

OUR HEART'S DOOR IS INSIDE US

Luke 21: 34-38, Matthew 26: 1-5, Luke 22: 1-6 and John 13: 21-30

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There is no handle on the outside of the door of the human heart. It must be opened from within. Somebody's always knocking at your door. Sometimes it is Jesus, and sometimes it is the enemy, Satan. Whose knocking will you open the door to? Often the answer as to whose knocking we give in to is found in our inner habits. It has been well said, "The chains of habit are so light you cannot feel them, until they are so strong you cannot break them. Sin doesn't appear to be irresistible until we want to be free from it. The moment we attack sin, we will be surprised to find that most of its strength and power has been hidden. Erwin Lutzer wrote a book entitled, "How to Say No to a Stubborn Habit, Even When You Feel Like Saying Yes." In the book, Pastor Lutzer speaks of a man who tried to drain swamp land on his property, not knowing the task was impossible, because the swamp was fed by an underground stream. Beloved, you and I were born in sin, just like Jesus' disciple Judas. Each of us have sinful patterns that influence us, and we are foolish to ever think we are above sin or sinning. Some years ago, from Saskatchewan, Canada, E. E. Shelhamer wrote a tract called, "Traits of the Self-Life." It is helpful.

He wrote, "Are you demonstrating the self-life? It shows itself as: #1. **A spirit of pride.** Do you have an exalted feeling or an important, independent spirit over other people because of your success or position, because of your natural abilities, because of your good training or appearance, or because of your good looks and personality? # 2. **A love of praise.** Do you have a secret fondness or longing to be noticed, a love of supremacy? Do you draw attention to yourself in conversation? Does your self puff-out, when you have had a time to speak or pray in the presence of others? #3. **An independent attitude of anger.** Are you irritable, but you cover it up, calling it nervousness or holy anger? Do you have a touchy spirit, a disposition to resent and retaliate when disapproved of or contradicted? Do you throw sharp words at others? "If you won't help me, I'll do it myself!" and then complain and feel hurt when no one notices your sacrifice! Do you have a desire to use barbed words to put yourself back into the proper light?

#4. **A spirit of self-will.** Do you show a stubborn, unteachable, self-sufficient spirit? Do you often argue and have an argumentative spirit when the facts are not known? Are you harsh, sarcastic, driving, demanding, unyielding and headstrong? Do you criticize and pick flaws in others when you don't get your way, or you feel unnoticed? Do you try to force God's people into service rather than lead by example? #5. **A spirit of carnal fear.** Are you controlled by a man-fearing spirit, that makes you shrink from duty? Do you reason around your God-given cross? Are you afraid of commitment to Jesus because you may cause people to think less of you? Do you compromise principle to please others? #6. **A spirit of jealousy or envy.** Do you hide that spirit in your heart? Do you harbor jealousy when others prosper? When someone is more talented or appreciated than you, do you speak of their faults rather than their virtues?

#7. **A spirit of dishonesty.** Do you evade, deceive, or cover up the truth? Do you hide or minimize your faults and try to leave a better impression of yourself than is true? Do you show false humility? Do you exaggerate, straining the truth? Do you show one face to one person and quite the opposite to another? #8. **An unbelieving attitude.** Do you live out doubt and discouragement in times of pressure and opposition? Is there a lack of quietness and confidence in God in your heart, a lack of settled trust as you often worry and complain in the midst of trials that God allows? Are you overanxious whether situations will turn out all right? #9. **A form of godliness, denying the power of God.** Are you complacent about sinners who are lost? Is your relationship with God dry and indifferent? Does your life lack spiritual power? Do you regularly meet God in prayer or devotional time? #10. **A spirit of selfishness.** Are you drawn to ease, catering to your appetites, hankering for short-lived pleasure? Do your joys and sorrows fluctuate around personal interests? Is there a yearning for money and earthly possessions?

Had any of us been among Jesus' 12 disciples and known Judas Iscariot, we might have detected a few of these sinful traits in Judas and we would have called them weaknesses. But would any of us, unlike the other 11 disciples have ever dreamed Judas would betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver? Today, I want us to trace the fall of Judas from his call by Jesus to be one of His apostles and disciples, and to become one of Jesus' upper echelon disciples, the treasurer, all the way to when Judas finally betrayed Jesus and committed suicide. What are the seven traceable steps we see in what started so perfectly, but ended in tragedy for Judas who did not repent? What can God teach us to keep us from following Judas' path?

