



JOHN: JESUS, THE BETRAYED

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John 13: 21-30

You're listening to a sermon from Doxa Church. In this, the third installation of our Gospel of John series, we'll take a look at the upside down nature of our Messiah, the many prophecies of his death and resurrection, and the unstoppable nature of God's redemptive plan for his people. For more information about Doxa, or to join us for a Sunday gathering, go to doxa-church.com.

Good evening, Doxa, we are going to be reading scripture from the Gospel of John chapter 13 verses 21-30.

"After Saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.' The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side, so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, 'Lord, who is it?' 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. Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, 'What you are going to do, do quickly.' Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. 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. So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night." This is the Word of the Lord. Please be seated.

Well, Father God, we ask you to settle the room. We know that so much is going on in all of our hearts and minds. There's traffic. There's construction, Lord. There's the Onward Campaign we're so excited for, Lord Jesus. I do pray for an eerie calm. I pray for a hedge of protection as they open up a word like this, a challenging word for all of us, Lord, I pray for that. And I do pray for my friends that are here, coming with resistance on their hearts and their spirits, Lord Jesus, would you open that up so that they can connect with you fully? And Lord Jesus, I pray for me. I pray for your provision that you would, that you'd be kind to me as I walk through this passage and that my friends hear, if there's anything that's not from you, would they just reject it, Lord. And anything that comes directly from you by the Spirit, Lord, would they receive it, would their hearts be open? We love you. In his name. Amen.

All right. How many of you have gone through an extraordinarily difficult, stressful situation in your life? You don't have to raise your hand, but I'm willing to bet that's most of us. We've all been through a really, really tough season. Now I wanna ask the question, who was there for you when you were going through it? Who were the people, the couple, the friends, that one person, maybe spouse or child, who, if they hadn't been there, you just don't know how it would've went? Who's that person? Who are those people, that man, that you had those conversations with, they provided for you in your moment of need. If they weren't there, man, that could have just went south. I mean, after all, if you're in the most difficult season of your life, it would be nice to know that your friends or your family, or whoever there was, that they were really close there and they were there next to you, helping you, providing for you. Right. It would be nice if they would stick by you. Right? I mean, think back to that scenario, like actually think back to that scenario. There's countless moments in my life as I think about, you know, where I might have, you know, what might have happened to me, if it wasn't for a specific person showing up. I don't know where I would be if the Lord hadn't brought that person. I'm sure you can remember those situations in your life.

Now Jesus, in this passage, is about to go through perhaps the most difficult 24 hours that any person has ever gone through. I don't think that's an exaggeration. I mean, Jesus lives a great life. He's a great human being. All he does is serve and help people and care for people. And in this moment, in the next 24 hours after this moment that we're about to read, he will be captured. He will be unjustly imprisoned. He will be unjustly convicted of a crime he does not commit. He will be beaten. Flogged. He will be made to march to his crucifixion and he will be murdered. All in the next 24 hours. And all of that doesn't just happen in vacuum. It's all gonna be triggered by his friends, those closest to him, not sticking by him in a moment of his biggest and greatest need. Some of those friends are gonna deny him to his face. And one of them is going to outright betray him. Now, I don't know if you, you find yourself a Christian this evening or this afternoon. If you do, you maybe know the story of Judas betraying Jesus. If you're not a Christian, you probably still know that story. That's kind of a cultural idiom, right? If you heard those movies, people call people Judas's for betraying them. Have you heard what I'm talking about? So everyone knows this guy Judas is probably not a good guy. And not a lot of people name their kid Judas, right? People just know, probably not a good name, right? No one's called, like I don't want to have little Judas running around, right? Just no one wants to be able to say that. Right. It means something different because everyone knows about this story.

You're a Judas. So it's, I think it's impossible really to overstate the significance of this text, not just for the book of John, but for the entire Bible, but also for the implications for all of us on the world. All of it. It's so huge. Jesus' betrayal by Judas is the linchpin in the grenade that sets off the explosion that kills God. That's how big this moment is. So I think it's probably worth unpacking a little bit, right? It's worth unpacking for a sermon just what the betrayal was like for everyone involved. For Jesus, especially, what was it like for him to experience that betrayal? What was it like for his disciples to experience? I mean, they were there, they were seeing what was going on. But more importantly, why did the betrayal happen? Why does it happen? And did it need to happen? Of course, it's also worth understanding just exactly what the ramifications are for the world, and for us as individuals too, on this betrayal. This is a big deal. Okay.

So verse 21 tells us a lot right off the bat. Let's look at it.

"After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit and testified, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.'"

