

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church-
Sermon by Pastor A. Schultz
Lenten Vesper #2.
February 20, 2013
John 18: 3 to 12



³ So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons. ⁴ Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?" ⁵ "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) ⁶ When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground. ⁷ Again he asked them, "Who is it you want?" "Jesus of Nazareth," they said. ⁸ Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these men go." ⁹ This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: "I have not lost one of those you gave me." ¹⁰ Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) ¹¹ Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?" ¹² Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

Benedict Arnold! The name is synonymous with traitor! Do you know how Benedict Arnold tried to betray our country? It doesn't matter. I don't need to. All I know is – he's a traitor. That's all I need to know! The fact is Major General Benedict Arnold made a pretty good start – joining the Continental Army outside of Boston. He distinguished himself through acts of intelligence and bravery. He helped capture Fort Mifflin and using clever defensive and delaying tactics fought well even in battles that he ultimately lost. He was a good soldier until something went terribly

wrong. Ultimately frustrated and bitter – Major General Benedict Arnold offered to surrender West Point to the enemy! His plot was discovered and thwarted! In the end Benedict Arnold suffered from Gout and from dropsy. Finally after 4 days of delirium he died at the age of 60. He was buried at St. Mary’s Church in London. Then because of a clerical mistake – his remains were removed to an unmarked mass grave. What a sad and terrible end to a man whose name will in this world remain a name of shame and betrayal. And still – compared to Judas Iscariot – people will forever say – Judas was worse! Today – Lenten Vesper II – we will consider:

Name of Wondrous Iscariot – Immanuel (God with us!)
See Jesus’ power

2. Marvel at Jesus’ gospel promise
As we catch up in spirit with the Lord Jesus he has been praying – praying with such earnestness – his face is streaked with the dark and bloody sweat of his passion to save us! Jesus prayed. He woke his disciples and warned and encouraged them. He prayed some more – found them still sleeping – prayed still more – then woke them. God’s Word says, **3 So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.** People who do what is gross and wicked and evil – do what they do under the cover of darkness – in the dark – in the night! The betrayal that Judas had promised for 30 silver coins – the price of a slave – the price Isaiah had foretold some 650/700 years earlier – by inspiration of the Holy Spirit--was about to take place. Judas came with soldiers – with swords or clubs or spears and shields – corrupt officials from the Church – concerned about their position of earthly power and authority among the people. They came carrying torches and lanterns to find their way. They came with weapons as if Jesus were some physical threat who needed to be captured.

Jesus was and always is in control of *everything!* **4 Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, “Who is it you want?”** **5 “Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “I am he,” Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.)** **6 When Jesus said, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground.** The force of Jesus’ will – his power and authority as the eternal Son of God – was far more than enough to forever vaporize them. Powerful enough to send them crashing and splashing into the burning lake of sulfur in Hell. But Jesus didn’t! It was enough that he sent them reeling – falling backward to the

ground. **Again he asked them, "Who is it you want?" "Jesus of Nazareth," they said.** (I'm guessing it wasn't quite as loud or forcefully when they said Jesus of Nazareth this second time!) Jesus is always in authority – always in control. **⁸ Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these men go."** If they wanted Jesus – then they should let his students, followers, imitators go free! Jesus was never ever selfish! Jesus never put himself first. Jesus washed his disciples' feet. Jesus gives us the most powerful example possible to show everyone we meet – that we are Jesus' disciples – by the way we love one another!

⁹ This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: "I have not lost one of those you gave me." **¹⁰ Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) ¹¹ Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away!"** Jesus takes care of his people. The Good Shepherd watches out for His lambs and His sheep! Jesus did not need Simon Peter – the fisherman – to be his body-guard – to keep him safe from arrest. To lash out in hurtful physical violence was completely wrong. Jesus always has the power to help – and in this case worked a powerful miracle of healing! If you have been to the Emergency Room – unless you are in imminent danger – you need to stop by the little desk labeled Triage! That's a fancy word for figuring how critical is your need? Unless you are literally crying out in pain – they will ask you for your Insurance Card. Before they do anything – they want to know who is going to pay for this? Please – have a seat. What is your name? Where does it hurt? It was quite obvious where Malchus hurt. Jesus who designed and engineered and built and maintained Malchus' ear knew exactly how to repair it. Jesus did not need to clean the wound nor sew any stitches. He simply touched the ear and it was healed – I dare say better than before! Again – if you were Malchus – what would you do? Would you fall on your knees before Jesus – lay hold of his feet with your hands – thank and praise Him? Would you cry out – don't lay a hand on Jesus – he has rescued and saved me?! If you were Simon Peter and you saw Jesus' miracle of healing – would you say to Malchus – "I am so sorry!"? Would your faith in Jesus be reinforced – first by everyone falling down – then by this miracle of healing – so you would not be afraid? Or would you see Jesus tied up and run for your life – only to watch from a distance what would happen next – still afraid? Would we

have done any better? I am painfully confident we would not! How sad is that?

