

Mark 14: 10-21; “Lord, is it I?”, Sermon # 109 in the series – “Astonished at His Teaching”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on May 4th, 2014, In the Morning Worship Service.

I would like you to focus your attention with me upon this question which the disciples asked in verse 19 – “Is it I, Lord?” It is a question not only for the disciples then; it is a question for all disciples now. The reason that it is just as much a question for today is this; there may be some here this morning who may question whether they have a right to partake of the Supper. Oh, I know; the guidelines for the visitors are in the bulletin. But I am not just addressing the visitors this morning. I am thinking also of the membership here. As you look at your own heart, you may have grave doubts about yourself. You may fear that you have a treacherous heart toward the Lord Jesus; the kind of treachery that Judas had. This is the concern that I particularly want to address. I certainly want all of us think together about this subject, but I want to especially make this message helpful to those who may be doubting their own salvation. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, and it is your sincere desire to follow him in relation to having a sincere faith, you are the person that I want to speak to. I hope by means of this passage to bring you to the place where you will have a solid assurance that your partaking of this Supper is not only right thing to do; indeed it will be the God-glorifying, Christ-honoring thing to do; to participate by partaking of the bread and the cup. This morning I want speak to you about the true disciples who said, “Lord is it I?” And I will also be speaking about the one false disciple Judas, who also said on that night in which he betrayed Christ, “Lord is it I”? I hope to clearly present the difference between the true and the false so that you will see more clearly the definiteness of Christ’s atonement for you, the one who is trusting in Him. I believe that the way that we will more clearly come to see our own heart is through reasonable self-examination. I want to give you 3 questions to ask yourself in self-examination before you partake of the Lord’s Supper. 1st – Have I come to see the deceitfulness and potential treachery of my own heart? 2nd - Are you desirous to pay attention to the smaller and greater duties of preparation for the Lord’s Supper? And 3rd – Are you willing to have Christ search your heart to make sure that there is no wicked way in you?

1st – Have I come to see the deceitfulness and potential treachery of my own heart?

Verse 10 says: “Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Him to them.” “And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money.” We need to see the context here; that Judas Iscariot was highly provoked by the Lord Jesus’ words to him and to the other disciples that they should “let Mary alone”, and not criticize her for pouring out the fragrant oil on Him from the alabaster box which cost so much money. Judas had thought that this lavish act of devotion to Christ was a great waste. He thought that it could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor. Let’s think together of the value of things for just a minute. If a denarius was the equivalent of a day’s pay for a skilled laborer, 300 denarii must have been quite a lot of money. But I think that from what I can tell that a denarius was worth somewhat more than that; that a skilled laborer could have probably earned about 7 denarii a day, or so. This would be 210 denarii a month, and about 2500 denarii a year. 300 denarii would then be equivalent to about a month and a third’s wages in that time period for an average working man. This seemed to be a terrible waste, in Judas’ mind; and he was so disgusted and upset with Christ’s response to him in reproving him for trying to object to Mary’s actions, that he immediately left them and went to the chief priests to betray Christ to them.

I would assert to you that he was very provoked because he first of all had a covetous heart. He had the heart of a thief, but he didn’t see it as sin. John’s gospel affirms what I am saying

here; in Chapter 12, verse 4, it says: “But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, who would betray Him, said, ‘Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?’” “This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.” He ended up coming to terms with the chief priests, and to value His Lord for that “princely price” of 30 pieces of silver. There was a prophecy in the book of Zechariah in the Old Testament concerning Judas’ actions in this regard. Zechariah 11: 12 – “Then I said to them (the “them” being the Jewish Sanhedrim, the elders of Israel at the time of Jesus), ‘If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages, and if not refrain.’” “So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver.” “And the Lord said to me, ‘Throw it to the potter’, that princely price they set on me.” “So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord for the potter.” That prophecy was most certainly fulfilled in Judas’ betrayal of Christ. He later on, when it was too late, felt remorse about having betrayed our Lord, and he went back to the chief priests and tried to give the money back to them, but they said: “See to it yourself”. And so he took and threw the 30 pieces of silver into the sanctuary of the temple, and then he went and hanged himself. And they buried him in the potter’s field. This was the most horrible of ways to have spent his life; his sin finding him out and taking him to hell. Here he had the Lord Jesus, the Savior of the World, and the Lord of glory, the One who worth more than all worlds and all things, and he is more concerned with money.