Anytime Jesus says "truly, truly" he's making a really large point, right? He's repeating himself. Now, I don't know how you picture Jesus. I don't know if you picture Jesus as like a stoic philosopher type who would sort of wander around very calmly and doesn't get very emotional. He doesn't cry. He doesn't scream. Nothing. He's just sort of this stoic spiritual figure. But Jesus, actually he was human and like us, he experienced human emotions. It says here that he was troubled. Some translations say he was in anguish or he was anxious. We've all kind of maybe relate to anxious a little bit, but anguish and that's devastating. If the best thing I could think of like anguish for like a regular person, without it being too crazy, is if you were to go on YouTube and you were to watch some videos of people being convicted at trial and them getting their guilty verdict. It's horrifying. It's sad. It's scary. That's the sort of idea of what anguish means here for Jesus. It's insane. So Jesus' betrayal was, it was troubling to his spirit. It was troubling to his spirit. So if you've ever been in a moment of suffering or difficulty, it really is hard enough just to go through a hard thing, right? It's hard enough. It's even worse when a close personal friend harms you or God forbid betrays you in your moment of biggest weakness. All it does is magnify, multiply the pain. Jesus, He's not immune from that. He's not immune from it. It says here he was troubled. You know what I think Jesus was. I think Jesus was in a lot of pain. I think Jesus was sitting there thinking, "Oh, Judas, like, what are you doing, man? What's happening?" The anguish is feeling in him and you know what makes his pain worse? Two things. One, he's about to die. Jesus knows that. He knows he's about to die. He says it over and over again throughout John's gospel. He knows his time is coming. This is not something that's on the back burner of his mind, right? 24 hours. And the second thing I think makes this worse is I think he loved Judas. All of the memories. Think about, put yourself in Jesus' situation, all of the memories, all of the meals, all of the laughs, all of the cries, fresh in his mind. Now it doesn't matter if you have a rough relationship with someone, when you build that sort of relational equity with them over a few years, it's going to be painful when something like this happens. And Jesus is not just fully God. He is not a stoic, spiritual-like figure only who just can cut right through human emotions. He's also fully human experiencing

the feelings and emotions that a human would feel without sin. And so he is feeling these emotions. It hurts him. It's really hard. What makes betrayal particularly hard is really the change in behavior in that person, right? I mean, maybe you've had sort of a kind of fun loving person next to you in your midst and you're enjoying them. And all of a sudden you hear something like betrayal behind your back and you go what? The flip messes with you so much. It's the complete opposite of the way you saw them, right? I don't know about you, I've experienced these emotions. I've had people at my dinner table, people I loved, people I babysat their children. People I had in our midst and loved, deeply cared for. You know, particularly when you're doing things like ministry, this can be really hard. You get lots, you have the opportunity, which is great, to be in relationship with a lot of different people, but you also, that also means you're opened up to all of our sin, my sin, their sin, all mixing together and things going south. And to sit with someone and have meals with them and to smile with them and then to see them betray you is so, so difficult. Can you remember a time when that happened to you? Can you remember a time that friend, that sister, that brother, that cousin, maybe that adult child or that parent who turned their back on you? Left you? Embarrassed you? Divorced themselves from you? What was that like? Did it hurt? I think it probably hurt. If you were in pain, I bet you were like Jesus, you were probably in pain like Jesus was in pain. So betrayal isn't just troubling to Jesus' spirit, it's troubling to ours as well. That's hard. What can I offer you in the midst of that? Well, if you've had betrayal happen to you, if you've had betrayal happen to you, Jesus has as well. And he hears you, he empathizes with you, and he loves you. And you actually can go to him for help. You can actually rest in his presence and ask him to heal you and to weep to him and to be sorrowful to him and to confess your own sin in the situation with him. You can do that with him. Hebrews 2 says, "because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted." And by the way, you should go process your hurt with Jesus. Because we've all been hurt by somebody. Some of us are just really good at hiding that hurt or burying it. But the hurt, if it's unprocessed, comes out in two things, it comes out in resentment, sound familiar? Or rage. Comes out in one of two things. So go be with Jesus and process your emotions. He's desiring you to. So Jesus' betrayal was troubling to his spirit. Let's continue. Verse 22.

"The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side, so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, 'Lord, who is it?'"

