

“He Was Numbered Among the Transgressors” – Pr Jim Sprengle
Lenten Midweek 1 – February 21, 2024

- I. **Luke 22:14; 24-38** – Previously read
- II. **Sometimes we do things even though we know better.**
 - a. We’ve been talking about wisdom lately, and the older we get the more wisdom we gain from experience.
 - i. Unfortunately, experience doesn’t always make the right choices.
 - b. For example, think about these words and what they could mean: “I didn’t mean to do that!”
 - i. Now, if you say it like this, “I didn’t mean to do THAT,” you are saying that you were definitely trying to do something... but it didn’t come out right.
 - ii. On the other hand, if you say, “I didn’t MEAN to do that” – it’s not quite as clear... perhaps you realize that you could have stopped it from happening... or maybe even you should have known better.
 - iii. I didn’t mean to do that...
 - c. I was reading about a guy who saw a car crash happen right in front of him.
 - i. Sometimes accidents happen without any warning at all – like a flash of lightning coming out of nowhere.
 - ii. Other accidents are the kind where the driver didn’t *mean* to do that, but he really should have known better.
 - iii. The guy observing this accident explained that there were several clues that seemed pretty easy to see from his vantage point.
 1. The first clue, a red light... cars were stopped and brake lights were on.
 2. The second clue was the speed limit... which wasn’t being obeyed.
 3. As the driver kept speeding toward the stopped vehicles, it became obvious that a huge accident was going to happen... and sure enough the driver slammed on his brakes, fishtailed, and smashed into the back of a car.
 4. Fortunately, no one was hurt, but the guy who observed the whole thing said, “I could see it coming, but the driver just wasn’t paying attention... he should have known better.”
 5. However, what do you think the driver who got in the wreck said to the police and his insurance agent? “I didn’t *mean* to do that!”
 - d. Our reading in Luke for today kind of reminds me of watching a wreck that’s about to happen.
 - i. Jesus has gathered His apostles – the individuals that He picked by hand to be His closest followers – and they are in the upper room.
 - ii. Jesus and His disciples are having a discussion, but it’s scary to think that the evil Jesus is facing is coming from them too.

- iii. Even after all the lessons they've learned, they are still being foolish and arrogant... and they should have known better.
- iv. The car wreck that's about to happen is more like spiritual wreck, and it begins as we read the first few verses.

III. **The disciples are arguing... again.**

- a. It seems so silly – or even stupid – that these guys have just experienced the institution of the Lord's Supper and Jesus predicting His betrayal... and they are arguing about who's the greatest.
 - i. Maybe a better word than stupid is evil... what they were doing was evil, pure and simple.
 - ii. But did they mean to do that? Did they mean it for evil?
 - 1. Probably not, but should they have known better? Absolutely.
- b. Jesus has already taught them that true greatness is not like the world and the people it raises up... the people we think are important get flipped around completely by the kingdom of God.
 - i. In fact, Jesus says that He will become a servant to them all – in spite of the fact that they are acting like arrogant jerks.
 - ii. Think about it, He is going to humbly die for them in a few hours' time, and they are jawing about who's best among them.
 - iii. It's evil... and sure, they probably didn't mean it for evil, but they definitely should have known better.
- c. The wreck keeps unfolding before our eyes as we look at verses 28 to 38.
 - i. First, Jesus comforts them – even though it seems like He would chastise them – but He tells them they will share in His kingdom!
 - 1. They will sit on thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel.
 - 2. If you read Revelation 21, it says that the apostles' names will be written on the foundation stones in heaven.
 - 3. They were focused on earthly things, and Jesus brings it back to Him and the bigger picture.
 - a. It seems that Jesus is trying to encourage them with the greater blessing of their eternal glory because they will be facing so much trouble and tribulation.
 - ii. Then Jesus tells Peter that satan is present and active – but an interesting point is that when Jesus tells Peter, “Simon, Simon, satan has desired to sift you, to sift you like wheat.” (it's plural, “all of you”)
 - 1. Satan wants to give all them trouble, and it will be the hardest thing they've ever known.
 - 2. Then Jesus speaks directly to Peter and says he will have trouble, but when he returns to Jesus in faith, it will encourage the others.
 - a. What does Peter say? I'm fine! I will never fail You Lord!
 - b. But where does Peter's arrogance go when the rooster crows and he's denied Jesus three times later that night?

- d. The foolishness and pride don't stop there, either.
 - i. Jesus reminds them about going out with no money or extra things – and God took care of all their needs... but now it will be different.
 - 1. Evil is coming... Evil is present... and the one perfect person ever... the only truly innocent man will be counted among the transgressors.
 - 2. Be ready... prepare yourselves, because you will need a sword.
 - ii. Now, they don't realize Jesus is trying to prepare them for the trial they will face, so they think Jesus literally means to take up arms.
 - 1. They are not listening, so how does Jesus reply when they have two swords ready?
 - 2. Enough with the boasting, the arrogance, and ignorance... "It's enough."
- e. In the middle of all the evil and "should have known betters," God is still at work and means it for good.

IV. **All the trouble and evil around Jesus will soon strike Him down.**

- a. Again, Isaiah says that He was numbered with the transgressors – as two criminals were crucified with Him... one on each side.
- b. The religious leaders, the soldiers, and others were mocking Him and telling Him if He really is the greatest, then save Yourself!
- c. It's hard to imagine that the greatness of God could come out in such a defeat – as He was arrested, tried, tortured, and crucified.
- d. It's also hard to imagine that the transgressors were not just the two men on the crosses beside Him... but also the closest friends He had.
 - i. The disciples in that upper room were also the transgressors... and as we look around this sanctuary today... we are also the transgressors...
 - ii. Thank God that Jesus overcomes the evil in our lives by coming right into the middle of it and dying.
 - 1. Not only that, but He defeats the evil by rising from the dead... which means that HE has the power and the authority – He is the greatest... and has all the power to forgive our sins.

V. **Sometimes it's hard to see a wreck that's coming.**

- a. Yet, God is trying to help us see the wrecks that are forming in our lives.
- b. When we are prideful and foolish, it's that much harder to see the wrecks coming up.
 - i. And so, I invite you to ask God for that kind of honesty and humility... to ask God for help in turning away from pride.
- c. We don't always stay away from the evil though... and we might even say, "I didn't mean to do that. But I did it anyway."
 - i. When that happens, remember: "You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good."
 - ii. In Jesus, God meant it all for good. Amen.

Sermon based on: "You Meant It for Evil, but God Meant It for Good: An Ash Wednesday through Easter Sunday Sermon Series Based on the Gospel of Luke", Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Gibbs, Concordia Seminary Publishing, St. Louis, 2022