

Christ Knew The Cost | *Luke 22:1-23 ESV*

Outreach Pastor Sam Creagar

4.10.22 | Faith Evangelical Free Church

Over the last two years, ever since becoming a dad, I have read a bunch of parenting books. And I've learned a whole lot from them – development milestones, behavioral expectations, and right now I am working on assuring myself through intense study that I really can survive potty training in the not too distant future (prayers for my wife and I will be appreciated).

But one thing that all the books I've read did not prepare me for was the increase in personal injury that comes with being a parent or caretaker, especially of an almost-2-year-old.

In just two years I have been (usually accidentally or incidentally) hit, kicked, scratched, and one time even got a bloody nose by an adorable little blond headbutt. I've burned my hand grabbing hot cups so that my daughter would not, and I have burned my mouth testing hot food so she'd be safe. I've had books dropped on my face, toys I swear I put away 5 minutes ago painfully crushed beneath my feet, and boney elbows and knees driven into all my vital organs.

When my daughter became a toddler I discovered she was the perfect height to run her forehead directly into every corner of every table in our house, so much so that I developed a habit of simply placing my hand over the corners any time she walked by. For months I have had a tiny little bruise in the palms of my hands because as Abigail goes teetering and toddling through the house, she bounces her head off my hand instead of the dining room table. She gets to go unscathed on her merry way and I follow behind, shaking off the pain just in time to sacrifice my hand again as she approaches the next pointy danger.

Through all of this I have learned that, at times, the cost of keeping her safe will be a sacrifice of my own comfort or even my own safety. But I love her, so I have no problem paying that price. I know the cost, and the cost will never stop me.

In our passage this morning we see that Jesus has a similar feeling and commitment towards us, but magnified to an infinitely greater extent. Jesus did far, far more than place his hand over the sharp corners of this life that we too often run recklessly toward. He stepped directly in front of the sin of humanity, the power of evil, and the justified wrath of God. And unlike me...he was not surprised or unprepared for this sacrifice. Jesus did it all, ***knowing the cost would be his own life*** – His body, broken for us and his blood shed for the forgiveness of our sins.

Jesus knew the cost of our salvation, and yet that cost – high as it was – did not stop him from moving forward with the plan that would secure our salvation.

Jesus knew the cost, but because he loves us he still prepared himself to endure the cross.

Last week, Pastor Steve taught us about Jesus' humble yet unstoppable kingly entrance into the city of Jerusalem. Word of his arrival spread like wildfire as he rode a donkey through the streets of Israel's ancient capital city. As cloaks were laid down to cover the road and praises of "*Blessed is the King who comes in the Name of the Lord!*" were shouted by more and more people, the leaders of the Jewish people became more and more unsettled.

That feeling would only grow in the days to come, as Jesus began to do things and say things no one had ever dared do before. He drove the money changers and merchants from the temple grounds, restoring it to its true purpose of being a place of prayer to God. He taught in the temple daily, astounding people not just with his interpretations of Scripture, but with the authority behind his every word. He questioned the theology of religious leaders, and made it clear to all who would listen that something was soon going to happen that would change the world. (*You can read about all this in Luke 19-21*)

So it should not surprise us that in Luke 22:2, we read that the "chief priests and scribes" – some of the leaders most often called out by Jesus for their lack of faith and understanding – were "*seeking a way to put [Jesus] to death.*". They saw Jesus as a danger to not only their positions of power, but to the safety and stability of the Jewish people as well. Ever since Jesus had arrived in Jerusalem they'd been trying to find a way to end his life.

In 22:1-6, two important things happen that push their schemes into reality:

First, Luke tells us that The Feast of Unleavened Bread and the meal of Passover were quickly approaching. This is an important detail because it means the population of Jerusalem was about to explode. Hundreds of thousands of Jewish pilgrims would travel to Jerusalem every year for this week-long celebration of God's saving the Israelite people from their slavery and bondage in Egypt long ago.