Was the 30 pieces of silver equal to 120 day’s pay in that society? That is what some have said; I do not know. But if that were so, that would mean that Judas was willing to betray and sell his Master for 840 denarii, about 1/3 of a year’s wages for a skilled workman. A slave went for about 500 denarii. But was this the value of our Lord in Judas’ mind? Truly Christ’s value is infinite in the mind of those who have by grace beheld His glory. His worth is beyond our greatest conception if we have come to know who He truly is; God’s beloved and only begotten Son, and if we have come to realize and believe in what He has done for us in the sight of the Holy God. He has obeyed God’s law perfectly on our behalf, and He has suffered, bled, and died for our sins. If we simply consider His blessed Person, He is worth more than all men considered altogether, for He is not simply flesh and blood, but God made manifest in the flesh; He is God and Man both; two natures in one Person. But when we consider what He has done for us, to give us all the blessings of salvation and the gift of eternal life, it brings us to express our deepest love and highest affection; He is worthy of both. But what I would like to focus on in relation to Judas with you now is this. He was willing to secretly betray Jesus. He went out secretly to betray His Master to them. Jesus knew what he was about to do, but the disciples did not know. Why so secret Judas? Do you not see that the Lord Jesus is the reader of hearts? Judas did not see his own sinfulness because He loved money more than all. If he could not get Mary’s gift money by the sale of the box of ointment for 300 denarii, then he knew how he could get more than twice that much money by selling his Lord! Here is not only greed, but avarice.

Rev. James Gardiner in his Encyclopedia of the Bible, says that covetousness is “an unreasonable desire after that which we have not, with a dissatisfaction with what we have.” “It may further be considered as consisting in 1st, An anxious carking care about the things of this world.” “2nd, A rapacity (that is taking what you desire by force) in your going about to get what you want.” “3rd, too frequently it includes sinister and illegal ways of obtaining wealth.” “4. A tenaciousness in keeping it.” “It is a vice which marvelously prevails upon, and insinuates itself into the heart of a man; and for these reasons, it often bears a near resemblance to virtue.” This is exactly what Judas was like. But He did not realize where it was leading him or where it would take him. Oh, my dear friends, do you see how great the sins of greed and covetousness are? Do you see that the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil? It is not money itself that is a root of all evil, but it is being a lover of money that is that root of all sorts of evil. Judas was a

lover of money more than of God. He had been a chosen apostle of our Lord's, and yet he was a devil. He had received gifts of the Holy Spirit to cast out demons and heal the sick, and yet he himself did not have a regenerate heart. He had never been born again by the Spirit of God.

What is the lesson for us here this morning. It is for us to ask the question – “Lord, is it I?” Is this me? Have I examined myself to see if I am in the faith, as it says in 2 Corinthians 13: 5? Is Jesus Christ in me? Do I have a regenerate heart? Do I have a heart that has been changed by the grace of God; a heart will not try to justify any sin, whether secretly or openly? Do I have a heart that will not try to rationalize sin as something which is acceptable? An unregenerate heart will attempt to justify sinning at many points. And even a professed Christian may try to justify sin for the personal reason that it is convenient to them; God and others should be able to understand why they can sin in some particular way. When Judas sought how he might betray Christ, he sought how he might conveniently betray him, it says in verse 11 of our text. He would make betraying the Lord of glory the most convenient thing possible to himself. He thought that he would be a great hero with the chief priests and Pharisees and all the people who did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God, and so he thought that he would make himself rich in popularity with the majority in Israel. I would like you to ask yourself now, before you come to the Lord's table this morning: “Am I tolerating any secret sin?” Do I have some besetting sin that I seem to want to be able to justify in my own sight? Do I think that I deserve more money than I have, and so I actually steal? Do I secretly commit adultery in my heart thinking that no harm will be done, and so I do not mourn over it, and confess it with the full intent of forsaking it? He who covers his sin will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find mercy. (Proverbs 28: 13)

