

# "You Know Best"

Luke 22:1-6

March 9,2011

Ash Wednesday

Tonight, we begin our remembrance of Lent again. Many questions may arise: Why do we have Lent? It is to meditate on Jesus' suffering and death on the cross. That causes another question: How did it happen that Jesus suffered and died? It is because one of His friends - one of His 12 special disciples, Judas, betrayed Him. He accepted money from Jesus' enemies in order to capture Jesus and give Him over to them. This leads to the biggest question of all: why did Judas do that? Why did Judas betray Jesus? Did he do it for the money? That might have been part of the reason. He received 30 silver coins to betray Jesus. That was about four months pay for a worker – somewhere between \$150 and \$1,000. It was a good chunk of change (you could buy a small farm with that), but is that enough money to betray a friend?

Judas probably betrayed Jesus because Judas felt he knew God's plan better than Jesus. Judas followed Jesus because he felt that Jesus was the Messiah from God. Judas saw Jesus heal sick people, make blind people see again, help deaf people hear again, and make dead people rise to life again. Judas listened to Jesus preach and teach about the Kingdom of God. Judas felt that Jesus would establish the Kingdom of God - kingdom here on earth where He would take up power, and rule as a mighty king.

But that was not happening. Jesus began speaking of humble serving, suffering, and dying. Judas was disappointed. Satan entered into Judas and influenced him to come up with a better plan: give Jesus to His enemies. If Jesus was a false Messiah, then this would expose it. If Jesus was truly the Messiah, that would force Jesus to use His power to escape and establish His Kingdom here on earth. Judas probably felt pretty good because he knew what was best - better than Jesus.

But that's a lie. And who invented that lie? Satan. A long, long time ago, Satan was himself a good angel until he thought he knew best - better than God. He rebelled against God and God cast

him out of heaven. The Bible says that Satan is the "The Father of Lies" which means he lies and spreads lies, too. Sin began on earth because people thought they knew best -- better than God. Remember the story of Adam and Eve. God told them not to eat the fruit from the tree. He warned them that if they ate the fruit they would die. But Satan influenced them to believe differently. Eve thought, "I know better than that. If I eat, I won't die, but I will become like God." That was the first sin.

Ever since that time, all sin begins because people think they know best. We see that in our children. If you are a father or mother, you've experienced that. You tell your children to do something now and they say they will do it later. You tell them to do one thing and they do another. Why? Children think they know better than parents. It is easy to become frustrated with their arrogance and angry at their stubbornness.

But all of us do the same thing with God. Why do we break God's laws and sin? Is it because we are evil people who want to do bad? Probably not. We just think we know best and that our ways are better than God's. I have visited with church members who don't attend worship. I explain to them God's command to worship, but they don't seem to care. They tell me they have something better to do which conflicts with worship. And their desires are more important than God's desires. When we discuss how we manage our time, money, and skills for the Lord, some people become angry and don't want to talk about it. They don't want God to tell them how to use "their" things. They want to use those things for themselves only. Why do we gossip, hurt each other, fight, quarrel, become involved in sexual sins, cheat, lie, and so on -- even though God forbids those things? We are very arrogant. We want to do what we want to do. We feel that our ways are better than God's ways and will be more successful than God's ways. We know what is best for us.

Is that true? Do we really know what is best? If we follow our ways and our desires, will that really be the best for us? No. God will not tolerate our arrogance. Our ways will earn only His anger and condemnation, ultimately in hell. If we continue to think we know best, what does God do? If you

became God and had created all people, what would you do to people who thought arrogantly they knew best? We probably would get very angry very quickly and destroy such arrogant people. That would make sense. Or, maybe if we were God, we would follow Judas's ideas: set up a kingdom here on this earth and strictly and harshly rule people. That would make sense, too.

However, we are not God and we do not know best. (And thank God for that!) God's ways are contrary to our ways. God does not hate us who have become so proud and think we know best. He knew what was best. He loved us deeply. He loved us so much that He was willing to send His Son, Jesus, to rescue us from our sinful pride and the punishment we deserved.

When Jesus came to this earth, He did not take up power, establish a Kingdom, and rule here on earth. That may have been our idea, but it was not God's way. He knew best. Jesus came here in humility, not pride. He came to become a servant, not a boss. He came to serve people, not requiring that people serve Him.

God's plan of salvation is also different than ours. If you ask most people, "How do you get to heaven?", they will answer, "I try to do what's good, be kind to people, and hope that's enough and God will accept me." But we can never do enough good. God requires holiness and one sin means we are not holy and can never be holy again. He must punish the sin. Our way to heaven fails. God knows best. He sent His Jesus to live holy in our place. He sent Jesus to bear the punishment for all sin in our place. Judas sold Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, but later he tried to give the money back. When Judas saw the soldiers leading Jesus away to be crucified, he thought, "I made a mistake. Jesus is going to die. I never meant that." But God knows best. God intended for Jesus to die all along. That was God's plan. On the cross, God punished Jesus for the sin of the world - your sin and my sin. Jesus offered Himself on the cross in our place and God accepted that sacrifice. God showed it by making Jesus alive again three days later.

It's good for us that God knows best. His love for us, instead of hate, means that we are not destroyed for our pride and arrogance. Jesus becoming a servant instead of a boss; dying instead of

ruling means that we have forgiveness for all our sins. We are holy in God's eyes. We have a relationship with Him now in this life and we have His guarantee of life forever after we die.

About 50 years ago, there was a TV show called, "Father Knows Best". Maybe you remember it or you can still see it on cable TV. In that show, the father of a family seemed to know best in every situation. Any family problem that came up, the father's wisdom and knowledge was able to solve it in 30 minutes. We look back and think that's silly: no one could always know what's best. Yet that attitude continues. Judas thought he knew best. We think we know best. And that's just as silly as "Father Knows Best". It is a lie from Satan. Judas's plans failed. Our plans fail. How to live and behave? Our Father knows best: the 10 Commandments. How to forgive our sins? Our Father knows best: allowing Jesus to die in our place on a cross. How to receive life in heaven? Our Father knows best: trusting solely in Jesus' death and resurrection. God truly knows best. And His best means the best for you and me. Amen.