Do you have a guess as to who this disciple is? One of his whom Jesus loved? It's John, the author, right? He's kind of name dropping a little bit right here. As I read it, I think. "Yeah. Yeah. Me and Jesus were, you know, sitting right next to each other. And it says, yeah, my head was right next to him actually. So I was able to relay the message." Like he's sort of bragging on his friendship like that with Jesus, which is cool in some ways and hilarious in others. He also mocks Peter's speed at one point, in another part, like he says, Peter's slow. Like I feel like they had a little rivalry going and we kinda see it in the writings. It's hilarious. But it's interesting because in one sense, the disciples, they're hearing this and they actually can't believe that anyone would betray Jesus. Think about it. They're thinking, why would anyone do

this to our Messiah? He's a great guy. So Jesus' betrayal was confusing to outsiders. It was really confusing. They're thinking, wait, what's he talking about like, Peter's, John, will you ask him who it is? Cause I don't even know what he's talking about. I've never even thought about. I mean, this betrayal would be in their minds crazy to even consider. This would be a betrayal of not just a friend, but their rabbi, a nation. I mean, this is the son of David we're talking about. The hope of all the scriptures and even a betrayal of God himself. They've seen Jesus heal. They've seen him be kind. They've seen him care for others. Care for themselves. They've been mentored by him. Now this really highlights a perplexing, how perplexing the betrayal really is. And it just at face value. I mean, Jesus' portrayal and murder is one of the most vile, preposterous act in all of human history. It really is. I mean, just because of the situation, Jesus lives a perfect life, his disciples saw him as perfect. He was great. I mean, in any scenario he got in any sort of conflict with, he was always right. Every scenario. He's perfect in every way. So they, he was perfect and yet, and all he did was help people. All he did was heal. All he did was care for. All he did was teach. All he did was call out what was wrong. That's all he did. And then he was betrayed. He was betrayed. Then he was imprisoned, put in prison. One of my biggest fears, I'll just be straight with you - prison. Like I think about being locked in a small room, it just scares me. Like I don't even like airplanes half the time. So thinking about being in a small little cage. Jesus was in prison and he was innocent. Then he was convicted of said crime. So not only was he in prison, he was convicted. And then they let a murderer go instead of him. That's part of the story. That the Romans and the Jews let go of Barabbas, a serial murderer, instead of Jesus, they could have chose. That's a tough one to swallow. And then they march him to his death. They make him carry his own cross after they beat him. And then they killed him. Plus he was innocent and everybody knew it. This is a vile act. 24 hours. Horrifying. His betrayal is quite literally an injustice of the highest order. Nothing like this has ever happened before. So it makes sense the disciples were sort of, you know, flabbergasted by this. They're like no way, but I think there's a bigger point in this passage. Why don't the disciples know who the betrayer is? Why don't they already know? This implies a lot. They were clueless, they were absolutely clueless. They had no clue. It implies that Judas looked and felt a lot like the rest of the disciples. They did a lot of things together by the way. They prayed together. They shared a lot of meals. They were in each other's homes all the time. He sat at the Lord's table. They even cast out demons together And they, and they didn't know who it was. It's not like they were all sitting around going, you know what? I bet it's Judas. I can tell, like, I think it's Judas. Like no one said that. They were all looking around, like who did this? And they were thinking, it's not like they were sitting around looking at Judas going, you know what? Every time we prayed, I took a peek at what Judas was doing. And he was never praying. He's always like staring around in a sinister manner, like rubbing his hands, like a mustache twirlin' villian getting ready to, you know, enact anarchy on us. Like he, that's not what was happening. They had no idea.

This serves as a stark warning for all of us friends. Salvation is not an outward demeanor or posture, it's of the heart. So it is totally possible to look, smell, and feel righteous or holy and be quite the opposite. Does that sink in? Jesus actually called this whitewash tombs to the religious people, right? Outwardly beautiful, inside filled with death, like a tomb. Judas prayed with Jesus. He studied the scriptures with him. He cast out demons. This means it's possible to

pray, read your Bible, sit at the Lord's table, and not be an actual follower of Jesus. What do we do with that? It means that a relationship with Jesus is more than behavior. It's more than just doing what the Bible says, but it also means that it's more than just cognitive understanding of who God is. So you can't just understand who God is, but it's also more than just an emotional appeal and crying at the feet of Jesus. It's sort of all of these things combined. Loving Jesus with all of our hearts, but being transformed by him and following what he says, because of course, his path is the path to life. I think this means two things for us. I think there's some implications.