I want you to see the difference between the person who is presumptuous and the person who is truly humble and repentant. Turn with me over to Psalm 19, verse 12. This is David speaking as a true believer who is praying to God concerning the way that he views his own heart. “Who can understand his errors?” (He confesses that there are times when he does not understand himself; he finds himself doing the very thing that he hates in the thoughts of his heart and what he meditates in his heart, just as Paul says that he found this same kind of evil in himself in Romans 7: 15) “Cleanse me from secret faults.” (He does not say that he has no indwelling remaining corruption in his heart; but he does ask to be cleansed from it when he does see it.) “Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me.” (That is, the temptation to these presumptuous sins is lurking there in his heart sometimes, but he asks to be kept back from committing these sins.) “Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression.” “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.” Oh, how precious a passage this is. This is the whole difference between a true and a false believer. The true believer hates sin when he finds it in himself, the false believer secretly loves it and will not have dealings with God over his heart sins; they will attempt to go on secretly having what they want. They do not really believe in God and Christ, for they say, “Who sees, and Who knows?” They will not repent when they might sense that they have a problem, they will not cry to God for grace and help, they will not pray that sin would not have dominion over them. I think that you can now see the difference can you not? Therefore, let each of us who considers ourselves to be a true believer not fail to secretly pray and have dealings with God over all the issues of our heart.

2nd - Are you desirous to pay attention to the smaller and the greater duties of preparation for the Lord's Supper?

Verse 12 says – “Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover lamb, His disciples said to Him, ‘Where do You want us to go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover?’ “And He sent out two of His disciples and said to them, ‘Go into the city, and a man

will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him.” “Wherever he goes in, say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says, ‘Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?’” “Then he will show you a large upper room, furnished and prepared; there make ready for us.” “So His disciples went out, and came into the city, and found it just as He had said to them; and they prepared the Passover.” “In the evening He came with the twelve.” “Now as they sat and ate, Jesus said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, one of you who eats with Me will betray Me.’” “And they began to be sorrowful, and to say to Him one by one, ‘Is it I?’” “And another said, ‘Is it I?’” “He answered and said to them, ‘It is one of the twelve, who dips with me at the table.’” Matthew’s gospel says: “Then Judas who was betraying Him, answered and said, ‘Rabbi, is it I?’” “He said to him, ‘You said it yourself.’” So you can see here that the disciples of our Lord were consciously recognizing what they needed to do to help their Lord when it came time for the observance of the Old Testament ordinance of the Passover. It would be right after the celebration of the Passover that Jesus would institute the Lord’s Supper. They knew that He would want them to help him with the arrangements.

How thankful I am that there are those in our church who do the same. They are conscious that for a church to function as a church which is glorifying to God that there are details of preparation which go into every service and every activity of the church. The fact that there are people who are willing to function at every level of service to their Lord, even in things which may seem small and unimportant, they know that these things need to be attended to. The ministry of the Lord Jesus was not a one man ministry. Oh yes, it all centered around him and what He was doing as the Son of God in fulfilling His ministry, but His Apostles and His disciples supported him in that ministry. Everyone who was His true disciple was eager to help out at various points. Some of the wealthier women supported Him by their own financial gifts. Some helped serve the meals and some helped in going to get the meal when they came to Samaria; some helped in distributing the meal when they fed the 5,000. Spiritually, they also did what they could to support our Lord. In Luke 22: 28 Jesus says: “But you are those who have continued with me in My trials.” These are the main characteristics of a true disciple of Christ. They want to know what the mind of their Lord is on every subject. And they want to be able to serve him in whatever context that He would have them to serve in His Church.

