



Abundant Life
COMMUNITY CHURCH



Each day this week, I (Gabe) will share a brief devotional- walking through some of the events of Holy Week, the days leading up to and including Jesus' death & resurrection, using some pictures from my trip to Israel last month.

A Plot is Hatched

Jesus, as far as I can tell, continued his teaching ministry on the Wednesday of Holy Week. But another event we know took place on this day was Judas making

arrangements with the chief priests and officers to betray Jesus to them. They had long wanted to arrest Jesus, but they weren't willing to do so when he was surrounded by a crowd, fearing the response. By bringing Judas into their circle of trust, they hoped to gain access to Jesus when he was alone, so they might take him quietly.

Take a few minutes to read [Luke 22:1-6](#).

I took the above picture from a rooftop in the City of David, overlooking [the Valley of Gehenna](#) (or Hinnom Valley). This valley is located to the south of Jerusalem, and it was where the city's trash was burned. It is believed that Judas' [Akeldama \(Field of Blood\)](#), the plot of land he bought with the money he received for betraying Jesus, and where he later hanged himself ([Matthew 27:1-10](#)), was located in this valley.

Judas' story is a sad one. He had a front-row seat for Jesus' entire ministry, and yet he will forever be remembered for the disgrace of his final days. There is so much for us to learn in his story, including the danger of allowing bitterness to take root in our hearts. Jesus warns against this very thing in the Sermon on the Mount, when he traces the act of murder back to its' root of anger in the heart ([Matthew 5:21-26](#)). Jesus encourages us to take sin seriously at this root level, before it ever has an opportunity to grow.

Yes, we read that Satan entered Judas Iscariot; but in order for that to happen, Judas needed to invite him in. How did he ever get to this point? He allowed anger, bitterness, and selfishness to take root in his heart; he watered it, nourished it, and encouraged it to grow. He teaches us an important lesson: we must be real before God and others, confessing our sin and processing any harmful emotions in their infancy. Jesus stands ready, at any given moment, to forgive and heal us; we just need to be real before him. Don't be afraid, in your time with God today, to be real

with him about your highs and lows, your joys and frustrations, your hopes and your discouragement. He cares about it all!



The Sea of Galilee, where most of Jesus' ministry took place. Judas was in Jesus' inner circle, so he witnessed the countless miracles, heard the kingdom teaching, and even played a role in bringing hope to the villages along this northern shore. And yet, he allowed bitterness to take root in his heart.



These are the Hermon River springs, in Caesarea Philippi - where Peter made his confession of faith and Jesus responded, "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church." This was a watershed moment in Jesus' ministry, something Judas had a front-row seat for.