¹¹ Jesus commanded Peter, “Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?” Jesus was determined to die to forgive us. Jesus knew what was ahead. He knew they would slap him – spit on him – blindfold him and strike him and mockingly ask, “Prophecy – who hit you?” They would make a crown of thorns and press it on his head. They would scourge him and taunt him. They would crucify him. And when he was dead – still they would pierce his side with a spear! Jesus knew that the words of the prophet Isaiah would come true. His face would be so battered it wouldn’t even look human. And still – Jesus pressed onward – to buy us back from death and the grave. Still Jesus pressed forward – to drink the cup of suffering to the most bitter pieces at the bottom of the cup. Still – Jesus was determined to save us! *This is in part why we come to Church – to thank Him and praise Him. We come to Church – even if we think there isn’t something in it for me. We come to Church – to worship – to praise and thank our Savior for all He endured to save me! We come to worship – to honor and glorify our Savior. Immanuel – God with us – we want to be with Him!*

¹² Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him... I imagine it was hesitant at first – that they reached out for Jesus’ arms, hands, wrists to tie him up. When he didn’t resist – they pulled the ropes tight – and shoved Jesus ahead of them. It was off to Annas, then Caiaphas, and by next Wednesday with Jesus’ permission Pastor Dolan will preach about Jesus before the cynical Roman Governor Pontius Pilate – Jesus’ wondrous name of love--**the Truth!**

¹² Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him... They arrested Jesus. What had Jesus done wrong? Absolutely nothing! Jesus never ever did anything wrong. Jesus’ enemies had tried to trap Him – tried to catch him in a mistake. They set little hypothetical word problems before Him. In the Gospel of Matthew you can read about some of these traps which were clever by half. **Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians.** (Do you appreciate that? Send people who were fiercely Jewish along with people who were supporters of Herod – who served as King – only at the

pleasure of the Romans.) **"Teacher," they said, "we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth."** A little buttering up – flattering Jesus so as to catch him off guard. **You aren't swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are. Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not?"** Flawless – and so? We have him if he says yes and we have him if he says no! How clever are we? **But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, "You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? Show me the coin used for paying the tax."** They brought him a denarius, and he asked them, **"Whose image is this? And whose inscription?"** **"Caesar's," they replied. Then he said to them, "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."** **When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.** Matthew 22:15-22 Next came the Sadducees – who don't believe in life after death – don't believe in Heaven or Hell. They asked Jesus a hypothetical. What if there were 7 brothers – all married to the same widow – one after the other. Finally on Judgment Day – who gets to keep his wife? **Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. But about the resurrection of the dead – have you not read what God said to you, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living."** Matthew 22:29-32 They thought they had Jesus for sure. **Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher which is the greatest commandment?"** Fool proof – and so? Pick any commandment – any of the 10 and the obvious question would remain – but what of the other 9? What makes any 1 commandment greater than all the other 9? **Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and Prophets hang on these two commandments."** In their blasphemous pride and jealous envy – Jesus' enemies didn't understand the obvious answer. **Love the Lord your God –** summarized the first 3 commandments and **love your neighbor as yourself –** covered all the rest! Jesus kept all these commandments

completely – refraining from every evil and accomplishing every good!
Jesus did all that – then died on the cross for all the times we failed!

Peter Root and Mary Thompson were tough! How tough? They were tough enough to ride their bicycles around – quite literally around the world! Since July two years ago – Peter and Mary have been riding their bikes around the world. They rode through remote parts of Central Asia. They had camped in the desert, rode through hills, stopped to swim in rivers and lakes, braved heavy snowstorms – even rode through tense situations as armed conflict broke out around them in Tajikistan! Peter and Mary were in a terrible accident the other day. A man was driving near them – when he reached down on the floor of his truck to pick up his baseball hat. In that moment – he swerved and crashed into them. People are very breakable – and this truck driver broke them – humanly speaking – beyond repair. We are very breakable, too. It is the essence of the Good Friday and Easter Gospel that Jesus is God with us – all the time. Only Jesus can take us safely from this world of trouble and grief – to forever safe and whole in Heaven. Jesus is with you today – tonight and forever. Jesus is our Immanuel. Amen!

Pastor Anthony E. Schultz

To God alone all glory!