

## Sermon for Mid-week Lent #4

**Date:** March 25, 2020

**Location:** St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

**First Reading:** Job 24:13-17

**Second Reading:** 1 John 3:11-15

**Third Reading:** Matthew 23:29-36

**Passion Reading:** Mark 14:1,53,65



**Sermon Text:** Mark 14:1,53,65

**Sermon Title:** Murderous Eyes

### Hymns:

CW – Our Eyes Behold the Savior's Face

LSB 453 – Upon the Cross Extended (v.1-3,7)

LSB 420 – Christ the Life of All the Living (v.1,5,7)

LSB 528 – Oh for a Thousand Tongues to Sing

### Liturgy:

Divine Service: Creative Worship



Pastor James Groleau  
St. John's Lutheran Church  
1200 13th Avenue NW  
Austin, MN 55912  
Office: (507) 433-2642  
Shepherd@JamesPlace.net  
StJohnsAustinLCMS.org  
FaceBook.com/StJohnsAustin  
Twitter.com@StJohnsAustinMN  
FaceBook.com/Shepherd.James.Groleau  
KAUS 1480 AM Sun. 9:00am



**Text: Mark 14:1,53,65**

It was now two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest him by stealth and kill him,...

And they led Jesus to the high priest. And all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together...

And some began to spit on him and to cover his face and to strike him, saying to him, "Prophesy!" And the guards received him with blows.

**NOTE: Copyright** information.

Bible Translation: GOD'S WORD®, © 1995 God's Word to the Nations. Some readings have been adapted to better reflect the original Greek or Hebrew.

Credit for Images:

Pronunciation for difficult words are contained in { }

© 2020 James Groleau.

Permission is granted to use these sermons for any non-profit purpose. I only ask that credit, as to their origination, be noted appropriately.

Grace to you, and peace, In Jesus' holy name. Amen.

“If looks could kill.”

Can you picture eyes filled with rage? In the ancient world, and still today in some cultures, the “evil eye” is a glance that is thought to cause harm to the recipient. That’s how I envision the eyes of the Temple authority, as they plotted Jesus’ death in the Passion Reading we just heard. They were filled with hatred as they watched Jesus being greeted with praise in Jerusalem during Holy Week. For nearly three years they heard Him speak woes and reproaches to them. If they could have shot arrows from their eyes they would have.

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!”<sup>1</sup> Jesus said. It wouldn’t win Him any friends, but it was what they needed to hear.



Understand however that these words, through angry, were not from hate but love. The way parent discipline a child out of love. God never speak the Law to us in malice, but only because we need to recognize our sin and know where and why we need to repent.

Jesus said:

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, saying, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Carry out, then, the legacy of your fathers.<sup>2</sup>

Jesus wanted them to recognize their blatant hypocrisy and repent. So He says, “Carry out, then, the legacy of your fathers.” to bring them face-to-face with the murder they had planned in their hearts under their pious pretenses of honoring the murdered prophets. Jesus challenges them to push things forward to their logical conclusion. He is basically saying:

I know your hearts! I can see the murder in your eyes!  
Go ahead! Walk in the steps of your fathers! Why don’t you go ahead and kill Me too, and continue your family tradition!”

1 Matthew 23:29

2 Matthew 23:29–32

“There is nothing new under the sun,” said the Preacher in Ecclesiastes. Murderous thoughts and looks are nearly as old as the fall into sin. Cain’s downcast look became murderous eyes toward his brother. The cause of murder is always the work of man, but the original source is Satan, who Jesus says was:

He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.<sup>3</sup>

Jesus, when addressing the Jews who wanted to kill Him, identifies Satan as the father of all who hate God’s Son. The apostle John says that Cain “was of the evil one.”<sup>4</sup>

What does this have to do with us? Aren’t John and Jesus just wailing on Cain and the murderous Temple authority? Certainly Jesus is not talking to us. Then again... The apostle John writes:

Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.<sup>5</sup>

He writes just a bit later:

If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.<sup>6</sup>

Follow the logic. If I claim to love God while hating my brother, I am both a murderer and a liar, just like Satan.<sup>7</sup> Then I cannot love God, and if I don’t love God, I must hate Him. Looks like Cain and those Temple authority don’t stand alone. This is why we make this confession to Jesus in the hymn:

I caused Your grief and sighing  
By evils multiplying  
As countless as the sands.  
I caused the woes unnumbered  
With which Your soul is cumbered,  
Your sorrows raised by wicked hands.<sup>8</sup>

3 John 8:44

4 1 John 3:12

5 1 John 3:15

6 1 John 4:20

7 John 8:44

8 Lutheran Service Book Hymn 453. Verse 4

Don't lie to yourself. You have said in your heart, "I have reasons for hating that person. I can make excuses for wishing that I do. I have good cause for casting an evil eye on my neighbor." Justified as you think you might be that's enough to make you a murderer in God's sight, and place you under His wrath. The Temple authority continue their family tradition in tonight's Passion Reading, and if we're honest with ourselves, we can see ourselves standing right along with them.

What a marvel it is that our Heavenly Father would allow His Son to be murdered at the hands of sinful men, just to save a bunch of rotten, rebellious, sinners with eyes filled with hate. Scripture says:

God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God.<sup>9</sup>

The wrath of God is not a murderous glance from the Father, but a look of righteous judgment upon the stain of sin. We all deserve God's wrath, but instead of giving us what we deserved, God put it on Jesus, and Jesus willingly took it, for us.

From the cross, Jesus looked on the masses of humanity from Adam to the end and said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."<sup>10</sup> Sin, which produces lies, hatred, murder, and every other sin, is so deep a stain, that we don't recognize the depravity of what we think, say, and do, unless it is revealed to us by God's Word. But once our murderous eyes have looked in horror on what we really have done, including nailing the innocent Son of God to the cross with the nails of our sins, then we also are ready for the joyful Good News of the forgiveness for all of our sins because of Jesus' voluntary sacrifice at the hands of murderers, the death by which He destroyed death and extinguished the wrath of God toward us.

For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, will we be saved by His life. Not only so, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.<sup>11</sup>

Rejoice in Christ, who has turned your murderous eyes away from sin, guilt, and despair and lifted them up to look on Himself as your Savior.

Amen.

9 Romans 5:8-9

10 Luke 23:34

11 Romans 5:10-11