HE WAS CALLED TO JESUS' SIDE AS AN APOSTLE. (I.) Judas's story in begins in Mark 3: 14-19. We read, "And He appointed twelve (whom He also named apostles) so that they might be with Him, and He might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons. He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder) Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him." Luke 6: 13-16 has the same listing. This Judas came from 12 miles south of Hebron, and as far as we know, was the only disciple from Judaea. Judas sat under the greatest Rabbi and Master the world has ever known, the God-Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, Messiah. There is no record that Judas plotted treachery against Jesus after Jesus called him, or that he was always seeking to overthrow Jesus. Some say Judas was only trying to force Jesus' hand so He would show His mighty power and defeat the scribes and Pharisees, and even defeat the Romans from having the Jews under their thumb. So, we are left to believe that Judas was able to preach and have authority over demons. As an apostle and evangelist, never are we told that Judas did not participate in Jesus' mission. Turn with me to Luke 9: 1-6. We read, "And He called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. And He said to them, "Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics. And whatever house

you enter, stay there, and from there depart. And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town, shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them.” And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.” Whatever we read at first, Judas showed no corruption in the beginning of his apostleship. Secondly,

HE WAS HONORED AND PROMOTED BY JESUS. (II.) Turn to John 13:29 tells us “Judas had the moneybag.” Judas must have been gifted in math and he must have been a good administrator. Was this promotion to becoming treasurer for the apostles the beginning of his demise? That has happened to scores of disciples of Jesus, even many pastors. Being promoted should be a time to examine ourselves. Promotion comes from God. It is a great honor, but promotion can be a dangerous moment. Thirdly,

HE WAS A DISCIPLE OUTSIDE, INSIDE, A LOVER OF MONEY. (III.) Turn to John 12: 4-6. We read, “But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples (he who was about to betray Him), said, “Why was this ointment (that Mary anointed Jesus with) why was it not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.” Now we begin to see the truth Paul wrote about in I Timothy 6: 10, “For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many pangs.” Jesus said to His disciples in Luke 16: 13, “No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.” The inward love always wins out. If our outer person is a lover of the world, but our inner person loves God, the inner love for God will eventually take over and the person of the world will become a person of God. But if a person of God outwardly, like Judas, has an inner compulsion, passion, obsession, or love for the world, he is headed toward a terrible fall or to hell without repentance, for his inner love and lust will eventually surface as it did with Judas. Many a treasurer for the Lord sacredly handles God’s money, but at times, the person trusted outwardly has become a deceiver, underhanded, and privately robbed God, and his own local church. As a superintendent since 1996, I have had to deal with two different treasurers who have robbed the church, and have had to be removed from office, tragically, stealing lots of money. One of the toughest passages regarding Judas is found in John 6: 70, 71, is Jesus asking the twelve, “Did I not choose you, the Twelve? And yet one of you is a devil.” Jesus spoke of Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the Twelve, was going to betray Him.” In knowingly giving dishonest Judas the moneybag, Jesus specifically modeled for us where not to put our trust: money. Jesus trusted his Father, not money, to provide everything He needed to fulfill His calling. He slept in peace every night, knowing that Judas was embezzling. Fourthly,

HE WAS A CRITIC. UNWILLING TO SUBMIT TO AUTHORITY. (IV.) Notice, up to this point, there is no mention of Satan entering into Judas. Giving

place to the devil happens in tiny, almost imperceptible, almost invisible increments. Satan is looking for us to be His instruments. Notice Ephesians 4: 27. Here we read, “And give no opportunity to the devil.” The words prior to this verse are “Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger.” We cannot give Satan an inch, or he wants a mile. He longs for a foothold in me and in you. He is the father of lies, and he makes us, little by little a critic of God, and then of God’s servants, and in that fashion, we give Satan a place to live in the very temple of God, our bodies. Turn with me to John 12: 1-8. We read, “Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. So, they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard/spikenard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples (he who was about to betray Him), said, “Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it. Jesus said, “Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of My burial. For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have Me.” Criticism that assaults God’s people and those serving the Lord, if not repented of, will in the end, lead to betrayal of Jesus. What if you were called by God to go on a one-day fast from criticizing God’s servants? What if He upped the fast to one week or one month, or one year? How long would you last? Fifthly,

HE WAS A CONTROLLER, DISAPPOINTED WITH JESUS’ PLANS. (V.)

