

Then Satan Entered Judas

CTW: Psalm 119:129-136

1st Scripture: John 13:1-30

2nd Scripture: Luke 22:1-6

Introduction

When you consider the brief biographical sketch that we are given in Scripture, concerning the life of Judas Iscariot, we get a terrifying picture of just how hardened the human heart is naturally. To have walked so closely to the Christ, to have witnessed first hand the powerful teaching and miracles of the Christ, to have tasted of the innocent and sinless purity of the Christ, to have been taught by and empowered to perform miracles by the Christ, and yet, to remain in the position of a hypocrite the whole time, ultimately unto betraying the Christ into the hands of His enemies for a hand full of silver, is a profound testimony of just how hard the human heart can really be. And what's even more frightening, is that we share the same nature that Judas had.

In my Systematic Theology class at GCA, we have just begun to consider the doctrine of "Ecclesiology," or the doctrine of the church. And we spoke about two important ways, in which, the church must be presently viewed. There is the invisible, universal church, which consists of every single, authentic believer in Heaven and on earth. This is the church, as God sees her. And then, there is the visible, local church, which consists of all, who, having made a profession of faith, have been baptized into local churches. This is the church, as we see her. And the sad reality is that not everyone in the visible local church, is truly a part of the universal church. In other words, there are tares among the wheat in the churches, because we cannot see the heart, and we are called to accept the profession of those who profess faith in Christ, allowing them to join the local body. To be sure, even as one of the twelve Apostles of our Lord, and many from among the multitudes proved to be hypocrites, it would not be wrong to anticipate that such infiltration will breach all local churches, at some point or another. Not everyone who names the name of Christ; not everyone who has a profession of faith, is truly saved and part of the universal church. And this is why we are called to periodically examine

ourselves, in accordance with what the Scriptures teach about Christ's true sheep, to ensure that we are truly in the faith.

This morning, I want to address the severity and danger of being insincere in the faith, challenging us all to ensure that we are not merely "playing church," while not truly, privately walking faithfully with God. I realize that we can, indeed, deceive ourselves into thinking that our faith is authentic, when it really is not, but even Judas, in the privacy of his own mind, would have been able to clearly identify his own hypocrisy, because after all, he was stealing from the money purse that he held on behalf of the Lord and His disciples, all along. We can and ought to have the assurance that our faith is genuine. But, we have to be honest with ourselves, and with God, considering the real motives of our professed Christianity. In other words, in the inner depths, I believe that the hypocrite knows more than we might think, even though he/she can easily fool everyone else, saying the right things, putting on the outward aura of holiness, while in reality harboring ill or impure motives. And so, coming from somewhat of a unique angle this morning, I want to challenge any who might be knowingly harboring a hypocritical faith (who might not be truly walking with the Lord, whom they profess with their mouths), to consider the grave danger of remaining in such a state, especially as we observe what happens to Judas, here in our main text.

I. A Ready Vessel for Satanic Penetration

The religious leaders of the Jews were plotting and looking for a way to destroy/kill the Lord. They knew they couldn't take hold of Him publicly, even though He was preaching in their synagogues throughout the course of His ministry, because they feared the general population, who had taken an interest in the Lord's teaching and miracles. Notice, in verse 2, we are told, "And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people." And so, they had to find a way to lay hold of Him by stealth, out of the public eye. This design had been clearly made known to Judas Iscariot, and he saw this as an opportunity to serve his own greedy purposes.

Before we get to verse 3, it is important that we understand how Judas had set himself up to become a vessel for satan, leading into what we are told in verse 3. In other words, I don't

believe that Judas would have been as vulnerable to commit such a heinous sin against the Lord, if his heart was not being gradually shaped in that direction along the way, as he continued to feed his idolatrous greed, even in the face of such a profound testimony of grace, offered to him by the Lord, for the duration of their time together. Judas was ultimately swallowed up by his own greed! The more you shun grace; the more you put off repentance in the face of such great light, the more hardened you become, and susceptible to committing much more heinous acts, involving the type of sin you have failed to part with along the way. Sin that is entertained more and more, will often grow stronger and worse. Hence, the famous slogan, “Be putting sin to death, or sin will put you to death.”

And so, as I said, idolatrous greed was clearly in the heart of Judas all along. When Mary (Lazarus’s sister) had anointed the Lord with very expensive perfume, Judas had complained about how that perfume could have been sold for a good cost, and given to the poor. But, John reveals to us the real motives of Judas, that were behind his rebuke. In John 12:4-6, we are told, “But one of [Jesus’s] 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.*” And so, Judas was a perpetual thief all along, and clearly had self-serving reasons for following the Lord. And these self-serving reasons blinded him from embracing everything that he had heard and seen the Lord say and do. Though true, eternal riches were ever before him, he completely missed it! And the more he missed it, the harder he grew against it, until he was even willing to betray it, to feed his idolatrous greed. And it was at this point that Satan made use of the investment that he was preparing and corruptively nurturing for the present moment. Judas was a prepared and ready vessel for satanic penetration!

II. Then Satan Entered Judas

Then we are told these frightening words in verse 3 of our main text: “Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve.” Now, what are we to make of this statement? I don’t believe that Luke is stating that Satan had literally entered Judas, in the sense of possessing him, as the demons had done to others, and whom Jesus cast out. I think the

sense of what Luke means here is further clarified by John in John's Gospel, where John later states in John 13:2, "And supper being ended, the devil *having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him...*" Following this, Jesus proceeded to wash the feet of His disciples. And so, John is actually explaining here what Luke meant by Satan entering Judas. The point is that Satan, taking advantage of Judas's open heart to greed, tempted Judas and put it in his heart to betray the Lord, by presenting an opportunity for Judas to feed his greed by making a deal with the religious leaders so as to secure some more money by this means. Again, Judas knew that the religious leaders were looking for an opportunity to arrest Jesus. Well, Satan then flashed this reality before Judas's eyes and heart, so that, Judas would see dollar signs, and then take the bait to betray the Lord to the religious leaders for profit. It is as James says in his Epistle, that we are not tempted by God, but rather, we are tempted when we are drawn away by our own sinful lusts and desires. This is exactly what happened to Judas. His own lust for greed (and idolatry) set him up for Satan to use him, even for such a wicked purpose as betraying the Lord.

