

Luke 22:47-48 - *“While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called **Judas**, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to **kiss** him, but Jesus asked him, ‘Judas, are you **betraying** the Son of Man with a **kiss**?’”*

I’m going to take you back today to a war which was fought over 3,000 years ago - a war between the city of **Sparta** and the city of **Troy**. It’s called the **Trojan War**. After a 10 year-long siege of the city of Troy, the Spartans built a huge wooden **horse**, and set it outside the walls of Troy. Then they **left**. When the Trojans **saw** it, they pulled it **into** their city. As it turned out, there were soldiers hiding **inside** the horse, and that night they opened the city gates so the returning Spartan army could finally get inside and **defeat** the Trojans.

Our text today is a tragic case of one of Jesus’ chosen 12 disciples - a man who had **walked** beside Jesus, had heard His **sermons**, had watched His **miracles**, had **prayed** with Him, and had even done some **mission** work for Him. But in spite of it all, this man - **Judas Iscariot** - became a **betrayal**. Satan had inserted a **Trojan horse** in the heart of Judas. He had gained **control** of him, and turned him **against** Jesus.

As we examine this text tonight, it becomes very clear how important it is that Jesus is our **warrior** who **fought** for us and, to this very day, **helps** us in our **own** battles against the devil. Just like he did with **Judas**, Satan wants to use **our** sinful flesh **against** Jesus. **The Battle Is Personal.**

There’s a lot of **crime** in our world today, but for the most part, we can keep ourselves **safe**. We can **lock** our **doors** and arm our **security systems** to keep thieves and robbers out of our homes and businesses. We can carry **mace** when we’re jogging in order to ward off attackers. It’s an ongoing **battle** - a battle which seems to get **worse** and **worse** as time goes on. And yet, our most **difficult** battle is an **internal** one - just like the battle which raged in the heart of **Judas**.

Let’s go back there for a moment. It was right after Jesus and His disciples had eaten the Passover meal together. They had left the upper room in Jerusalem, and had walked out to the Garden of **Gethsemane** at the foot of the Mount of **Olives**. When they arrived, Jesus went a little farther by Himself, and He **prayed**. When He had finished, Jesus **returned** to His disciples again, only to find that they had all fallen **asleep**. Jesus woke them up, and we’re told, *“While he was still speaking, suddenly a **crowd** appeared, and the man called **Judas**, one of the*

*Twelve, was **leading** them. He came near to Jesus to **kiss** him. But Jesus said to him, 'Judas, are you **betraying** the Son of Man with a **kiss**?'"*

Matthew tells us in his Gospel that Judas went right up to Jesus, and singled Him out for the soldiers by dramatically **kissing** Him. Under normal circumstances people would have thought that Judas was greeting his good **friend**, Jesus. But Judas had pre-arranged this friendly greeting to be a **sign** for the soldiers. He was using the display of close friendship to **betray** Jesus, and to hand Him over to His **enemies**. What was it that had turned Judas from being a **friend** of Jesus into someone who could **betray** Him? What **Trojan horse** had entered his heart to make him become a **traitor** to the Savior of the world?

Something certainly had **changed** in Judas. He had been a highly **trusted** member of Jesus' chosen 12 disciples, even serving as the **treasurer** for the group. But, as time went on, Judas started helping **himself** to some of that money. Then Satan entered into Judas and convinced him to go to the chief priests to get paid to **betray** Jesus. Jesus had **warned** His disciples that one of them would betray Him, but Judas didn't **heed** the warning, and he fell into the hands of the **deceiver**. While they were celebrating the **Passover** meal we're told, "*As soon as Judas took the bread, **Satan** entered into him. So Jesus told him, 'What you are about to do, do more quickly.'*" So, Judas **left** to gather together with the **enemies** of Jesus.

What a sad turn of events. It's pretty clear that Judas really **struggled** with the choices he was making. But Satan had **tricked** him into thinking that Jesus didn't know what He was doing. Judas allowed Satan's Trojan horse to come into his life, and that choice ultimately resulted in his **destruction**. **The Battle Is Personal**, and Judas **lost** his battle.