First thing, be careful to test all things and all people by the scriptures. It's always helpful to go back to the foundational book that we all have. This is revelation from God. Faith comes from hearing the word. This is it. Okay. It's always helpful, when you, when you feel something in your spirit, when you talk to somebody, when you hear teaching on stage from a pastor or you watch a teaching online, or you read a book that a friend hands to you, to go back and look at the actual framework of what God says. Always do that. Always do it. Doesn't matter who's teaching it, because sometimes teachers are really good and really persuasive. And they'll be able to teach, tell you that they're right. And without a framework to which to judge them by you might be lost and you might follow something that you don't want to follow. You wanna be as close to God as possible. Second thing Paul says, watch your doctrine and your life closely. So he doesn't say, just watch your doctrine closely. Study your Bible. He also says, watch your life. How are you living? He doesn't just say, make sure you live a good life and don't pay any attention to what you believe. He says, watch your doctrine, watch your doctrine and your life closely. He also says, work out your salvation with fear and trembling, which means that we should go to God with a healthy reverence to make sure we're always considering exactly what God asked us to do. Cuz we just can never know what sin is lurking in our hearts and lurking in the hearts of those around us. Jesus though, he ultimately does know the heart. Now you might think, and I feel like I would think this, I became a Christian at 19 and I might think this too. Wow. That seems like a lot. You know, I feel like I'm starting to feel guilty. I feel like there's, you know, it just feels like there's a lot of pressure to be able to have to, you know, deal with all of that, and you know, maybe your life is full. And I think I would feel that too, I think, and hear me this, I don't think this is an understatement. I actually think we've probably all, particularly in Western world, have greatly underestimated what it means to actually be a follower of Jesus. I think it's gonna take far more than we all think. And I don't just mean from our behavior. I mean, from our soul, from our spirit, from what God does to us. I think we've drastically really understated that. It's costly. It's hard. I just don't think following cultural norms is gonna be enough. Cultural Christianity might not get it done. I love you. I want you to press into him more. I really do. I want you to make certain that you're in a clear relationship with him because there's such so many gaps in today's world and what our, how our thinking is. If you can be a Christian, I'll just leave you with this, if you can be a Christian and live however you want, you might be missing something. It's always helpful to go to the source. Okay. All right. Let's continue. Verse 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. Then after he

had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, 'What you are going to do, do quickly.'"

Okay. There's a blind there that speaks out. I think you all heard it. It says Satan entered him. Let me just pause right there for a second. Like I thought the Bible was just a roadmap to life. I just thought, you know, if I did this, I'd have hope and peace and joy. Yeah. All those things are true. There's some real stuff going on. Real stuff. Satan entered him. That means something. We've gotta understand what that means if we're gonna understand this passage. Now there's a lot of, there's a lot of discussion on what this passage means exactly. And I think there's a lot we can get from it, but there is one thing that we clearly see in the text and it's this: Jesus' betrayal was motivated by outside forces. There's something else going on here. Now, as I said two weeks ago, human beings love categories. We love categories. So when we hear a verse like this, we might think, well, that's it. We got our answer, right? Judas did it. Like it's either Judas or Satan did it. Satan entered Judas. And he puppeted him around. And that's how it happened. So poor Judas or bad Judas. That's what we're looking for. We're looking for categories. And we like this response, remember, because we just want those categorical answers. But this explanation misses some nuance, I think. It doesn't address how Judas opens the door for Satan to enter him. And I believe he opens the door. See scriptures record Judas had been stealing money. He'd been stealing money as the group's treasurer, the entire ministry. And he never confessed it. He never made restitution. None of it ever happened. He sat down at the Lord's table. He was with Jesus and he never even mentioned it or confessed it. And with that, Judas had been opening the door for Satan to enter him.

Okay. So what do we know about that? Unconfessed sin, particularly repetitive or habitual lifestyles of sin, open the door for Satan's power and influence over us. You get it. So there's a way we open the door. Unconfessed lifestyles of sin opens the door for Satan's influence. Does that feel terrifying? Maybe a little bit. I mean, it means something. Here's the thing. Satan is not God. He's not omnipotent. He's not omnipresent. He's not all knowing. He is none of those things and contrary to popular belief, while God can in fact encounter and change a person without them first approaching, Satan cannot. He is a created being with weak limitations. Okay? This means those walking in repentance with Jesus are actually safe from heavy demonic influence or possession. Satan cannot walk through a closed door. And those walking in the light are not at risk for Satan entering them. Hear me. If you're at all terrified about this, go to Jesus. Jesus is far more powerful. This is not some cosmic boxing match between Jesus and Satan and whoever wins gets the kingdom. That's not how it works. Jesus won on the Calvary with the death, burial, and resurrection. Satan has eternal damnation in his future and he still does try to influence this world, but if you stay in the cover, know the covering Jesus Christ and you repent of your sin, you'll be safe. But there is a real battle going on. Satan cannot walk through a closed door because those walking in the light keep the door closed and repent. We are not at risk. In fact, it's actually just the opposite. Colin Smith, he says this, a blogger. He says, "Sometimes we get this the wrong way around, fearing that Satan will somehow have secret access to God's children, while doubting that Jesus can do anything for a person unless they open the door. But the Bible teaches precisely the opposite."

