

Bad to the Bone – Judas Kiss

3/21/28

Matthew 26

Sunday AM

Have you heard the phrase *bad to the bone*? Before 1982, the phrase meant a person was *rotten to the core* – **a no good, dirty dog to be avoided**. But in 1982, George Thorogood and the Destroyers put out a bluesy-rock tune that transformed the idea of being bad into a macho slogan meaning a person was as *tough as nails*. 2 yrs later, the movie, *The Terminator*, using Thorogood's song, made Schwarzenegger *ba-ba-ba-ba-bad* – **bad to the bone** – and it stuck!

This AM, I want to start a 3-week Easter series focused on (3) men who thought they were **bad to the bone**, but in actuality, it turns out, *they were just rotten to the core*. Today, I want to begin w/ the pretender – Judas.

The mere mention of his name invokes thoughts of treachery/deceit. In fact, few people today would even consider naming their son Judas. **But it wasn't always this way**. Judas was once a very popular name.

The name was derived from the term **Judah** – and meant *Jehovah leads*. **Iscariot** – referred to the region from where he grew up – likely referring to *Kerioth-hezron* – a town in south Judah. BTW – this would've made him the only disciple not from Galilee.

Now, before we cast Judas aside in shameful disgrace, we need to realize there's a little Judas in all of us.

Judas was a man w/ high hopes/great ambition. Not only did he have great expectations for himself, He also had them for Jesus. See, when Judas first met Jesus, he was certain Jesus was going to change his plight in life and restore Israel to greatness. He was certain Jesus had come to topple Rome and restore the glory of Israel. Yet when Jesus' plan differed from his plans – he grew frustrated and decided to get out of Jesus whatever he could get – 30 pieces of silver.

Judas suffered from a common malady in the heart of all people, he was consumed w/ his own agenda and only saw Jesus as a means to an end. For Judas, in spite of everything he'd witnessed up-close and personal w/ Jesus, he could only think – **what's in it for me**.

Result – we learn from his life that the human heart is capable of sinking to great depths to care only for itself in spite of the truth staring us right in the face.

His life reminds us that it's possible to be near to Jesus, even associated w/ Him, and still miss Him b/c we refuse to see Jesus for who He really is.

His life reminds us that sin will always take us farther than we want to go, keep us longer than we want to stay, and cost us more than we're willing to pay,

His life reminds that when it comes to God, we'll will either sell out to Jesus or we'll sell Jesus out.

Let me walk you thru his story...

While Scripture gives us little insight into his calling or who he was before becoming one of the (12), we know he was the trusted treasurer of the group.

We also know that Judas was hoping and looking for a Messiah who'd ride in on a white stallion to conquer Rome and restore Israel – **but Jesus didn't come as conquering warrior as Judas had hoped but as a suffering servant as we all needed**. This is critical to understand if we're to appreciate the sequence of events in **Matthew 26**.

To refresh your memory, in Matthew 21, Jesus had come into Jerusalem on the back of a colt w/ the people waving palm branches and singing “*Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!*” Immediately on His arrival, Jesus cleared the Temple yet again, and then began confronting/exposing the establishment for their greed/ungodliness. Let’s just say the higher ups were not happy w/ Him, yet they didn’t know how to squelch His popularity.

So, as **Matthew 26** begins, the chief priest/elders had come to the end of their patience and were looking to get rid of Jesus no matter the cost. **But they had no leads to take Jesus into custody.** That is, until Judas’ frustration w/ Jesus came to a boil and he decided enough was enough – and he wanted out. Which brings us to **Matthew 26:6-9**:

While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came to him w/ an alabaster jar of expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table. When the disciples saw this, they (John said only Judas) were indignant. “Why this waste? This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor.”

No doubt, by this time, Judas was at his wits end. When was Jesus going to take out Rome and establish his rule? Was the great rebellion ever going to happen! And as he kept pressing, Jesus took his disciple to the home of Simon the Leper, and what happened next, put Judas over the top. A woman (John identified as Mary) entered the room as poured a pint of perfume over Jesus. This perfume was worth a **year’s wages**.

Perspective – the avg. annual income in the U.S. is said to be around \$68k a year. So, if you had a bottle of perfume worth \$68k, would you pour it out over top of someone? Not likely. No, we’d likely split it into smaller quantities and sell it to make more money.

Well, b/c he was already extremely frustrated w/ Jesus, this event set Judas off even more. John recorded that it was Judas who’d become indignant – ***ticketh off***.

Isn’t how we react when others don’t meet our expectations – everything they do either annoys us or makes us mad? And we stay mad until the person does what we want them to do. ***Such was the case w/ Judas***
But notice what happens next (v.10).

Aware of this, Jesus said, “Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have w/ you, but you will not always have me. When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached thru-out the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

Jesus responded to the piety of Judas by telling him to lay off this woman b/c she had done a beautiful thing to Him. He explained that her blessing **honored** Him, **identified** Him, and **prepared** Him for his burial.

