

Mark 14:10-11

¹⁰ Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Him to them. ¹¹ And when they heard *it*, they were glad, and promised to give him money. So he sought how he might conveniently betray Him.

Matthew 26:14-16

¹⁴ Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests ¹⁵ and said, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶ So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.

Luke 22:3-6

³ Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. ⁴ So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them. ⁵ And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. ⁶ So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude.

Last week we looked at one of the greatest acts of kindness being done to Christ. Mary worshipped her Lord at a very great expense. And the person who criticized that act the most, the one who pretended to be the most moral and spiritual, now is the very one who commits the greatest act of treachery this world has ever experienced. We need to watch and learn. History often repeats itself.

As usual, there is information in the other gospels that Mark doesn't include. I am going to pull all three passages together from Mark 14:10,11 Matthew 26:14-16 and Luke 22:3-6. This is a compilation.

Then (lk) **Satan entered** one of the twelve called **Judas Iscariot**. Judas then (lk) **went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains** and asked them (mt) **"What are you willing to give me if I deliver Christ to you?"** And they **counted out to him thirty pieces of silver**. They gladly promised to give Judas this money if he delivered on his promise. **So Judas sought how he might conveniently betray Christ** and (lk) **sought opportunity to betray Christ to them in the absence of the multitude**.

There are three parties in this transaction.

We have Judas

The chief priests and captains

And Christ

Judas portrays the scariest behavior of all. It is truly frightening. He shows what can happen to a false Christian.

We know a lot about Judas from the bits and pieces we have picked up through Christ's ministry. We know that he was with Christ from the beginning. We know that Christ picked him as a disciple. We assume that he exercised the power

given to him to preach and to heal and cast out demons. Judas was in charge of the finances. And he was a thief. So it is very likely that he loved money. He was not in the inner circle. Maybe he resented that. We don't know. But we do know **what he finally did**.

Our hearts are the trickiest people we know. We look at what Judas did and we think, I could never do such a thing. And Judas would have said the same thing. And the priests and captains would have said the same thing. These people had shaped their world view to a place where evil looked good and good looked evil. Wrong thinking led to wrong actions. I doubt that these players would have defined their actions at any time **as evil**. It isn't like they were saying, we know this is wrong to do, but we are going to do it anyway. No. They had lied to themselves about themselves and their world long enough that they believed the lies.

How does that happen? How could this man be inside Jesus most trusted group but be proven in the end to be false? Why wasn't he exposed early on? How could he foster this wickedness and yet still be untouched by the ministry he had all around him?

Well, he did it the same way we do it.

Let's look at Judas's life to find out **how to have your heart remain untouched by true ministry**.

So, let's look at Judas's life. We don't know a lot, but we know that Judas had at least one secret sin. We know that he was stealing from the money box. This was probably discovered after his death. But the sin was certainly happening while he was alive.

Think about this. Judas had a secret sin. He had to know it was a sin. I am sure he had lots of justifications in his head. But he had to know it violated one of the 10 commandments.

And what did he do about it? Did he seek out someone he trusted to help him with this inclination to sin? Did he expose it to someone who could help it? Did he confess this sin to Christ? There is no evidence of such a thing. What Judas did was keep it hidden. He probably allowed his justifications to excuse his behavior in his head.

This is where the devil usually starts in a person. His goal for your life is destruction. He prowls around for people he can devour. That is what he wants for you this morning.

And one of the first things that he wants in your life is **an attitude** or **behavior** in your life that the bible clearly defines as sin. He wants you doing it or thinking it on a regular basis. He wants it to become a stronghold, something that you either **don't want to give up**, or it **scares you** to think about giving it up because you feel you can't stop it. You are afraid it is too big of a thing to take on.

Then he wants you to justify that behavior. He wants you to believe that you either **can't** or **you don't need to** stop the behavior or thinking. He wants you to think there is some reason that makes that sin permissible in your case. You might redefine sin so the thing you are doing is no longer a sin. So you might do it theologically. Or you might appeal to how you are designed. You might say, yes scripture does say that I should not do these things or think these thoughts, but this is just the way I am designed. I cannot help it. There are lots of ways we can deceive ourselves into justifying our sin.