So imagine, for a moment, that you are a chief priest or a scribe. You just witnessed the dramatic entry of Jesus into the city, with people swarming the streets in order to see Jesus and call him "king". And now, this extremely popular and shockingly powerful itinerant preacher would have not only the usual citizens of Jerusalem ready to join his cause...but several hundred thousands more might be caught up in his teachings.

If you believed Jesus needed to be dealt with before, now you'd be desperate to find a way to end his life as soon as possible.

These Jewish leaders finally got the opportunity they'd been waiting for when one of Jesus' own followers unexpectedly broke ranks and showed up to strike a deal:

3 Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve. 4 He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them. 5 And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. 6 So he consented and sought an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of a crowd.

Luke 22

Judas – one of the 12 disciples who were closest to and most befriended by Jesus – shockingly makes the decision to betray Jesus. We never get much more than hints and suggestions as to what motivated Judas to exchange Jesus' life for a bag of coins, but we safely say two things were at play:

- Judas made this decision himself. Something inside of him was broken and insidious, and it opened the door to dark and terrible things.
- Satan, the supernatural and demonic enemy of God, influenced *the already sinful heart* of Judas to betray Jesus.

I, personally, do not believe Satan “possessed” Judas in such a way as to drive or control him beyond his own will. I do believe demonic possession can happen, but it is also important to recognize when Satan is working not against our desires, but in cooperation with our own, sinful decisions and actions. I think that is what is being described here.

So, let's take a step back and look at the scene Luke is setting:

- The Jewish nation is arriving in Jerusalem, preparing for the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Passover.
- The Jewish leaders are making plans to put Jesus to death, desperately hoping to find their opportunity to strike soon.
- Judas, one of Jesus' own disciples, is preparing to betray his teacher and friend for a little bit of silver.
- Satan is preparing to pull all his strings and watch the Son of God suffer like no one on earth ever has or ever will again.

The stage is set for things to go very, very badly for Jesus very, very soon. His life is now in grave danger in a way it has never been before. The world is preparing to turn against the Son of God.

And what does he do in response? Jesus prepares...to have one last meal with the people he loves before everything falls apart...*exactly as he knows it is supposed to.*

7 Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. 8 So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it.” 9 They said to him, “Where will you have us prepare it?” 10 He said to them, “Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters 11 and tell the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ 12 And he will show you a large upper room furnished; prepare it there.” 13 And they went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.

Luke 22

For those of you who were with us last week and heard Pastor Steve preach on Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, you may notice some parallels between 22:7-13 and Luke 19:28-34. In both passages Jesus sends a few disciples ahead of him to prepare things for his arrival, and in both passages Jesus accurately describes all they should expect to find, and it all turns out exactly as Jesus said it would. In both passages, ***Jesus clearly has a plan and is clearly in control.***

There are, however, two important differences between these two scenes of Jesus entering Jerusalem.

First, on this trip into the city Jesus does not make his presence obviously known. Before he had a kingly, grand entrance. Now he has his disciples quietly prepare a Passover meal, and no details are given in regards to how or when Jesus came into the city that day.

Second, we are told that Jesus is there to eat Passover with his disciples. This is significant because the Passover meal begins at 6pm and goes late into the night. Which means for the first time since Jesus arrived in Jerusalem...**he is within the city limits at night**. It was his custom to teach in the temple during the day, but camp outside the city limits at night (see Luke 21:37-38). And on this night, all the crowds that had served as his protection will be busy with their own Passover meals in their own homes.

And with Jesus is Judas, who knows all of Jesus' plans for the evening and now has close, quick, easy access to the Jewish leaders he needs to inform about the whereabouts of Jesus.

Jesus' decision to come into the city and celebrate Passover with his disciples is a fatal one. He is walking straight into what looks an awful lot like a trap. What is the Son of God up to? How much does he know and understand about what is going on?