Each one of us faces the same **Personal Battle** against **sin**, and **Satan**, and the **world**, and our own **flesh**. What will the Trojan horse look like in **our** battle? What temptations will the **devil**, the **world**, and our **flesh** present to us, in order to try and convince **us** that Jesus doesn't know what He's doing? Whatever it is, it will be a **struggle**. The Apostle Paul told the Romans, "*I certainly delight in God's law according to my **inner** self, but I see a **different** law at work in my **members**, waging **war** against the law of my mind and taking me **captive** to the law of **sin**, which is present in my members. What a **miserable wretch** I am! Who will **rescue** me from this body of death?"*

The Battle Is Personal, and in reality it's **more** than just a **battle**. It's a **war** - a war that we have been fighting for our entire **lifetime**. We **want** to trust Jesus

with all our heart, but our faith is always under **attack**, and our sinful flesh is **weak**. Sometimes there are flashbacks to the **past**, and those **skeletons** in our closet make us feel like we're too **dirty** and **unworthy** to be friends of Jesus. And when we're not stressing over the **past**, we're stressing about the **present** - the sins of **today** - the things we **know** are wrong - things that we **want to stop** doing - but we **don't** stop. Like Paul said, *"I do not **understand** what I am doing, because I do not keep doing what I **want**. Instead, I do what I **hate**."* It's **disappointing** - it's **depressing** - and it robs us of our **joy**, and works against our **faith**.

But here's the good news. Although we have to fight the **battles**, we **don't** have to win the **war**. In fact, we **can't** win the war, because it's **over**. Jesus already won it **for us**. Jesus, our warrior, **loves** us, and He **fighters** for us every day of our lives. Jesus helps us fight our personal **battles**, and defends us against the devil's sneak **attacks**. So we can say with Paul, *"Who will **rescue** me from this body of death? I **thank God** through Jesus Christ our Lord!"*

Jesus is our **defense** against our sinful flesh and Satan's battle for our hearts. Our betrayed Jesus will **never** betray us. Jesus went through all that physical abuse **alone**. Jesus went before God's judgment seat **alone**, with the sins of the **world** piled on His shoulders. Jesus experienced **alone** the full torture of **hell itself** in our place. He fought all these **Personal Battles** alone - and in every case, He came through them **victorious**.

When Jesus voluntarily gave up His life on the cross, God **erased** every accusation which had been raised against you, me, and the entire world. The only thing God sees in us now, is the holy, perfect life of **Jesus** - a life which is freely available to all those who turn to Him in **faith**.

Jesus is the **starting** point in our **Personal Battle** against the Trojan horses that Satan keeps trying to use against us and our faith in Jesus. We need this strong **warrior** to **strengthen** us in our on-going battle against sin; and to **do** that, Jesus has given us some powerful **weapons** to use. Here are some of those weapons we have for our personal struggle against sin and Satan.

The **first** weapon is God's powerful **Word** which contains all of God's unfailing **promises** to us. God's **Word** is a two-edged **sword** - a sword which **slices open** all the stuff we try to keep **hidden**, and at the same time, a sword which **cuts away** all of our **guilt** as it continues to bring **Jesus** into sharper **focus** for us.

Our **second** weapon is the **Lord's Supper**, which under more **normal** circumstances we would be **receiving** together tonight. In this supper, our **warrior** provides each of us **personally** with His true **body** and **blood**. This is as close as we can possibly get to Jesus on this side of heaven. It's almost as if we were right there in that upper room in Jerusalem, when Jesus looked at each of His disciples, passed around the **bread** and the **wine**, and **assured** them that in this supper He was also giving them His **body** and His **blood**. Can you picture yourself there? Whenever we're **slipping** in our struggles against the devil, this special meal points us right back to **Jesus**, and to the **forgiveness** of sins, eternal **life**, and **salvation** that He fought to win for us. Our battle against Satan is **personal**, but so is this **Holy Supper**.

And our **third** weapon is the **Holy Spirit** who is working within us to strengthen us in our battles against sin and Satan. We have all **benefitted** from having the Holy Spirit **working** in our lives. We all need to continue **encouraging** one another in order to stay close to **Jesus** and His **Word**. That's what will enable our faith to keep **growing**, as we are nourished by God's grace through **Word** and **Sacrament**. **The Battle Is Personal**, but our God has provided us with everything we need to continue to fight the good fight of faith. *"For this reason, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to take a stand on the evil day and, after you have done everything, to stand."* Amen.