

JESUS REVEALS THE BETRAYER
(John 13:18-30)

¹⁸ I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. ¹⁹ Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am *he*. ²⁰ Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. ²¹ When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. ²² Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. ²³ Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. ²⁴ Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. ²⁵ He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? ²⁶ Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped *it*. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave *it* to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon. ²⁷ And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. ²⁸ Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. ²⁹ For some *of them* thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy *those things* that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor. ³⁰ He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.

John 13:18-30

Jesus and the twelve disciples are gathered around the supper table on this solemn night before the crucifixion of Jesus. Jesus has washed the feet of the disciples and he has returned to his place around the table. It is at this point that Jesus instituted the ordinance of the Lord's Table. Now John doesn't record this but Matthew, Mark and Luke record it. And it seems that when Jesus washed their feet and when he instituted the ordinance of the Lord's Table, all twelve disciples were present – even Judas.

I find it astonishing that Jesus got down on his knees and washed the dirty feet of Judas. I find it astonishing that Jesus included Judas in the first Lord's Table. And this might lead some to conclude that Jesus didn't know that Judas was a devil; that Jesus didn't know that Judas was lanning to betray him; that Jesus didn't know that Judas would betray him for thirty pieces of silver; that Jesus didn't know that Judas would lead the soldiers to the Garden of Gethsemane; that Jesus didn't know about the satanic kiss in the garden.

From this account, it is clear that the disciples didn't know about Judas. Judas was a full-fledged member of the twelve. Judas was the holder of the money bag. Judas had been with them for three years. Judas had gone with them on the missionary journeys. And the disciples didn't know what was in the heart of Judas. But Jesus knew. And this is the central idea of our text for this morning. It is that Jesus knew.

If all this had been unknown to Jesus; if Jesus was caught by surprise; if Jesus was taken against his will; if Jesus was crucified contrary to his own plan; then the disciples would have been very discouraged indeed. But here at the last supper, Jesus is telling the disciples that all of

these things were known to him. I want you to notice in our immediate context how many times we are told that Jesus knew something.

Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should pass out of this world . . .

John 13:1

Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

John 13:3

For he knew who should betray him;

John 13:11

I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen.

John 13:18

When Jesus reclined around the table at this last supper, his design was to comfort them by informing them that he was not being caught by surprise. Their leader, their master was not being duped. He was not being outsmarted in the end. He was not going to be the ultimate loser. Rather, he was in full control. All of these things were meant to be. And he carefully instructed the disciples so that they might believe once all these things came to pass.

Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.

John 13:19

Now Jesus had told the disciples before that one of the twelve was a devil. You might remember that after Jesus fed the five thousand that he taught the people that he was the real bread of life. And when he finished the “Bread of Life Discourse” he spoke privately to his disciples and look what he told them.

Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

John 6:70, 71

So you see, Jesus knew all along who it was who would betray him and now, on the night before his death, he wants to make sure that the disciples know that he knows, lest they be discouraged.

Now while they were around the table, Jesus began to be troubled in spirit. (John 13:21) This is a grand understatement. Jesus’ soul was in torment. He was troubled first of all because of the unrequited love of Judas. Jesus had loved Judas as a friend and a companion. Jesus had invested a part of his life in Judas. But Jesus was troubled because of the ingratitude in the heart of Judas. Jesus was troubled because he had a deep hatred of sin and sin incarnate was sitting here at the table with him. Jesus was troubled because he could see with his omniscient eye Satan moving around Judas. Jesus was troubled because Judas was minutes away from walking away

from the True Light and into eternal darkness. Jesus was troubled because of the terrors of eternal hell and eternal punishment which awaited his friend Judas. Jesus was troubled because his friend would betray him into the hands of wicked men in just a few minutes. And it says,

Jesus was troubled in spirit.

John 13:21

That word troubled means to be stirred up and agitated. The idea is that the insides of Jesus were churning. He was moved on the inside with great emotion. Perhaps he was stirred up with great sorrow for Judas because he was about to send Judas to hell. And he told the other disciples,

One of you shall betray me.

John 13:21

Now when Jesus told the disciples that one of them would betray him, they didn't know which one. And they began to look around the room at one another. (John 13:22) What an uncomfortable moment that must have been. Perhaps Peter looked at Bartholomew with suspicion. Perhaps some of them distrusted that former tax collector Matthew. But mostly, they each distrusted their own selves. In the Matthew account we find that each disciple, one by one, asked Jesus, "Is it I?" (Matthew 26:22)

Now in our text we learn that John (the disciple whom Jesus loved) was reclining at the table right next to and in front of Jesus. In fact, John was in such close contact with Jesus that the Scriptures say that John was leaning on Jesus' bosom. So, it appears that John had the best seat in the house. He could hear every word that was spoken by Jesus. He could hear not only the public speeches of Jesus but also the little dinner conversation.

Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake.

John 13:24

Old Peter, he was never one to be patient, was he? And he beckoned to John. Perhaps he whispered in his ear or made some gesture. At any rate, he wanted John to ask Jesus who was the betrayer. And so, John asked Jesus, "Lord, who is it?"