But the next step is what makes it all deadly. In order to accomplish the devil's plan in your life this next thing is absolutely necessary. He must keep you from bringing this sin out into the open. We can see how effective that was with Judas. The devil must keep you from **really baring your soul** about this sin to a brother or sister who can and will help you. The devil knows you must keep it a secret for his plan for you to be successful. He doesn't mind if you talk about this sin to someone who will not call it what it is. In fact he would probably prefer it. Because that makes us feel even more justified in our position. He wants you **comforted in your sin**. This is different than being **comforted in your repentance**. It is different from being encouraged in your struggle against sin. He wants you to have believers around you who will **not call your sin a sin**. He knows that will create the greatest likelihood of you remaining in your sin. And that, without a doubt, is the devil's will for your life.

There are two applications here. The first is, are we being like Judas? Is there something in our life that is very questionable? Scripture appears to say it is wrong. But we cling to it anyway. We might make mention of it, but we keep the details of its severity carefully hidden away. We present one image but we live another. People would be surprised if they saw what really went on. They would never imagine that we were pilfering the money box, or whatever it is we are doing.

It is never safe to play with known sin. It is never safe to harbor known evil. Like Jason taught us at church camp, be killing sin or sin will be killing you. Judas is the perfect example of what secret sin will result in.

The second is, will our ministry help a potential Judas? Do we believe **people's** explanation of their problems over what **scripture says**? Do we listen to people without considering what **God says about what they are saying**? Do we show empathy when what we should be doing is telling truth? If a person is living in sin, the kindest thing we can do for them is not to help them feel good about

living in sin. The kindest thing we can do is address their sin and help them get out of it. And only the Maker is qualified to tell us **what is** and is **what is not** allowed. Only God is qualified to define sin for us.

Now look at what Luke tells us about Judas's visit to the religious rulers. It says Judas **went his way**.

When we have secluded our sin and gotten used to living dual lives, the next step is usually to do that which is most true to ourselves. Betrayal is usually the result of a failure to commit ourselves. It is a display of a lack of loyalty that we have always fostered. Betrayal is due to a person having a personal agenda that is different than the agenda of the group to which they belong.

That is the danger present in much of how Christians in America choose a church. Most professing Christians look for a church that best meets their needs. They are not looking for a family to integrate with. They are looking for a service group to service them. Instead of viewing it as a family that graciously welcomes them into itself, they view it more as a Walmart that they can go get the things they want. There are many problems with this, but one of the greatest is that there is no loyalty.

The 11 disciples that were left may not have represented Christ well, but deep down they were loyal to Christ. And ultimately they all suffered and died for him. They were committed to Christ. They had a deep belief that He was worth serving. So their lives became dedicated to Him. God was the most important thing in their lives.

But Judas was in that group for a different purpose. He had his own agenda. **Judas** was the most important thing in **Judas's life**. He had in mind what he wanted out of that group and he never got it. So for Judas to follow his own agenda was not even a change of mind for Judas. Nothing really changed, except that the devil entered into him. Judas was part of the group as long as it met his agenda. When it stopped fulfilling what he wanted, to move on was not a big step.

We are aghast when we look at what Judas did to Christ. But what we fail to see is that often marriage splits and church splits are pretty much in the same vein as what Judas did. All it takes is for a person to think that their agenda is more important than the purpose of the whole. We only need to think that **what I want** is paramount in life. When we think that thought, we will spend anyone who **doesn't give us what we want** or **doesn't take us where we want to go**. The day of the betrayal would really come as no surprise if we were to know the direction of the heart. A person who is committed primarily to their own benefit in this life is by nature disloyal. Everything is a potential sacrifice on the alter of self.