Now, if you’re not paying close attention you might miss this. Remember, Judas was struggling that Jesus hadn’t fulfilled his expectation as a conquering warrior – here to overthrow Rome, but now He’s talking about dying. Judas is thinking, “**Wait a second** – Jesus you can’t die! If you die, then my dreams will be shattered. My plans won’t be accomplished.” ***This was yet another nail in the coffin of Judas’s disillusionment.***

Judas was done. Notice what happens next in (v. 14):

Then one of the (12) – the one called Judas Iscariot – went to the chief priests and asked, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?” So, they counted out for him 30 pieces of silver. From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

Notice – Judas went to them. He couldn't handle anymore disappointment. He knew the establishment wanted to get rid of Jesus, and after (3) wasted yrs of following Jesus, Judas thought, "If I'm not going to get my rebellion, I ought to at least get something for all this time spent chasing Jesus all over the place – so he sold Jesus out for the price of a slave.

Which raises a tough question? At what price and for what are you willing to sell Jesus out for to satisfy your wants/desires? For ambition? For desire? For profit, possession, position, or popularity? I said it earlier. When confronted w/ the truth of Jesus – ***we will either sell out to Jesus or we will sell Jesus out.***

When a man encounters Jesus, he will do one of two things: Either he must die, or he must put Christ to death.
Bonhoeffer

We learn in this moment from Judas that it's possible to be close to Jesus, yet far from the truth. Close to grace, yet far from mercy.

Let's fast forward to the Upper Room. It's the night before the Passover and the disciples have gathered to share the Passover meal. At the meal, ***Rabbi Jesus performs yet another crazy act in the eyes of Judas.*** He takes off his rabbinical robes in exchange for a towel and a basin of water – and like a slave, begins washing the disciples' feet. Judas was thinking, "How humiliating. I cannot continue to follow this guy!"

Of course, Jesus was doing this to teach the (12) what it really meant to serve – and Jesus was giving Judas one more opportunity to know Him for who He really was and to understand why He came.

But Judas wasn't looking for the TRUTH – he was looking for the exit. As the evening continued, Judas finally heard what he needed to hear. Apparently, either Jesus or one of the disciples suggested that after the meal they should go to Gethsemane. **That's when Judas took his cue.** He'd promised to deliver Jesus to the High Priest, but to do so, he had to get Jesus away from the crowds – and now the time had come. Yet how was he going to leave w/out being noticed – and Jesus helps him out. **Listen to John 13:**

Jesus said, "I tell you, one of you is going to betray me." His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him which one he means." Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus replied, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. So, Jesus told him, "What you are about to do, do quickly." But no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the festival, or to give something to the poor. As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. John 13:21-30

So, Judas, knowing Jesus knew what was about to happen, bolted to tell the High Priest that Jesus was headed for Gethsemane – and that they'd be able to take him into custody – and they did. **Look at v. 6:47f:**

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the (12), arrived. W/ him was a large crowd armed w/ swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests/elders. Now, the betrayer had arranged a signal w/ them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest Him." Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed Him. Jesus replied, "Do what you came for, friend." Then the men stepped forward and arrested Jesus.

What a horrific moment. Truly, this is arguably the most sinister moment in human history. Judas, filled by Satan, betrays the King of Kings/Lord of Lords.

You can almost hear the hiss in the kiss!

Yet this shouldn't surprise us. Satan has no shame – and neither do those who follow him. Neither do they have any sense of restraint. Of all the despicable things Judas could've done – but to kiss Him! This was a special act of reverence/respect – only in this instance it was the equivalent of spitting in Jesus' face.

As you likely know, ultimately, Judas would regret what he had done, but not before the damage was done.

Early in the AM, all the chief priests/elders made their plans how to have Jesus executed. So, they bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate the governor. When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized w/ remorse and returned the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests/elders saying, "I have sinned as I have betrayed innocent blood." They replied, "What is that to us? That's your responsibility." So, Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.
Matthew 27:1-5

W/out a doubt, the story of Judas is one of the most tragic stories in history. For 3 yrs he walked w/ Jesus. He conversed w/ Jesus. He witnessed every miracle, every conversation – he had a front row seat – and yet in the end. He missed it. What an example of opportunity lost – and for what? He exchanged eternity for 30 pieces of silver.

Think – What was worth great value one min. (30 pieces of silver) was worth nothing the next. Isn't that just like sin. It promises something of value but once indulged doesn't meet the promise.

Sad Truth – Judas gained a 30 pieces of silver world – but in the process... lost his soul.

I'm reminded of Jesus to the (12) at Caesarea Philippi – *Jesus said, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever would save his life will lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same will save it. What is a man profited, if he gains the whole world, but forfeits his own life?"* Luke 9:23-26

Judas heard Jesus speak these words. He understood what was required to follow Him. He's a reminder to all of us that religious association and participation doesn't guarantee relationship/intimacy w/ God.

Listen – Far too many people, in an attempt to satisfy themselves and preserve something this side of heaven – have done so at the expense of refusing Jesus. Why? B/c **they only see life for what is in it for themselves.**

No matter how much we beg, barter, and bargain w/ God, the only thing He accepts is a broken/contrite heart – that He will not despise.

One pastor said it this way – There is a reason we attempt to barter/bargain w/ God – it's b/c bargaining and bartering are easier than surrender.

Catch – When we barter w/ God rather than surrender, we're responsible for the outcome. But when we surrender, it becomes God's responsibility for the outcome.