

FOLLOWING THE KING: *THE JUDAS WARNING*

Matthew 27:3–10 (NKJV)

Before Matthew ever shows us Judas hanging from a tree, he takes us through a night filled with shadows, warnings, and prophecy. **Chapter 26 is the descent into the darkest hours of Christ's life, and Matthew wants us to feel the weight of every step.**

- Jesus is betrayed in a house,
- pressed in a garden,
- abandoned by disciples,
- arrested by soldiers,
- interrogated by priests,
- and denied by one of His closest friends.

In one chapter, we witness the breaking of the alabaster, the breaking of the will, and the breaking of the disciples.

- We watch the fragrance of worship fill a house.
- We watch the agony of surrender fill a garden.
- We watch the failure of disciples fill the night.

And woven into all of it is a shocking truth and He shows us something we cannot ignore - BETRAYAL

- Jesus predicted BOTH betrayals.
- Judas would betray Him.

- ‘Peter would deny Him.

Matthew 26:21 (NKJV) - “Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.”

Matthew 26:34 (NKJV) - “Assuredly, I say to you... you will deny Me three times.”

- Two disciples.
- Two failures.
- Two prophecies.

Both sat at His table. Both walked with Him for years. Both swore they would never fall. Both collapsed in the same night. But only one survived his failure.

- Peter fell...and ran toward Jesus.
- Judas fell...and ran away from Jesus.

The difference was not their sin. The difference was their direction. And Matthew wants you to feel that tension burn in your chest before he ever opens the next chapter.

Failure did not destroy them. Direction did. And Matthew now shows us what happens when failure runs away from Jesus instead of toward Him. If Peter shows us restoration, Judas shows us ruin. And now

the camera zooms in on the man who could not find his way back.

INTRODUCTION - THE MOST TERRIFYING WORD IN THE GOSPEL...IS A NAME

- *John, Luke, Matthew, Mark JUDAS???*

Every believer knows the name. Every preacher feels the shiver. Every demon recognizes the weight – JUDAS.

- It is a name that has become a warning label.
- A caution sign.
- A flashing light at the crossroads of discipleship.

You cannot whisper it without feeling the danger. You cannot study it without sensing the gravity. You cannot preach it without trembling.

Because Judas is not just a villain. Judas is a mirror. Judas is a prophecy. **Judas is a possibility in every unsundered heart.**

Matthew places Judas' story immediately after Gethsemane because Gethsemane is where Jesus surrendered His will...and Judas is what happens when a disciple refuses to surrender theirs.

- Bethany revealed Christ's worth.
- Gethsemane revealed Christ's will.
- Judas reveals the cost of uncrucified desire.

You can walk beside Jesus and still never walk like Jesus. You can sit at His table and still never surrender your heart. You can hold the bag and still lose your soul.

Now let us walk into one of the most sobering passages in all of Scripture.

Matthew 27:3–10 (NKJV) - “Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned by betraying innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us. You see to it. Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself. But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood. And they consulted together and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value

of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced, and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me.”

TRANSITION TO POINT ONE: Now lean in - because before Matthew shows us what Judas did, he shows us what Jesus already knew.

JESUS CHOSE JUDAS...KNOWING EXACTLY WHO HE WAS

John 6:64 (NKJV) - “But there are some of you who do not believe. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him.”

John 6:70–71 (NKJV) “Jesus answered them, Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil. He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.”

- Jesus did not misjudge Judas.
- Jesus did not accidentally recruit a traitor.
- Jesus chose him with full and perfect knowledge.

Why Jesus Chose Judas:

- **To fulfill Prophecy** - Psalm 41:9 (NKJV): “Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.”
- **To prove that proximity is not salvation** - Judas walked close — but never bowed low.
- **To expose hypocrisy and religious hardness** - Judas is rebuked by sinners and embraced by priests.
- **To show the sovereignty of God** - God can weave even betrayal into redemption.

TRANSITION STATEMENT: Judas is proof that you can be chosen for ministry and still refuse to be changed by mercy. Now we move deeper...

JUDAS FELT REMORSE... BUT NEVER REPENTED

Matthew 27:3 (NKJV) - “Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful...”

- **The Greek word is metamelomai**. This is not repentance - This is regret. Sorrow. Emotional pain.
- **Repentance is metanoeo - a turning of the heart, mind, and direction.**

Judas had regret, not repentance. He confessed his sin:

Matthew 27:4 (NKJV) - “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.”

- But he confessed to the wrong priest. He goes to the chief priests. He never goes back to the Great High Priest.
- He returned the silver...but never returned to the Savior.
- He threw the money...but never threw himself upon mercy.
- He cried tears...but tears alone are not repentance.

TRANSITION STATEMENT - Judas shows us a terrifying possibility: You can feel bad enough to die and still not surrendered enough to live. Which brings us to a disturbing scriptural parallel...

JUDAS “FOUND NO PLACE FOR REPENTANCE” - LIKE ESAU

Now we connect Matthew 27 to Hebrews 12. **Hebrews 12:16–17 (NKJV) - “Lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For you know that afterward, when**

he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.”

