

Lent Day 35
Monday March 21, 2016

Reading: Mark 14.12-21

Reflection

I have been a Christian for 20 years now and I have been a part of four churches in that time. What I have found is that people in churches hurt each other. Not really surprising when we understand that we are all broken people who have spent most of our lives under the power of sin and pursuing our own personal interests. Odds are in that situation we're going to be hurt. That's why forgiveness is at the centre of our faith.

In this passage the big question staring me in the face is, "Why does Jesus mention that he's going to be betrayed by one of the twelve?" It doesn't help them and it doesn't stop Judas. I think it's here for us. This is *the* meal and Jesus is intentionally eating it with the one who is going to betray him. Judas is not getting a pass, but he is at the table by Jesus' invitation. Judas is enjoying grace.

When Jesus dies on the cross he doesn't just make a way for you and I to be forgiven. He creates a community and this community is to be a living witness of the reconciliation (repair of relationship) between us and God. That is why our community is to love each other in a radical way, which means we have to exercise grace and forgiveness.

It's not easy. Everything we have been taught tells us to do things differently. Punish people with our anger and hate. Hold a grudge. Separate and withhold fellowship. Protect ourselves from being hurt. Let the other person come to me first. All of this is directly opposite to the kind of community we need to be. We need to embrace the hard work of forgiveness. After all Jesus preached "love your enemy and bless those who curse you." Now, he practices what he preached by feeding Judas his body and blood.

Prayer

God of grace and mercy, give us the vision of a kingdom community and the courage to practice forgiveness. Freely you have forgiven us, let us freely forgive each other. Amen.