14 And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. 15 And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. 16 For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

Luke 22

At Passover food and drink would be set out on tables, and cushions arranged to allow for a long, relaxing meal. There was (and is) a specific and ceremonial order the way this meal was enjoyed. Jesus likely took the position of master of meal and ceremony, usually reserved for the father of the family. He speaks of his deep longing and desire to share this meal with them...*and the reality that he knows this is in fact his last meal on earth before he suffers*. He tells his disciples that one day, when all God's plans are complete and fulfilled, he will once again sit at a table and enjoy fellowship with those who love and follow him. But this meal, this Passover, for now, will be his last.

Because Jesus knew. He knew that the Passover was a precursor to the events that were about to unfold. He knew the Jewish leaders were making plans and taking action to end his life. He knew Judas was about to betray him. He knew Satan was on the move. He knew that on this day – *"when the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed"* – that the time had come for his life to be sacrificed, too. He knew suffering was just around the corner.

He knew the world was preparing to destroy him...but Jesus was preparing, too. He was preparing for something so much greater than anyone other than God the Father, Son, and Spirit could have ever dreamed of or anticipated. Jesus was preparing to create through his flesh and blood and death a brand new promise with power to save all those who would follow Him.

17 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. 18 For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." 19 And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 20 And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. 21 But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. 22 For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is

betrayed!" 23 And they began to question one another, which of them it could be who was going to do this.

Luke 22

As I mentioned before, Passover is a very sacred and intentional meal. It is a holy act of remembrance and thanksgiving for God's past, present, and future faithfulness to His people.

However, during this Passover, Jesus radically redefines the what – or rather, who – the food and drink are pointing to. He also reveals that he knows exactly what is going on, exactly what is about to happen, that he is prepared and ready to fully embrace it.

Of the bread, Jesus says: *"This is my body, which is given for you."* His body given up, and over, to death – sacrificed for our sake. *"Remember that this is what I choose to do"*, Jesus tells us. Remember that the one you follow is the ***one willing to sacrifice himself for the sake of others.***

Of the cup, Jesus says: *"This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."* Throughout the Old Testament, the shedding of an animal's blood is the one and only sacrifice capable of atoning for sin. And here, at his last meal on earth, Jesus tells us that he is preparing to shed his own blood so that a ***new covenant***, a new promise, can be offered to you and to me so that we might be freed from sin and offered eternal salvation.

There is obviously so, so much we could dive into and unpack from this passage. But I want to take a moment to just sit with the incredible fact that Jesus was completely aware of what was going on. Nothing about his impending arrest, abandonment, or abuse was going to surprise him. He made it clear that he understood he was going to suffer and die.

Jesus knew the cost. His courage and commitment to his obedience to God was one of perfect understanding. Christ knew the cost, knew the pain to come, knew the horror of what was about to happen...

And still, ***even knowing the cost, Christ still prepared himself to endure the cross.***

I don't know about you, but I don't know anyone or any story quite like this. I know that people sacrifice for those they love. I know there is bravery and courage and selflessness to be found in the hearts of many who walk this earth.

But not like this. As Jesus sat at that table and enjoyed his last peaceful moments before the terrors to come...in his mind and in his heart, he knew. That his friends would abandon and betray him. That the world would curse him and mock him and crucify him as he spent himself saving them. He knew the dark moment of his forsakenness, even before God the Father, was at hand. He knew that his mother, Mary, would have to witness him dying, unjustly nailed to a cross.

Jesus knew he would die. And that knowledge did not stop him. That is a love like nothing else I have ever heard of or known. It's *almost* unbelievable. But thanks be to God...I stand before you this morning to declare to you, it is true and it is EVERYTHING.

I think there are two important things we must consider in light of Jesus' astounding willingness to suffer and die for our sake.

First...I would encourage you to reflect on and sit with what it truly means that Jesus was completely aware of what our salvation would cost him. His arrest, torture, and crucifixion were not the result of his other plans failing or being unable to find another way. This was the only way...and Jesus believed it to be worth it.