- Esau wanted to undo the consequences but not the condition of his heart.’
- He cried over what he lost, not over who he had become.
- Judas cried over the guilt, but not over his nature.
- Esau sought repentance with tears but never with surrender.
- Judas sought relief with tears but never sought Christ.

Emotion is not repentance. Confession is not repentance. Remorse is not repentance. ONLY SURRENDER IS REPENTANCE.

TRANSITION STATEMENT: Esau cried over consequences. Judas cried over guilt. But neither bowed their will. And that sets the stage for the darkest line in the Gospels...

JUDAS WALKED WITH JESUS... BUT NEVER WALKED LIKE JESUS

The most haunting line Jesus ever spoke: **John 13:27 (NKJV) - “Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, what you do, do quickly.”**

- This is the Judas tragedy: He never resisted the small sins so he could not resist the final one.

Judas' downward spiral:

- He stole from the money box - John 12:6 (NKJV): “He was a thief.”
- He criticized extravagant worship - John 12:4–5 (NKJV): “Why was this fragrant oil not sold...”
- He made the deal with the priests - Matthew 26:14–15 (NKJV)
- Satan entered him - John 13:27 (NKJV)

Revelation you ignore becomes darkness you embrace.

Early Church Witness

- Chrysostom said Judas' heart was “corroded by greed.”
- Origen called him “the picture of apostasy.”
- Pseudo-Jerome wrote: “He carried death in his name and never sought deliverance from Him who is Life.”

Judas lost his soul one small compromise at a time. It is possible to be around Jesus and yet never be like Jesus.

CONCLUSION: TWO MEN, TWO FAILURES, TWO FUTURES

Matthew places Judas beside Peter intentionally. Both failed. Both sinned. Both wept. But here is the difference:

Peter ran toward Jesus with his failure. Judas ran away from Jesus with his.

- One found mercy. The other found misery.

The question today is not, “Have you failed?” The question is: **Where are you running with your failure?**

WHERE ARE YOU RUNNING WITH YOUR FAILURE?

Every person under the sound of my voice has failed. Every believer has stumbled. Every disciple has moments they wish they could erase. Failure is not the issue. The issue is direction. The issue is movement. The issue is response.

The issue is: where are you running with your failure?
Because **FAILURE IS A FORK IN THE ROAD.**

It is the moment where two disciples stand in two gardens and make two decisions:

- Judas ran away from Jesus with his failure.
- Peter ran toward Jesus with his failure.

Both failed. Both wept. Both collapsed. Both denied. Both disappointed their Master. But one man ran into the darkness and died with his guilt. The other man ran into the light and lived with his calling. Now lean in — this is the theological revelation:

Failure never kills you. Running the wrong direction does.

- Judas carried his sin to the priests.
- Peter carried his sin to the Savior.
- Judas carried his guilt to isolation.
- Peter carried his guilt to restoration.
- Judas carried his shame into darkness.
- Peter carried his shame into the presence of Jesus.

Judas hung himself. Peter humbled himself.

- One man died by his rope. The other man lived by His grace.

- **Failure destroys no one, but unconfessed failure destroys everyone.**

This is why Scripture records this line with prophetic tenderness **(What is Jesus saying to those marked by failure): Mark 16:7 (NKJV) - “But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee.” “And Peter.”**

- He mentions the failure by name because grace is specific. Mercy is precise. Restoration is personal.
- Heaven calls the fallen one by name.
- Heaven restores the broken one by name.
- Heaven singled Peter out because Peter’s failure was not his future.

And neither is yours. The question today is not: Did you fail? The question is: Where are you running with your failure?

- Are you running with it into hiding?
- Are you running with it into shame?
- Are you running with it into condemnation?
- Are you running with it into silence?
- Are you running with it into despair?

Or are you running back to the feet of Jesus?

- back to the mercy of Jesus?
- back to the arms of Jesus?
- back to the calling of Jesus?
- back to the cross of Jesus?

Because here is the revelation:

**Failure in the hands of Jesus becomes testimony.
Failure in the hands of Satan becomes tragedy.**

**Failure brought to Jesus becomes restoration. Failure
run away from Jesus becomes destruction.**

**Failure confessed becomes freedom. Failure hidden
becomes bondage.**

**And Judas is the warning that shakes every disciple
down to the bone:** The danger is not that you failed. The
danger is that you ran the wrong direction with it.

- Failure is the place where God separates Judas from Peter.
- If you run to Jesus, your failure becomes a doorway. If you run from Him, your failure becomes a tomb.
- Hell cannot win until you stop running to Him.
- Your greatest tragedy is not sin - it is surrendering to despair instead of surrendering to Christ.

Failure becomes fatal only when you believe your failure is final.

So, the Spirit is asking you today...not “Did you betray Me?” not “Did you deny Me?” not “Did you run from Me?” not even “Did you sin against Me?”

The Spirit is asking one question: Where are you running with your failure?