

I want to ask you a question: When I say the name Judas, what is the first thing that comes to your mind? What images are conjured up? Perhaps this...the kiss.



It was with that despicable kiss that Judas would show the world that he was “betrayer”...truly, Judas is one the most despised people in human history. And rightly so, for he became the embodiment of darkness and evil when he betrayed our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The title of this morning’s message is: “The Unmasking of Judas.” This morning as we think about Judas, I want you to think about his name. Would you ever consider naming a son: Judas? Of course, not...not unless you wanted to doom that son to bear the stigma of having an evil man as your namesake. It’s interesting...in the New Testament where the apostles are listed, he’s almost always mentioned last and usually with the qualifying phrase: “the betrayer.” If you look at art and literature, Judas is commonly portrayed as a very grotesque and hideous figure.

I did a little research about Judas. His name: “Judas” was a very familiar and common name in the region of Judah and I learned, he was the only one of the twelve apostles who was not from Galilee. The name “Iscariot” comes from a town named: Kerioth, a small town, south of Jerusalem in Judea. It’s from Kerioth, we get the name Iscariot...a derivative of that name.

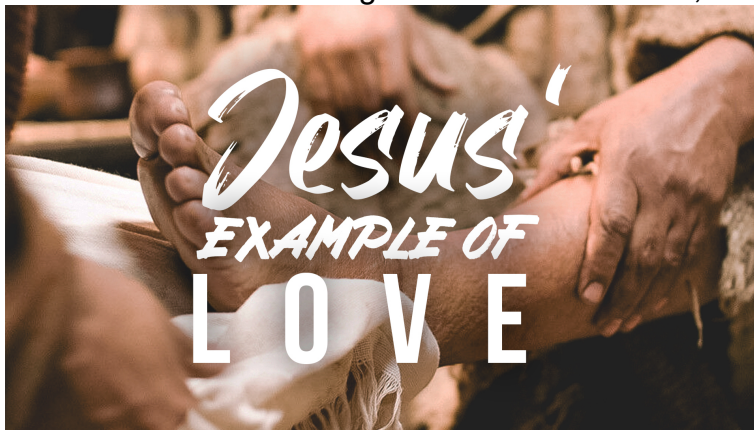
I guess for me...and I’ve said this several times over the last several weeks, it’s so sad to think about how in the world Judas could have become so vile, so wicked, so despicable. How do people become that way? You know at one point Hitler, Saddam Hussein, Osama Bin Ladin, they were cute little toddlers...with cherub faces...but somewhere, somehow, someway...they emerge as twisted, demented people. We’re going to see that today. Follow along with me:

John 13:18-30

¹⁸ I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled,^[a] ‘He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.’ ¹⁹ I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he. ²⁰ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.” ²¹ After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, “Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” ²² The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he

spoke. ²³ One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side,^[a] ²⁴ so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus^[b] of whom he was speaking. ²⁵ So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, "Lord, who is it?" ²⁶ 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, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. ²⁷ Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly."²⁸ Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. ²⁹ Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor. ³⁰ So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

Now, let's remember where we are in Passion week...it's Thursday night. Jesus and the Apostles are in what we call the "upper room" of a house Jesus has secured in Jerusalem where they can have their last meal together. Jesus knows that...but, they don't. But, in the midst of that meal...Jesus stuns them all by getting up and taking a towel and basin of water and washing their feet. He did this because no one else even thought about it. Remember, the title of our series:



"Jesus' Example of Love." What a stunning example...truly the very reason Jesus came...to be willing to go all the way down to the lowest of the low to secure our salvation.

Well, after doing this, Jesus put His outer garments back on, He returned to His place at the table and said, "Not all of you are clean/saved," and who was it that he was speaking of? Of course: Judas. Judas was lost and moved into the realm of hatred and evil where his thinking was totally consumed and controlled by Satan. Jesus knows all of this...and the unmasking is ready to begin:

John 13:18

¹⁸ I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled,^[a] 'He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.'

What Scripture is that? It's taken from Psalm 41:9, as King David spoken of a trusted advisor that would betray him, but also pointed to Judas...see it...

Psalm 41:9

⁹ Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.

