I hope aren't you. Please. Please. And if you never have. Begin today. And you will find that he is a great, great Savior.

[ 29 : 30 ] Let's pray. Let's pray.