This truth should drive us to examine our relationship with Christ, with the church, with our spouses, with our friends. Do we truly love God more than self? Will we trust that He will truly reward us for faithfulness in a way that is more beneficial to us than the scraps we can scrape up in this life? That is what allows us to have a loyalty to God's people, even when that loyalty costs us dearly. That is what allows us to remain committed to spouses and churches when it seems like the cost we pay is greater than the benefit we gain. Essentially the basis of our trust in one another is really **the trust in our mutual commitment to Christ at the temporary expense of our own benefit.**

And all it takes to be a Judas is to prioritize what we want for ourselves and our families above that which God wants. That is all that it takes.

So, how do you regard your life? Is it truly all about Christ? Can we sing take my life and let it be and mean it? Can we break the fixations we have on those things we think we must have in order to love one another? What is there in us that would easily lead us to be a Judas? Where are we likely to "go his way" like Judas did in our text this morning?

Now we see that Satan entered Judas. I used to think that is what led to Judas doing the awful thing that he did. I now believe it was all pretty well set into motion before Satan ever entered Judas.

I have been upgrading pcs from Windows 7 and 8 to Windows 10. There is a little utility that runs that tells me that the machine is Windows 10 ready. Then I am free to upgrade that pc. Well Judas was devil ready. He had made all the evil selfish choices needed up to this point. He was not a committed follower of Christ. He had never dedicated his life to following Christ. I think now that the devil entered Judas because this is not a task he wanted to delegate to an underling. Judas had given his permission to the devil by his rejection of the Lordship of Christ. He displayed that Satan was his spiritual father. Now Satan was just entering one of his own.

Then Judas went to cut a deal with the religious leaders. The leaders he spoke to consisted of the chief priests and captains. So the chief priests probably would have been Sadducees in upper leadership. The captains were probably the temple guard soldiers. They would have had limited civil authority to carry out the laws in regard to the domain of the religious worship.

Notice the question- **how much will you give me?**

That was always Judas's question. It was probably the question he was asking when he began to follow Christ. How much will you give me? But He was not willing to accept Christ's terms. Eternal reward was not enough. He would not

trust Christ for a reward on Christ's terms. Judas wanted it on **his terms**. So, for the here and now 30 pieces of silver was better than eternal life later.

30 pieces of silver, incidentally, was the price of a slave. **Exodus 21:32**

³² **If the ox gores a male or female servant, he shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.**

Zechariah 11:12-14

¹² **Then I said to them, "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. ¹³ **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. ¹⁴ **Then I cut in two my other staff, Bonds, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.******

So from this point forward Judas is looking for a way to have the leaders arrest Christ privately. I don't know why this information was hard to get for them. But for whatever reason it was difficult to catch Christ in seclusion.

There are several more observations we can make here.

First we see one of the twelve turned out to be a turncoat. There was falseness even in this inner circle. We can pretty well bet that there will be false followers in almost every circle. People will appear to be following Christ, they will appear to be a true body member, but at some point they will either find something inside so distasteful or something outside so seductive that they will leave the fold to pursue their own plans. We don't need to be shocked when that happens. Christ promised it. About the only place you don't find this is where people are persecuted for their faith. In those circles there is nothing that appeals to the flesh to claim to be a Christian. That keeps falseness to a bare minimum.

Second we see that Judas sold out Christ for something he didn't need. He essentially traded **what he needed most** for **what he didn't need at all**. So many people make that same fools trade. They trade their lives for stuff. We don't see anywhere that the disciples went hungry while they were with Christ. Judas wasn't needing for food, clothing or shelter. But he held in his mind that he needed the money he was able to pilfer from the cash drawer. And he paid a great price for that thing he held in his mind as being important. Idols are always like that. They require worship at the expense of our worship of God.

Third, note that the **leadership** did not **approach Judas**. **Judas** approached **them**. They had no idea there was a traitor in Jesus's group. But the leadership, once approached, was more than happy to help Judas with his plan. Judas had more in

common with the Christ haters at this point than the Christ lovers. And the enemies of Christ always have one thing in common; hatred of God.