Jesus told John,

He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it.

John 13:26

Now while John (and probably Peter) watched, Jesus took a piece of bread and dipped it in the juice and he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

As soon as Jesus gave Judas the sop, Satan entered into Judas. It appears that Satan was personally present at this last supper. And he was waiting for the moment. And this was it. And

he took possession of Judas. We are not sure what it means, but it says that Satan entered into Judas.

Now, after Satan entered into Judas, Jesus gave Judas a command.

That thou doest, do quickly.

John 13:27

And Judas immediately got up and went into the night.

Well, that is the account of what happened that night. Now, let's evaluate what went on here. First let's consider,

How Jesus knew that Judas would betray him

First of all, Jesus knew what was in the heart of man.

But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

John 2:24, 25

Now when Judas was reclining around the table, he had already been to the chief officers of the Jews and he had made preliminary arrangements to betray Jesus. He had decided several days ago, back in Bethany, when expensive oil was poured over the head of Jesus that he would hand him over.

And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them. And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

Mark 14:10, 11

So Judas, with deceit in his heart, lay around the table knowing that he was the one. And when Jesus said, "One of you shall betray me," the other disciples didn't know who it was. But Judas knew. And Jesus knew.

Judas thought that he could deceive even Jesus. And so, Judas asked Jesus, "Is it I?" And Jesus answered, "Thou hast said." (Matthew 26:25)

You see, Jesus knew what was in the heart of Judas. Sinners tend to think that God does not know what is in the heart. But God knows. God not only sees the acts of men but he discerns the thoughts of the heart.

Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me . . .

Psalm 139:23, 24

So, Jesus knew that Judas would betray him simply because he knew the hearts of men. But also,

Secondly, Jesus knew those whom he had chosen.

I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen.

John 13:18

What Jesus was telling his disciples here is that he did not make a mistake. He did not choose his disciples carelessly. He did not choose them with inadequate information. But he chose them very carefully and he said, "I know whom I have chosen."

You see, the disciples were likely to think that things had gone terribly wrong. They were likely to think that Jesus was not in control after all. They were likely to think that the master plan of Jesus had gone awry. But Jesus told them, "I know exactly what I am doing. I know whom I have chosen."

Now when Jesus spoke of choosing here, he was not speaking of the choosing of a people unto salvation. He was not speaking of the eternal election of a people unto salvation. But he was speaking of the choosing of the twelve disciples. And to fulfill his eternal purposes, he chose twelve disciples and one of them was a devil.

What we should learn from this is that Jesus did not make a mistake when he selected Judas. Rather he intentionally used the wicked heart of Judas to carry out his purposes here on the earth.

How inscrutable are the decrees of God. How unsearchable are his ways that even the evil deeds of the wicked man carry out the plans of God. Even the wicked men that nailed Jesus to the cross were unknowingly carrying out the determinate counsel of God. (Acts 2:23) And Judas, though he was a thief and a liar; though he was greedy and self-serving; though he had an evil heart, nevertheless, God used his wickedness to carry out the determinate counsel of God. No, Jesus did not make a mistake. He chose a wicked man to be one of the twelve.

Thirdly, Jesus knew of the betrayer through the Old Testament Scriptures. In our text, Jesus quotes Psalm 41:9 in speaking of Judas.

He that eateth bread with me hath lift up his heel against me.

John 13:18

This is a reference to Psalm 41:9. Now when David spoke these words in the Psalm, he was speaking of someone who had betrayed him in his day.

Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lift up his heel against me.

Psalm 41:9

Now in this Psalm, David is lamenting that a trusted friend, who had eaten bread with him at his table, had betrayed him. Most likely David was referring to Ahithofel. Ahithofel was a trusted advisor in David's court. He was a right hand man. But when David's son Absalom, rebelled against David, Ahithofel turned against David and sided with Absalom. And David said, "Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lift up his heel against me."

Now what you should understand is that David's life, in many respects, was a type of Christ. And many of the details of David's life were typical of the True David which was to come. And when Jesus read this Psalm, he understood that it not only referred to the betrayal by Ahithofel but it also had reference to the betrayal by Judas.

There is an even more specific prophecy about Judas found in Zechariah. Read the following verse as though it is Judas speaking.

And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord.

Zechariah 11:12, 13

So, the betrayal of Jesus was known to Jesus not only because he knew what was in the heart of Judas; not only because he purposely chose Judas to fulfill that role, but also Jesus knew by his knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures.

The purpose for revealing the betrayal to the disciples

Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.
John 13:19

This is why Jesus graciously revealed the betrayer at this last supper. It was to increase their faith. Now when Judas came to the Garden and gave Jesus the kiss of betrayal, the disciples would know that this was all a part of the plan.

Jesus did the same thing at this last supper regarding his death. He began to make the disciples understand that he would be going away.

Little children, yet a little while I am with you.
John 13:33

I go to prepare a place for you.
John 14:2

Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more.
John 14:19

Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away . . .
John 14:28

And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.

John 14:29

Do you see how Jesus is cradling his disciples in his arms and he is preparing them for the awful deeds that will be done in the next few hours? And in the face of his own grave circumstances, Jesus is thinking about others. He is about to bear the sins of the world in his own body, and yet, his thoughts are centered on those whom he loves. And he tells them, one of you is going to betray me and I am going to die and go away.

Lessons to be learned from the life of Judas

Look what it says about Judas.

He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.
John 13:30

When we consider that one of Jesus' own disciples got up from the table that night and walked away from the light of the world, it causes us to marvel at the blackness of the human heart. The human heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it? (Jeremiah 17:9) Judas Iscariot got up from the table and abandoned his friend. He turned his back on the One who loved him and who would have loved him for eternity. And he walked out of that room. And it is not by chance that the Scriptures say, "And it was night." (John 13:30)

Judas walked out of light and into darkness. Yes, it was night time in Jerusalem. But there was a satanic darkness in the heart of Judas. When he walked out of that room, he stepped out into the dark reaches of hell. His soul was overcome with its own dark depravity. And he made the worse choice of his life.

And for those of you who do not know Christ, for those of you who are yet in your sins, for those of you who have not known the regenerating power of God in your hearts, you should know that your heart is capable of the same foolish choices that Judas made. You also are capable of walking away from Christ. You also are capable of rejecting eternal life and stepping out into eternal death and destruction. Not only are you capable, but it is certain that you will because the heart is deceitful above all things. In your natural condition you are a sinner. You are blind and you are a fool just like Judas. How could Judas do such a thing? It is because he was a wicked sinner by very nature. His heart was evil. And following the dictates of his nature, he walked out on Jesus. And your wicked heart will cause you to do the same.

It is imperative that Jesus' change your heart or you will share hell with Judas. If you hear the gospel of Jesus Christ you will either respond to it in faith by the grace of God or you will walk away as Judas did. So we learn first of all from Judas that the human heart is desperately wicked.

But we learn from the case of Judas that sinners can never upend the redemptive plan of God. Sinners think that they can refute the decree of God; that they can change the course of God's plan. But in the end, we find that even the sinful acts of sinners push forward and carry out the plan of God. Satan thought that he won the battle when Jesus was crucified, but instead, he found that he only served to carry out God's redemptive plan. Judas thought he could alter the plan of God. But he found that his sin was prophesied beforehand and was an integral part of the plan of God.

Now make no mistake. The wretchedness of Judas sprang from his own heart. No one compelled him to sin. His own sin nature compelled him. But God used his wretchedness for his own sovereign purposes. As Joseph told his wicked brothers one day, "You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good."

But then we also learn that sometimes God likes to get praise even from sinners. It is one thing when your friends say nice things about you. But when your enemies praise you sometimes that is high praise indeed. And when Judas was overcome by his guilt, he took the coins back to the temple and threw them down and he told the chief rulers that the man Jesus was innocent. If Judas had known one evil thing about Jesus he would have said so. But when he stood in front of the ruling Jews he couldn't think of one evil thing to say about him. And he said, "I have betrayed innocent blood." How pure was the life of Jesus that even his enemy could find nothing to say against him!

And then the record of Judas should teach us that in this world there will always be imposters among us. In the best case, the church should always be composed of the regenerate. But in this world and even in the church there will be imposters at times. Judas was a fake. He posed as a believer. And he fooled the other disciples. But in reality he was a thief and a traitor. In this world and in the church the reality is that there will always be a mixture. There will be sheep and goats. There will be wheat and tares. And in the end they will be separated by the one who knows the hearts of all men.

You see, Jesus allowed Judas to remain in the group for a while. And his community of disciples was infiltrated by an imposter. And so it has ever been in the churches. But in the end, Christ will always cleanse and purify the church.

Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this, The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

Matthew 13:24-30

Lastly, I want you to notice that in the end, Jesus finally told Judas to get out.

And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.

John 13:27

Grace and mercy and opportunity is not extended forever. It is extended but for a moment. And when you have utterly rejected him, Christ will tell you to go. And he will not beg you to stay. You will become an outcast and darkness and blindness will envelop you forever. And you will step out into the night and you will never see the light again. You will be counted among the reprobate and Jesus will not seek you again. Finally, Jesus will say goodbye to your soul. And when he finally withdraws his offers of grace from you, your soul will know torment indeed.

Judas was so overcome with torment that he went out and hanged himself. And Jesus said of him,

Woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed: good were it for that man if he had never been born.

John 14:21

And if any of you should ever walk out on Christ and reject him the same could be said of you. It would be good for you if you had never been born. I urge you to follow Christ to the end. I urge you to put sin far away from you and to put on the righteousness of Christ. I urge you to linger a little while longer around the table with Christ and not to leave him. For Judas walked away from Jesus and it was night.