In John 13: 1-2, the love of money+the criticism of Mary, one of Jesus’ followers, finally led Judas to allow the devil to put the plot of betrayal into his heart. We read, “Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him.” The spirit of control has divided more churches in America, and in Sweetwater County than any other sin. When our leaders don’t say what we desire, it is easy to be disappointed. Jesus had told His disciples repeatedly that he would be betrayed and crucified. Way back in the earlier part of Jesus’ ministry, in AD 32, Jesus said to His disciples in Mark 9: 31, “The Son of Man is going to be betrayed/delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And when he is killed, after three days He will rise again.” Remember in Matthew 16: 22-23, Peter rebuked Jesus about Him saying He would be crucified. Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are a hindrance to Me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.” All 12 disciples wanted to forget Jesus’ crucifixion prophecy. Don’t think Judas forgot Jesus’ words in Mark 9: 31, that He would be betrayed and delivered into the hands of sinners. Here is where Judas cut out of following Jesus. Luke 22: 3, tells us that as the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, “Then Satan entered into Judas, called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve,” and conferring with the chief priests, he decided on betraying Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.” Judas would fulfill Jesus’ prophecy and he did it. Sixthly,

HE WAS A PARTNER WITH EVIL, A BETRAYER FOR A PRICE. (VI.)

The enormity of the sin of Judas consists in its being against all the bonds of love, friendship, discipleship, and the light he knew for 3 and a half years. John 13: 12. On the night of the Last Supper, Jesus washed the feet of all twelve of His disciples. We read, "When Jesus had washed their feet and put on His outer garments, and resumed His place, He said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you?" Read on in 13: 13, "If I then, your Lord and Teacher/Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. In 13: 17-18, Jesus added, "If you know these things, blessed are you in you do them. I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, "He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against Me." At the Supper, all the disciples were asking Jesus, one after another, who would betray Him, saying, "Is it I, Lord?" Then we read in Matthew 26: 24-25, "The Son of Man goes as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born." Judas, who would betray him, answered, "Is it I, Rabbi" or "Surely it is not I?" Jesus said to him, "You have said so." You remember in John 13, Simon motioned to John seated next to Jesus to ask Jesus who would betray Him. John 13: 26-27 states, "Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it. So when He had dipped the morsel, Satan entered into Judas. Jesus said to him, "What you going to do, do quickly." Judas now formally changed sides. He agreed to betray Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane with a kiss. Judas kissed Jesus in betrayal, even though Jesus stepped out to meet his betrayer and captors. No signal was necessary. When you play with the devil, finally you are so linked with him that his moves are yours and your moves are his. How treacherous it is to partner with evil. Seventhly,

HE WAS A CHILD OF HELL ENDING HIS LIFE IN REMORSE. (VII.)

There is no record of Judas repenting, but there is the biblical record of his remorse. Matthew 27: 3-5. Listen to this eternally tragic ending. "Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he changed his mind and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." They said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, Judas departed, and he went and hanged himself. Acts 1: 18 adds "falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out." When we allow Satan to come and have a place in our hearts, he quickly sees to it that he takes our life so he can have our soul forever. Let it be known that there is a huge difference in losing the ability to think clearly in our mind, and making a conscious choice to give Satan place and the driver's seat in our lives. May the Spirit of God alert us today to get off any path of sin that is destined to prove we really know not the Lord. Don't become a critical person, criticizing God's servants, and wanting control of your future, repent. Submit to Jesus. Submit to your family authority, in your church, in your marriage, and in your walk with God. Yes, Judas was chosen, having a devil. Mary Magdalene had 7 devils. God cleansed her. Satan could never have had Judas, unless Judas would have willingly opened the door of his heart. There is no handle on the outside of the door of the human heart. Let's bow!