The greater duties of their preparation for the Lord’s Supper were to be found in relation to who was going to betray Him, in this case. In our case they are seen in relation to the preparation of our hearts to observe it with a right view of ourselves and Him. Now you will notice that all of the disciples, Judas included asked our Lord if it was them who was betraying Him. But turn over with me to John Chapter 13, verse 1. “Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.” “And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself.” “After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.” “Then He came to Simon Peter, and Peter said to Him, “Lord, are You washing my feet?” “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this.’” “Peter said to Him, ‘You shall never wash my feet!’” “Jesus answered Him, ‘If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.’” “Simon Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!’”

This is what so many Christians need to consider; the fact that they do not understand their need for Christ to wash them spiritually, and to cleanse them spiritually, each and every day. Not simply when they first come to Him for salvation, but each and every day. Lord, is I an Apostle who needs to be washed? Never! But Peter, this false attitude of your own sufficiency is

the very reason that you will fall into sin and deny Me three times; Jesus is saying. It is true, dear Christian, that when you come to Christ you bathe. You ask Him to wash you and to cleanse you from all of your past sins. That is the bath of the washing of water in regeneration and the renewing of your soul. But you need further works of grace every day. You need Jesus to wash you every day from the sins of your heart and your walk, where you have gotten dirty; Jesus must stoop down to wash your feet, spiritually, so to speak. If you do not let Him do this, you have no part with Him. So as you come down for the Lord's Supper now, remember this, and have dealings with God. Feed and feast upon Christ, and glory in the reality of His stooping to help you make progress in your heart in your walk with Him.

3rd – Are you willing to have Christ search your heart to make sure that there is no wicked way in you?

Here in our text in verse 19 it says: "And they began to be sorrowful and to say to Him one by one, 'Is it I?'" "And another said, 'Is it I?'" And, "He answered and said to them, 'It is one of the twelve, who sips with me in the dish.'" "The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed!" "I would have been good for that man if he had never been born." And then immediately in verse 22 we find Jesus instituting the Lord's Supper – "As they were eating Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.'" "Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. I want you to notice, as we are now gathered at the table to observe this Supper, that there was self-examination that proceeded it. Each disciple looked into their own heart, and asked the question: "Is it I?" Even Judas asked the question as well. But, let's back up for a moment and think about what it says in John's gospel, Chapter 13, verse 22 – "Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke." "Now," it says, "there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved." "Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke." "Then leaning on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, 'Lord, who is it?'" "Jesus answered, 'It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it.'" "And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot the son of Simon." "Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him." "Then Jesus said, 'What you do, do quickly.'" "But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him." "For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, 'Buy those things we need for the feast,' or that he should give something to the poor." "Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately." "And it was night."

This is really a sad situation for Judas. He never had private dealings with the Lord over his own sin. He denied that he needed to do this. But still, he went through all the motions of observing the ordinance of the Passover. He even took the piece of bread from Jesus' hand. But it was not for good for him; it was for his judgment. It was not the Lord's Spirit who entered him, it was Satan. Let us remember 2 things as we partake today. Let us remember now, as we come to partake of this bread and drink of this cup that we are remembering what Jesus had to do to bring us grace to change our hearts so that we would have the wisdom to examine them day by day. He had to be betrayed, He had to suffer, and bleed, and die to purchase this great salvation. And let us also remember the importance of self-examination. Self-examination is not morbid introspection. It is not simply mourning over yourself and doubting and fearing that you are not measuring up. It is learning to bring your heart to Jesus that He might search you and know you, and lead you and guide you by His good Spirit into all the truth, and the reality of the greatness of His grace. The words of Psalm 139, verses 23 and 24 are very appropriate here – "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." This is what we should be willing and even eager to do each and every day, so that we might glorify God in the way that we spend our time and live our lives for Him while we yet have time, here upon the earth.