

“God’s Purpose for Judas”
John 6:70-71
(Preached at Trinity, June 12, 2019)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. At the beginning of **Chapter 6** multitudes were flocking to Christ. They were impressed by His healing and miracles. They were prepared to make Him their king.
John 6:14-15 NAU - "Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world." ¹⁵ So Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone."
2. By the time we’ve reached the end of the chapter all this has changed. The teaching of Christ proved too much for them.
John 6:60 NAS - "Many therefore of His disciples, when they heard *this* said, "This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?"
3. The multitude steadily declined until only the twelve remained.
John 6:66 NAU - "As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore."
4. None of this took Jesus by surprise. John declares the sovereign insight of Christ.
John 6:64 NAU - "For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him."
 - A. On one hand Jesus was a man. He possessed all the qualities of our humanity, except sin.
 - B. On the other hand, Jesus was Divine. His divinity did not change His humanity. It did not make Jesus more man, or greater man.
 - a. But there were times when His divinity was vividly displayed. This was true with regard to His understanding of man and of God’s sovereign purpose.
 - b. We saw this in **Chapter 2**
John 2:23-25 NAU - "Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. ²⁴ But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, ²⁵ and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man."
 - c. Jesus declared His oneness of purpose with the Father
John 5:19 NAU - "whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner."

5. Jesus declares in **Verse 64** that He was fully aware of who would betray Him. "and who it was that would betray Him."
The actions of Judas Iscariot were known by Jesus from the beginning. In fact, Jesus chose Judas as one of the twelve Apostles knowing that he was ordained as God's instrument of Christ's betrayal and arrest.
John 6:70-71 NAU - "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?" ⁷¹ Now He meant Judas *the son of Simon Iscariot*, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him."
6. Jesus came in fulfillment of the eternal Covenant of Redemption. Nothing was left to chance. All of history is a display of God's redemptive purpose that He determined before the world began.
- A. Jesus was sent forth by the Father as the Savior of His people.
John 6:37-40 NAU - "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. ³⁸ "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹ "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰ "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."
- B. The angel declared this to Joseph, the husband of Mary
Matthew 1:19-21 NAU - "And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. ²⁰ But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹ "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."
7. Jesus came to save His people from their sins. This was God's eternal purpose. But there were a multitude of details that had to come together in order for the crucifixion to take place. Every detail was predetermined. Judas was used as God's instrument in the grand orchestration of the crucifixion. God not only ordained the end, He ordained every means to the end.
- I. Consider for a few minutes God's sovereign oversight over every detail of our lives
- A. We refer to first and second causes
1. God is the First Cause of all things
In other words, God has predetermined all things.
God determined our birth. He determined when and where we would be born. He determined our parents. He determined the color of our hair, and on and on in millions of details
 2. God is also sovereign over the second causes, what we call the use of means.
 - a. God determined our parents. But He also determine when and where *they* would be born. He determined when and how they met and the attraction they had for one another. Any misplaced detail, and you would not have been born.
 - b. God determined all the details of the means that led to your birth.

3. God can work with or without the use of means
London Confession, Chapter 5 – of Divine Providence
“. . .there is not anything befalls any by chance, or without His providence; yet by the same providence He ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently. God in His ordinary providence maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them at His pleasure.”

- B. God not only determined that Jesus would die on the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice for sinners. He also ordained every means to the end.
 1. God determined when Jesus would be born. The setting was perfect, the timing perfect. Every detail in the life of Christ was in perfect fulfillment of God’s plan.
 2. God ordained the actions of Judas Iscariot in betraying Christ. He also ordained the actions of Caiaphas and the counsel as well as the actions of Pontius Pilate. All of these were the means God used in carrying out His purpose
Acts 4:27-28 NAU - "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur."

II. How is it that God can ordain the countless details of our lives while holding us responsible for our decisions?

- A. The life of Judas was not unlike billions of others
 1. He was born, went through childhood, adolescence and adulthood
 2. The life of Judas was filled with the boundless decisions that characterize our days. His decisions were not coerced or forced upon him. He lived his life with freedom of action.
 3. The freedom of action enjoyed by Judas was tainted by the universal problem of sin.
 - a. Every decision, every move of his life was under the dark cloud of sin.
 - b. The pride, greed, selfishness, hatred, envy, anger, and carnal lusts that mark our fallen condition control our every move.
 - c. By nature we love ourselves and our sin more than we love God
 4. John describes the heart of Judas in **Chapter 12**
John 12:4-6 NAU - "But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, said, ⁵ "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and given to poor *people*?" ⁶ Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it."