As we just read, Jesus offered Judas a piece of bread, and after Judas took it, goes out and puts the plan in motion to betray Jesus. You see church, all along, Jesus knew what Judas was going to do. Jesus knew from the moment that He asked Judas to join the Apostles what Judas would do...eventually betray Him. This was all known to Jesus...no surprise to Him. In fact, remember back in John 6, Jesus said:

John 6:70-71

⁷⁰ Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve? And yet one of you is a devil.” ⁷¹ He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray him.

Jesus knew all along...and that had to be gut wrenching for Jesus. Yes, Judas would soon leave that supper in that upper room and go to carry out his plan with the Jewish leaders to betray Jesus, and Matthew tells us in his gospel how the trap had already been laid.

Matthew 26:14-16

¹⁴ Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests ¹⁵ and said, “What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?” And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶ And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him.

And so, the opportunity was at hand. Judas would eventually lead the Jewish leaders to the Garden of Gethsemane, where he knew Jesus would be going to pray, most likely learning that from the conversation at the meal. And yet, that next day on Friday, Judas would feel such remorse for what he did, he would take the money back to the Jews, but when they wouldn't accept, saying it was “blood money,” (like they were so righteous)...Judas would throw that money down in the Temple and then go out and kill himself. He would die hanging from a rope from a tree.



What a tale of two extremes: Jesus and Judas. Jesus would die and purchase salvation for those who would follow Him. Judas would die having rejected Jesus and go to Hades...and those who reject Jesus will follow him there. Jesus and Judas, extreme opposites. Jesus was perfect, Judas was a fake. Judas was **so close** to Jesus, so close to salvation...yet, so far away.

Think about it church... yes, Judas was like the rest of Apostles; yes, he had left all to follow Jesus. But his motives were ALL wrong. Maybe he started out okay...but He became motivated by greed, and the power of money grabbed his heart as he became the “keeper of the bag,” the Treasurer of the group. He devolved into perhaps the most clever hypocrite who ever lived. Even after having been under the daily influence of Jesus Himself, he became the opposite of Jesus. He became a Son of perdition...a son of Hell...a conniving tool of Satan.

Watch what Jesus says next...

John 13:19

¹⁹ I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he.

Now, church, why did He say? Why did Jesus say: “I’m telling you this now before it takes, place.” It’s simple, church...Jesus knew He had a very fragile and temperamental group of men. He’s telling

them He knows who the betrayer is because He doesn't want them to be blown away by all that's going to happen (literally within the next 2-3 hours).

You see, there's no surprises for Jesus. He's in total control of every situation. **And He's in total control of yours. Don't forget that.** He's never intimidated by anything He sees, because already knows what's going to happen. Jesus stands outside of time...He knows all...and so we can rest in His omniscience and sovereignty over our lives...and that should give us tremendous spiritual strength and confidence.

Eventually, Jesus and the apostles will leave that upper room and go to Gethsemane where we know Jesus often went to pray and John captured that prayer (chapter 17) and I want you to see what Jesus said about the Apostles and Judas:

John 17:12

¹² While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

You see, Psalm 41 was fulfilled that night in Gethsemane...along with Zechariah 11:12-13.

Zechariah 11:12-13

¹² Then I said to them, "If it seems good to you, give me my wages; but if not, keep them." And they weighed out as my wages thirty pieces of silver. ¹³ Then the Lord said to me, "Throw it to the potter"—the lordly price at which I was priced by them. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord, to the potter.

That all happened with Judas. BTW...do you know what the Jewish leaders did when they found that money in the Temple? They used it to buy a field, fulfilling that prophecy of Zechariah, written some 500 years before Jesus was born. The point in all of this, is this: every bit of all that was happening was all part of God's plan and Jesus knew the plan. Jesus knew the rebellion, apostasy and hypocrisy of Judas from the beginning...Jesus knew it all. No surprises with Jesus! **Watch verse 20**...Jesus says:

John 13:20

²⁰ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me."

What does this mean? Well, it sounds like a commission, doesn't it? It is...in fact, it's very similar language to the language Jesus used when He sent them out two by two. He was saying, "Don't worry about anything, you are mine and so, just as I've said before...when I send you and someone receives you, they're receiving me...and when they receive me, they're receiving my Father.