And again, we are reminded here that this Judas was numbered among the twelve! Judas wasn't some random individual from the outside. Indeed, he wasn't even just a simple committed disciple. He was one of the twelve, whom Jesus had set apart, and who had served Jesus in a close and unique way. One of His close disciples; one of His inner circle, was taken hold of by Satan, and used to breach the inner trust that had existed among the twelve.

"So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them. And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude" (vs. 4-6).

Having been taken in by the seductive sway of Satan, Judas then went to the chief priests and the captains, to make them an offer, where he would betray the Lord to them for an agreed upon amount of money. And unsurprisingly, we are told that the religious leaders were elated by this, and they ultimately agreed to pay Judas thirty pieces of silver for his labors. Judas then promised to do so, and he went out and waited for the right opportunity to enact his plan, when he should find an occasion where the multitudes would be absent, so they could privately arrest Him.

III. Closing Applications

1) See here the danger of flirting with sin and refusing to strive to put it to death. Are Christians without sin? No. We still struggle with, battle against and wrestle with remaining sin. But, we do struggle with, battle against and wrestle with remaining sin. Sin ought to grieve us, compelling us not to comfortably embrace it, but rather to plead with God to help us overcome it. If you are comfortably set in a pattern of toying with any particular sin, friend, you must recognize that you are setting yourself up to be further hardened in that sin, and don't be surprised if you find yourself coming to the point where you are being prepared to be a vessel for satan, to infiltrate Christ's church. We must take sin seriously.

You may think you have control. You may think that you can presume upon God, and mingle with sin carelessly, with the intent of walking away from it at some later time. But, you must understand, to think like that is to fail to understand the idolatrous nature of your own heart. When that hardness settles in; when the cement of your careless neglect to protect your very soul sets, the enemy will use you for his own purposes, and you will have no desire to resist him, at all, at that point. Indeed, it is more dangerous to be a hypocrite in the local church, joined to the people of God by a verbal confession (maybe baptized and among God's people), than it is to just be a full-blown professed non-Christian on the outside. To be sure, the devil has a special place for false converts in the church, and he knows that he can use them to do great damage to the church. He is willingly patient to prep them unto such ends. He will let years go by even, so that, he can infiltrate the Lord's church by false professors. False Christians are like breaches in defensive walls, and they present golden opportunities for the enemy to penetrate and infiltrate the church. Let me ask you, does that not frighten you? Would you continue to pretend, and to fool others in the body, for your own selfish purposes, recognizing that you may very well turn out to be the Judas Iscariot of this local church? It would have been better if Judas were never born, the Lord said. Now, I realize that Judas had uniquely betrayed the Lord Jesus Christ, but do you think for a second that Christ is any less concerned for His bride, the church?

Please, if you are living a double life; if your heart does not truly line up with your profession of faith and you are comfortably walking in private sin, repent now and seek the Lord in truth! Don't allow your present love for temporal lusts to swallow you up, when the enemy

comes along and enters you, as it were! Recognize that to nurture sin continually is evidence of the fact that satan just might be nurturing you for a much more grievous purpose. And when he “puts it into your heart,” you will be hardened beyond repair, entrapped and unwilling to budge. Judas spent three and a half years with the God-Man; he heard His preaching, beheld His innocence, saw His miracles, indeed, performed miracles in His Name, himself! And yet, he continued to feed his idolatrous greed. And he betrayed the Lord of glory! He had no idea that he was a mere vessel being nurtured, shaped and corrupted by his greed, unto so wicked an end! Don’t let that be you!

2) For those of you who are truly in Christ, again, in the battle against sin, confessing and warring against sin, be ever thankful to God for His preserving grace. Were it not for the continued faithfulness and grace of our God, we would all be Judases. Thank the Father every day for His sustaining grace, that He has given you eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart that is at war with sin. And thank the Lord Jesus Christ for His constant intercession, because it is His prayers for us, that our faith will not fail, which enable us to overcome the powerful deception of satan and sin. And thank the Holy Spirit who brings the conviction of sin to our hearts, and who continually drives us back to God and to Christ for continual grace each day, so that, we might have the strength to press on and to put sin to death. Brethren, we hardly understand the deceptive nature of our own hearts, and just how prone we are to going astray, but our Triune God keeps us, and lovingly disciplines us, so that, we persevere and stay on course. If you are uncomfortable with sin; if your sin grieves you, never see that as a bad thing. That discomfort is only temporary, and it is doing your soul a lot of eternal good. Indeed, it is one of the evidences of God’s love for you.

3) Finally, if you are not a Christian this morning; if you have not fled to Christ, and to Christ alone, for refuge and salvation, see that you are on a path that is quickly leading to utter and eternal destruction. Christ is the only way of salvation, and unless you repent of your sins and embrace Him by faith, you will be forever condemned, and destined to become the object of God’s fierce wrath, forever! Forever is a long time, friend. Don’t die in your sins! And don’t die, trusting in anything but Christ, or you will die in your sins. For, He is the only way to eternal life. [The Gospel!!!] Amen!!! Benediction: Jude 1:24-25