This is the sort of realization that led to the authors of our Scriptures filling their pages with awe and praise. This is the sort of truth that has radically transformed lives for centuries. Everything Jesus did he did in willing obedience with the plan of God and in order to save...you.

If you are already a believer and follower of Jesus, this week I want you to try to describe not what you think about this...*but how this makes you feel*. What happens in your heart and in your soul when you realize that Christ knew the cost of your forgiveness and your salvation, and did not hesitate to pay it in full? I'd encourage you to pray about this, and then share it with someone – certainly with God, but also with a friend, or a member of your life group, a mentor, or perhaps you could share it with someone who doesn't yet believe in Jesus. Your testimony could be the spark the Holy Spirit uses to light the fire of faith in their own life.

And if you're joining us this morning and you are not yet a follower of Jesus...I have a challenge for you, too. All I ask is for you to consider is this: if you could be sure that what I said this morning was true, and Jesus really did put himself into danger and death because he loves you...if you knew this to be true, what would that mean to you? What in your life might change? And as you consider those changes...how do they make you feel? I'd love for you to reach out to someone who does consider themselves a Christian and have a conversation about how the possibility of the Gospel story being true makes you feel.

The second thing I think we must consider in light of this passage is Jesus' call for us to remember – remember that in order for us to be saved from sin and death, his body had to be given up and his blood had to be shed.

To help us remember, this last meal that Jesus shared with his disciples has been practiced by Christians for more than 2000 years in what we call The Lord's Supper, or Communion. At Faith we normally celebrate this remembrance on the first Sunday of each month (as we did last week). But this morning we are going to do so again, remembering what we have read and seeking Jesus together, as a community.

Just like the disciples, we too will take up the bread and the cup. Just like the disciples, we will remember Christ's body broken and given up to die on our behalf. We will remember that his blood was shed for the forgiveness of our sins.

As we enter this time of Communion, I invite you to reflect and pay attention to what is going on in your heart and your soul.

As you remember Jesus' love for you (or perhaps as you think about it for the very first time), what do you feel? What does Jesus' sacrifice of his life mean to you?

Personally...I feel humbled. In awe of a God who would do this. I feel...unworthy, and yet so profoundly grateful that it is not my worthiness that matters. I don't have to put my own hand over the sharp corners of life to try and save myself. (Which is great, because I'd fail, and I'd die) Christ did it for me...and that means I am saved to be with God, forever.

Communion

At our church anyone who has confessed Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior is welcome to join in the celebration of communion.

In just a moment we will all, together, take our bread and after some words from Scripture, eat together. We'll then take our cup and, again after a reading from Scripture, drink together.

If you've joined us in-person today you've been provided with individual communion servings. The top simply tears away twice, once for the bread and again for the juice. If you're watching at home, please feel the freedom to use any food and drink you have on hand.

If there is anyone joining us today that does not believe in the Gospel or has not confessed Jesus as their Savior, we want you to know that we are so glad that you are here today and honored that you would allow us to be part of your journey in seeking truth and learning more about Christianity.

During this time, we'd simply ask you to reflect on what you've heard, and maybe even use the time to share a simple prayer with God. You could also, right now, at this moment, believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that his life, death, and resurrection blessed you with all you need to be forgiven and free. If you feel led to do that...please, please do so and join us for this remembrance of your Savior, too.

And if you have any questions about the service, about communion, or about Christianity in general I'd love the chance to chat with you or even meet with you in the coming week.

I invite you all to consider these words from the Apostle Paul, from the letter of Romans, as we prepare ourselves for the remembrance of Jesus's sacrifice for us:

6 When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. 7 Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. 8 But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. 9 And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. 10 For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. 11 So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.

Romans 5 (NLT)

So, friends of God, let's join together in remembering Jesus our Savior.

"The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'this is my body which is [broken] for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'"

"In the same way after supper he took a cup and said, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."