5. Judas was governed by his selfish greed. His decision to betray Christ was motivated by his greed.
Matthew 26:14-16 NAU - "Then one of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests ¹⁵ and said, "What are you willing to give me to betray Him to you?" And they weighed out thirty pieces of silver to him. ¹⁶ From then on he *began* looking for a good opportunity to betray Jesus."
 6. Judas was also influenced by the same tempting lies that Satan throws at all of sinful humanity.
John 13:2 NAU - "During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, *the son of Simon*, to betray Him,"
John 13:21-27 NAU - "When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me." ²² The disciples *began* looking at one another, at a loss *to know* of which one He was speaking. ²³ There was reclining on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. ²⁴ So Simon Peter gestured to him, and said to him, "Tell *us* who it is of whom He is speaking." ²⁵ He, leaning back thus on Jesus' bosom, said to Him, "Lord, who is it?" ²⁶ Jesus then answered, "That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him." So when He had dipped the morsel, He took and gave it to Judas, *the son of Simon Iscariot*. ²⁷ After the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Therefore Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly."
 - a. Jesus is saying that Judas was an instrument of the Devil.
"One of you is a devil"
 - b. Satan is under the sovereign reign of God and uses him to accomplish His good purposes.
- B. Judas did what he wanted to do, but he did what God ordained he would do
1. This is repeated billions of times each day.
Proverbs 21:1-2 NAU - "The king's heart is *like* channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes. ² Every man's way is right in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the hearts."
 2. When Jesus was delivered over to the Jewish leaders and Pilate and Herod Jesus was but a pawn in the exercise of their lust for power. They thought they were in control of their actions. They had no idea they were accomplishing the will of God.
 3. Every mocking curse of the crowd came from sinful hearts but were under the sovereign direction of God.
Each individual was active making personal choices. They were choices of their own volition – choices of which they will bear responsibility
- C. This is the nature of life.
1. God providentially brings hundreds of details before us each day. hundreds of decisions. Moments that must be received, reviewed, and then decisions made.

2. Every decision, however, serves to fulfill the purpose of God
Acts 4:27-28 NAU - "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur."
3. Yet our sin is our own – we make the decision to sin.
 It was Judas' own wicked heart that brought him to the sinful decision to betray Christ. Judas was a thief. He was filled with selfish greed. Faced with the opportunity of personal gain he followed the leading of his heart.

Conclusion:

1. Now do you understand the meaning of the words I repeat often –
 "People always do what they want to do."
2. If you are apart from Christ you only think you are ruling your life. Your sin has blinded you into believing that your decisions are wise. But it is madness. Everything we do that is contrary to God's Law will bring us misery, both now and eternally. Flee to Christ.
Proverbs 1:7 NAU - "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction."
Proverbs 9:10 NAU - "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."
3. As you seek to honor Christ with your life He directs your way.
Proverbs 3:5-6 KJV - "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. ⁶ In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."
4. There is one more point in this passage that is worthy of serious contemplation. John reminds us in **Verse 71** that Judas was one of the twelve. He is set before us as a solemn warning. He was close to Christ, intimate with Christ. He walked with Jesus for three years, yet he did not know Him savingly.
 - A. James Montgomery Boice wrote: "Judas did all these things and did them so well that, so far as we know, not one of the disciples ever suspected him of being what he was. Yet underneath it all he was no friend of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he eventually betrayed him."¹
 - B. It should cause all of us to look closely at our own profession of faith in Christ. Has Jesus captivated your heart? Are you serving Him? Are you resting in Him alone?
 - C. Learn carefully the difference between Peter and Judas.
 - a. Peter testified to his faith in Christ
John 6:67-69 NAU - "So Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?" ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ "We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."
 - b. Judas was one of the twelve, and yet he betrayed Christ.

¹ James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 545.

- c. Both ultimately denied Christ. Peter later repented and was restored. Judas went out and hung himself.
John 17:12 NAU - "While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled."