

Personal reflection for Monday of Holy Week

The Bible passage for Monday of Holy Week, Luke 22:1-23, describes how Judas was moved to betray Jesus and found his opportunity at the Last Supper where, in Leonardo da Vinci's painting of the scene, Judas is seated fifth from the left, clasping a bag of money. You can see it at <https://www.jesusdaily.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/suppernew89-1024x536.png> (It is said that each of da Vinci's apostles was based on a real-life model and for Judas, da Vinci searched the jails of Milan for someone scoundrel-looking.)

We don't know why Judas acted as he did. Matthew suggests he was motivated by greed (26: 14-16) but Bible scholars have offered other reasons: he was possessed by the Devil (Luke 22:3-4); he had to fulfil a prophecy and Judas' betrayal was a necessary part of God's salvation plan: *The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.* (John 13:18 in which Jesus quotes Psalm 41:9); he was politically motivated, angry that Jesus was not a more militant Messiah; he was disillusioned – believing Jesus was not the Son of God; it was revenge: Judas had felt humiliated by Jesus' rebuke at Bethany for suggesting the oil Mary used to wash Jesus' feet could have been sold for the poor (John 12:4-8). Perhaps Judas doubted Jesus' divinity – he called him 'Rabbi' rather than 'Lord' (Matthew 26:25)? Some suggestions have no basis in scripture: Judas did not intend to betray Jesus but merely to bring him and the religious authorities together; and the so-called 'Gospel of Judas', written in the 2nd century portrays Judas sympathetically as an important component of God's plan. (I've drawn on an interesting BBC article at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/thepassion/articles/judas.shtml>)

In our passage today Jesus' view of Judas is uncompromising: *but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed* (v22). But does God love Judas? Does He regret Judas' abrupt death (Matthew 27:3-8 and Acts 1:18-19 – the accounts vary)? Is Judas beyond redemption? God's love for everyone does not mean that everyone will be saved: *[unbelievers] will go away into eternal punishment but the righteous into eternal life* (Matthew 25:46). After his resurrection Jesus forgave Peter's denial of his master (John 21:15-17); did Judas, by his death, show remorse? In thinking about these questions, we might consider how we respond to people who have betrayed us or what our feelings were after we have let somebody down.

A prayer by Graham Jeffery:

Each life has its own meaning, Lord,
Though often we do not see it at the time.
Only at the end, journey completed,
Will I look back on my false steps,
Twisting footprints and see,
Even in the darkest times,
How you were leading me,
Carrying me, walking beside me.
Amen.

You can find a musical version of Psalm 41 at

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Psalm+41+sung+in+English&docid=608004602340705215&mid=32E0475D7E83070F037A32E0475D7E83070F037A&view=detail&FORM=VIRE>

(Wait a second - a bespectacled guitarist will appear and start singing.)