You see, Jesus wants the disciples to know that even though a betrayal is coming...that His confidence in them is unwavering. They still must go on! The commission still stands. Disciples: You are to still wash people's feet...follow my example by humbling yourselves. That commission still stands. So, there should be no more talk about who's the greatest...it's all about service now!

Judas walked away. So sad. And yet, brothers and sisters, those of you as old as me, or older have watched people walk away from the faith, haven't we? We've all seen Judases...they prove to be false and they walk away. But, that doesn't change our commission either, does it? No! We're to still keep going...pressing on, even when some defect. We're to be faithful to our commission to: "Go make disciples of all nations." Watch verse 21.

John 3:21-22

21 After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, “Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” **22** The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke.

I alluded to it before, but you know...Jesus must've been troubled in His spirit on a daily basis about Judas...just being in his presence and knowing what Judas was becoming was gut wrenching for Jesus. Because He loved Jesus. I believe Jesus so often looked at Judas with such anguish in His heart because He knew Judas was going to end up in Hell and it was ripping at Jesus' soul.

Yet, even when Judas betrayed Him, Jesus would call him “friend.” And church...that tells me that Jesus knows what it's like to live under pressure day by day in difficult circumstances. He knows what it's like to live when relationships are strained, when jobs are hard, when your life is filled with turmoil. He knows it. He lived it, and if you're saved, He's with you and He says, keep pressing on...I did...and through me...you can! Keep marching!

But there's something else. Church, I believe Jesus' trouble was even greater at this moment, because He knew Satan was coming. In just moments, Satan himself is going to show up in that upper room. But, for now...the rest of the guys look around the room and are totally clueless as to who the betrayer might be. Once again, they're stunned, bewildered... “What is He talking about?”

John 13:23-25

23 One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side,^[e] **24** so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus^[f] of whom he was speaking. **25** So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, “Lord, who is it?”

Now who is the disciple...the “one whom Jesus loved?” It's John, the writer of this Gospel. And yes, it seems kind of awkward to identify oneself the way John did...but John was not bragging or trying to single himself out...it was simply how he felt about Jesus... Jesus loved him...and certainly that was true of Jesus regarding the other Apostles. John felt loved by Jesus. So, he used this title and it would be a title that John used throughout the rest of this Gospel on several occasions.

Something else that's interesting is how the seating arrangement was around Jesus, (and we get this from the other gospels)...but John is at Jesus' right hand and guess who is at Jesus' left hand? Judas! Isn't it interesting how Judas had managed to get himself into that position. Again, maybe it's from this intimate position that Judas learned they would headed to Gethsemane after supper. Nonetheless, Peter motioned to John (since John was next to Jesus) and said, “Ask him.”

Here's what's interesting...in Matthew's gospel...he records that they all began to ask, “Is it I? Is it I?” They didn't know. Amazing, isn't it? Judas was such an unbelievable poser, a FAKE...so much so, that he had deceived the rest of the Apostles. But, isn't that how Satan works? He's the master of deception and doesn't Satan disguise himself as an angel of light! Appearing to be good, yet evil!

So, they're all looking around to the room trying to land on the guy who is the betrayer...maybe Thaddeus looks around: Matthew, no, Peter, no, James, no, Nathaniel, no...Judas, no...**they're all at a loss**... So, again, having caught Peter's motion/gesture...John asks Jesus...

John 13:25-26

25 So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, “Lord, who is it?” **26** 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, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.

Church, how could Jesus have been any more clear? I mean he said: “Whoever takes this morsel of bread when I’ve dipped it...” and He dipped it and gave it to Judas. I mean...how more obvious can you be? He’s the guy! But church, here’s the issue...I still believe these guys were reeling from the foot washing...I believe they’re still embarrassed and mortified that Jesus humbled Himself and did that for them, all the while they’d been arguing about who’s the greatest...they’re emotionally rung out and we also know that at a meal like the one they were having...they’re all talking...and sharing in bowls that’s been spread throughout the table of what was called a “sop or paste.”