Fourth, I have a quote from Matthew Henry I'd like to read.

Note, The greater profession men make of religion, and the more they are employed in the study and service of it, the greater opportunity they have of doing mischief, if their hearts be not right with God. If Judas had not been an apostle, he could not have been a traitor; if men had known the way of righteousness, they could not have abused it.

Essentially, insiders can do far more damage to the church than outsiders. We can steel our minds against the critics attacking us for believing God and what God says. But our defenses are down to those on the inside, those we believe we are to love like Jesus loved.

Sixth- notice that the leadership did not attempt to make Judas testify against Christ. They could have easily made that part of the deal. But they didn't. Why not? This is even more proof that they knew the Messiah was innocent of all the charges they were bringing against Him. But since, in their minds he was guilty of blasphemy, the ends justified the means. They would feel ok taking whatever means they needed to take to get Christ killed. And they would do it, even though one of his inner circle could not come up with any offenses Christ had committed.

OK we have taken a hard look at Judas. Now let's close up with a quick look at the Jewish leadership and Christ.

Jewish Leadership- There is really nothing good to say about this group of people. We need to consider the sovereignty of God in all of this. God allowed these men to be in charge of that which had His name on it. These men would readily kick people out of their access to God, beginning with those who were God's favorites. They would block their access to worship and to sacrificing their sheep. Then they escalated to killing the son of God. That is leadership God allowed.

We cannot assume that because someone is in spiritual leadership that they are right. But we can assume that if they are evil, it is because God has a purpose for allowing it to be so. This evil group was going to do the most important thing for people everywhere to be saved from their sin and to be given new life in Christ. They were going to crucify Christ. Had they not carried out their part, we would all be lost. So while it may have seemed to those who were victims of this evil leadership that all was lost. While those who suffered at their hands may have wondered what God was doing, God had a wonderful plan.

These men were self serving. They were inept at their job. They were ripping people off for their own gain. They were hirelings to the nth degree. They had Ceaser as their King and money and power as their lord. But they still ended up carrying out the part that God had them play.

Now, what about Christ.

Christ knew what Judas was doing. But have you ever considered how he treated Judas, even though he knew what Judas was about to do. Christ never gave Judas a reason to reject Him, even though He knew that Judas would.

Jesus told us to love our enemies and to do good to those who would hurt us.

Here we have a perfect example of Christ doing just that. Christ knew all along that Judas was the betrayer. But no one in Christ's group ever had any idea that Judas was such a person. This means that Christ must have treated him like all the others. It was only at the very end that he singled Judas out.

What can we learn from this?

Well, we are not going to know who the rejecters are. Christ did. But evidently the risk of loving those who will waste our love is never a reason to stop loving them. Christians give from a position of strength. We don't give love to get love. We give love because we **have been loved**.

Christ always told the truth. And He didn't temper it according to who He spoke to. But at the same time he held out the opportunity to believe in Him, to follow Him, to everyone He spoke to.

That is the example we are to follow. Christ didn't temper the cost because Judas was not willing to pay it. But Christ never ridiculed Judas even though He knew Judas's heart to be evil. We can address the issues at hand in our representation of Christ. We can tell the truth about what scripture says at every point. But we don't need to belittle our adversaries. In the end, they will stand before the judge. And they are best judged if we have given them no reason to reject Christ, but they still did.

So we have a lot to consider this week. We need to look for the seeds of Judas in us. Are we harboring and protect and hiding something sinful in our lives? Are we asking only "what will you give me?" What is in it for me? And are we willing to die for our fellow believers, or are we willing to spend them for ourselves. How about the people we counsel, are we giving them God's counsel? Will we call sin, sin? Do we believe lies that people are telling themselves, or do we believe and represent what scripture says.

We cannot avoid having Judas's from time to time. But we can sure help true believers not to act like Him by ministering the truth to them.