

Kington Baptist Church

MESSAGE BOARD – Good Friday

In Colossian chapter 2 and verse 13 we read: *God made you alive together with Christ, when he forgave us all our trespasses* – the word that most interests me here, especially for today, is the word **'all'**.

After Judas received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, 'Do quickly what you are going to do'. (John 13.27)

This is where John tells us that Satan entered into Judas, to work out his purpose. It would seem from the situation that the majority of the disciples were oblivious to what was going on and what was about to happen. Equally, it is perfectly clear that Jesus was fully aware what was going to happen, how it was going to happen, and who was to be a key figure in what would happen. All this was obvious to our Lord. He knows Satan's finger prints. He is fully aware of his cunning and his wiles. He had resisted Satan, with his temptations, in the wilderness. Satan was real too to those with Jesus. The disciples were fully aware of him and his activities. They had themselves cast out evil spirits in the name of Jesus.

This awareness of Satan and of his tricks wasn't limited to the time of Jesus and his disciples. It was equally the case in the ages that followed. But now we're not sure. Now, and during the last 150 years in particular, we've lost that alertness to Satan and to his tactics. We're more grown up, more sophisticated, more philosophical.

In fact, the reality is that we're more gullible, more easily fooled and more foolish. The 'modern man', in his imagined wisdom, has become more foolish. It's an inescapable fact of history that the less aware a civilisation becomes of God the less aware they are of Satan. And the less aware they are of Satan, the less aware they are that they are in his thralldom. And this is, of course, his key tactic. His key tactic is to hide himself – so that we don't think of him or pay attention to what he's about, to his works. We put his evil working down to 'natural' causes. We're duped and gullible. If we talk about him we're mocked, just as when we talk of Jesus. This, of course, is exactly how Satan wants it: laugh at him as if he's not real; laugh at Jesus as if he doesn't matter.

Satan has a few, but only a few, perennially effective tactics to keep people from the gospel and faith in Jesus Christ. One is to clutter our minds so full of nonsense that we have no thoughts of sin or the Saviour. He keeps our minds too full to have thoughts of Satan or his activities. This has worked especially well for the last 150 years, with people being busy as never before with work, entertainment and pleasure. If it's not work it's 24/7 sport, hobbies, entertainment or staring at a 'flat screen' – whatever, it seems, happens to be projected onto it! The result is a population that is, in the

main, decent, satisfied and content. But if someone does think of eternal realities, Satan's next tactic is to turn their minds to distortions and misrepresentations of truth – and our culture offers unlimited choice!

But the inescapable fact is that Satan is at work, just as he was in the mind of Judas. Of course, he's at work not only in Judas; remember how he worked on Peter – to deny his Lord; and, Thomas – to doubt his Lord; and, the two walking along the road to Emmaus – to despair of their Lord.

At the Last Supper Satan unfolded his scheme. Judas let Satan enter him. Satan had already 'put in his mind' to betray Jesus (John 13.2). Now he enters fully into Judas – as Judas enters fully into his evil actions. What's also clear is that all this, amazingly, is under the authority of Christ! It is Jesus who says to Judas, *'Do quickly what you are to do'*. All is within the Lord's purpose and under his authority – even the 'permission' for Judas to act! Jesus doesn't turn from death. Why? The answer is that it was by his death that Christ will defeat *'him who had the power of death, that is, the devil'*. (Hebrews 2.14) Satan's ambition is death. But *this* death, of the Lord Jesus Christ, is God's victory. The deceiver will be caught in his own net. Satan's aim was the death of Jesus. But that is Satan's defeat. And our salvation! The death of Jesus was vital, so that our sin would be nailed to his cross. He cancelled our debt, *'nailing it to the cross'*. (Colossians 2.14) In John 19.19 we read that Pilate wrote a *title* and nailed it to the cross. It was the usual practice to nail above the crucified person their name and their crime. Pilate wrote one. God wrote the other! The *title* God nailed to the cross was 'my' name and 'my' sins. The charge-sheet of all 'my' sins: **'all'**. The entire debit – **'all'** – is paid – over and done with. Remember, *God made you alive together with Christ, when he forgave us all our trespasses!*

My sin—O the bliss of this glorious thought!—
My sin, not in part, but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more;
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

May the Lord by his Spirit open our eyes, to see the invisible realities – more real by far than the things that are seen: *'for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal'!*

Jesus took the twelve aside and said to them, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be fulfilled. For he will be handed over to the Gentiles; and he will be mocked and insulted and spat upon. After they have flogged him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise again." But they understood nothing that they were being told; they were blind to what Jesus said, and couldn't grasp what it meant. As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard a crowd going by, he asked what was happening. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." Then he shouted, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. He asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, I want to see." Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has saved you." Immediately he was able to see and followed Jesus, glorifying God. (Luke 18.31ff)