You see, what was common at meals, was to take bread and tear off pieces and dip it into these bowls of mashed herbs, nuts, apples, pears and wine. Judas, being beside of Jesus would have been partaking from a bowl of this paste with Jesus, near Jesus, throughout the meal. So, it’s likely what Jesus said just went right over their heads... But, here’s the other thing...and this astounding...this was also Jesus letting Judas know: I’M ON TO YOU...I KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING...BUT JUDAS this is your chance to REPENT. But, he didn’t...

In fact, what happened next would only be noticed by Jesus...that’s when Satan showed up!

John 13:27

²⁷ Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “What you are going to do, do quickly.”

Only Jesus knew that was happening. The other guys were oblivious to it. At this point, Jesus was going to get Satan out of that room, for Satan had now possessed Judas. “Do what you are going to do quickly...get out of here.” And church, that was a command and Satan has to do what Jesus commands. Jesus is in total control...always has been and always will be.

You know, Judas, from that point, wouldn’t live another 24 hours. If you look at the probable timeline: he would be dead by the next morning (Friday)...swinging from a tree. Of course, Jesus would die that next day too...but, Jesus would come out on the other side of His grave to eternal glory, while Judas would leave this earth bound for Hades, where he is at this very moment.

Yes, Jesus wanted Satan/Judas gone so that He could share more glorious promises with His followers...His true followers.

John 13:28-29

²⁸ Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. ²⁹ Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the feast,” or that he should give something to the poor.

BTW...the “Feast,” John mentioned, scholars tell us that was referring to the **Feast of Unleavened Bread**, which began the night of Passover and lasted for seven days. But, the point is this: the other Apostles still had no idea and that’s what’s amazing to me. No one ever made the connection.

This is all a reminder to me of how easily there can be weeds growing in with the wheat...these weeds, called tares...



look like the wheat, so you don't pull them up until the harvest; and then, you cut them both down (again, they look the same), but when you take the winnowing fork...see it...



and scoop them up and toss them into the wind...only the wheat has substance and the wheat kernels fall into a pile, while the weeds float away...chaff and are scooped up and burned.

John 13:30

³⁰ So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

Think with about what has happened in that room: The Apostles have been cleansed, while the fake...the betrayer has been removed. **BTW: Do you think Judas ever ate that morsel of bread?** If he did, it's the last thing he ever tasted. But, the thing that really struck me is the end verse 30...that last sentence: "And it was night." You bet it was! What an appropriate description of that moment. The prince of Darkness, Satan, walked out of that upper room embodying Judas...and into the darkness of night. Night...darkness...representing sin and death.

And so, for Judas, the next day when life ebbed out of his body, swinging from that rope...



He would wake up in Hades and one day he'll stand before the Great White Throne Judgment, and be judged for his unbelief, and then cast into utter darkness, into the Lake of Fire, which is Hell. You say, "utter darkness?" Yes, because even though there will be fire in Hell, it will be fire that emits no light...utter darkness. Peter and Jude, (Jude, the half-brother of Jesus), tell us that Hell is "utter darkness," 2 Peter 2:17 and Jude 1:13.

You say, "Why is there no light in Hell." Because the Light of the world will be in Heaven...and you know what? That night in that upper room when Satan and Judas exited...all that was left in that room was the Light of the world and His followers...safe in the light of Jesus. But, for Judas...doomed to eternal darkness!

What a disaster! To be so close, yet so far! I saw this depiction of Judas and it really got me.



The look of remorse...it's too late...and it wasn't worth it.

It's been said that Hell will be a place of regret, and the more you have to regret, the more torturous Hell will be. Is there anyone who will have more to regret for all eternity than Judas? What an amazing lost opportunity, what a wasted privilege to have known the truth of Jesus...to have seen His power and His majesty; and yet, to refuse to trust Him. Oh, it teaches me the danger of loving money. The danger of power, ambition and greed. People will literally sell their souls to the Devil for money. Judas did and what good did it do Him?



Look at the image, I ask you: What are you living for...if it's not Jesus...I promise you...whatever it is...it won't be worth it? The message today is a warning to lost sinners...a warning NOT to be like Judas! A warning to be heeded: to repent and follow Jesus while there's still time. Because if you don't, you will go where Judas is.

Oh, I beg you, be saved and be just like those Apostles in that upper room...be found safe in the presence and the light of Jesus!