Isn't it funny how we do believe the opposite of that? Oh man. Like Satan's gonna get me. Oh, well, Jesus. I mean, I feel like I've gotta really reach out before I get a call back on him. As if God doesn't want you in his kingdom. And Satan does. Well. If Satan didn't puppet Judas around then into making a decision, then it must have been God himself. Right? Sure. Certainly God puppeted Judas around. Judas is just a sort of a pawn in the grand schema of what God was doing. You ask that question? Is anyone? Actually someone asked me that question last week. I think it's a fair question. First, I would say, if you haven't, go back and listen to my sermon from two weeks ago, Jesus, The Prophesied, because I'll walk through human responsibility and God's sovereignty in greater detail there. And I just don't have time to do that again. So you should go listen to that if you're curious about this. Second, Jesus is doing something unique by dipping the morsel into the cup and giving it to Judas. And this is something I discovered over the last few weeks. See in the culture at that time, taking a morsel from the table and dipping it into a cup and giving that to somebody actually was a gesture of a special sort of love and friendship. It was. There's just no doubt about it. As you study that, you understand that culturally, if I were to dip it and to give it to somebody, I mean, think about it now it's a little odd. I mean, some of you eat off each other's forks. I praise God for you, I guess. You're at The Cheesecake Factory and you're just, you know, have some of the red velvet cheesecake honey. And they down goes the hatch, you know, whatever, but good for you. It's not as common today, but if you were to do it and you were to, you know, say you're at Olive Garden or wherever you go and you get some of your pasta, you're probably not leaning over to your like mortal enemy's mouth and feeding him, right, like a two year old? Probably not happening, right? Maybe your spouse, maybe your kid, certainly your kid, quite honestly, but definitely not your mortal enemy. Right? There's something going on here. See God, Jesus here is actually triggering Judas with this act, and Satan. See Jesus doesn't change. He's loving. He's glorious. He's sovereign. He's powerful. All at the same time. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. This mere act of feeding the morsel, the bread, it triggers evil in him. Jesus makes a loving act towards an enemy and the enemy gets mad. That's what happens. As the Puritans say, the same sun that melts the snow hardens the clay. The sun is always the same. It's the object that determines how it affects him. So in theory, this act could have triggered extreme repentance and humility in one person, but in Judas and really Satan, it triggers betrayal. Jesus is the same. So is this a, is God sovereign in this act? Yeah, he's sovereign, but he doesn't overpower a good and pure person with evil. He doesn't do that. He offers a morsel in a culturally loving way and it triggers evil. God does not do evil, but he does leverage it for good. So God is sovereign and Judas is responsible for opening the door to Satan. Both are true at the same time. So the question is, what do you do with this information? That's a lot of, that's great, but what do I do with it?

Here's the first practical thing I thought of. If I was a 19 year old, not a Christian I'm sitting in here, I would think Satan can enter somebody. That's a real reality. But he cannot enter a repentant child of God. He can't do it. We must take these forces seriously if we wanna overcome them, friends. The Bible says we don't wrestle just against flesh and blood, but the powers and principalities of the air. The bullets are actually flying in a spiritual war. And it's so easy to overlook that with all of the distractions that we have. So many distractions, it's so easy to just be pacified in our comfort, lulled to sleep. It's so easy. I Peter 5 says this,

"Be sober-minded, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you."

You want that? I would like some cover in a war. Jesus is the cover. Okay. Maybe this is sounding like a lot to you. Maybe this is overwhelming to you. I think it is quite honestly. It's a lot. Maybe this message on Satan or sovereignty, it just, it makes you feel uneasy. And listen, I get it. It is, it's heavy. But we actually do have assurances that God is working all things out, no matter how bad they may look. Today and back then. We do have assurances. Look at verse 18 of chapter 13. Not in our section, but let's read it. This is Jesus talking. He says,

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

Lifted his heel against me. What is he talking about? Well, verse 30, we kind of see where this is going. It says,

"So, after receiving this morsel of bread, he," that's Judas, "he immediately went out. And it was night."

So this verse, verse 18, is actually Jesus quoting from Psalm 41, saying that Judas eating his morsel and then immediately going out to betray him is not actually a random act of betrayal. It's actually a prophecy predicted in scripture, centuries earlier. That's wild. So Satan enters Judas trying to stop Jesus. And he has no clue that him trying to stop Jesus is all a part of God's plan to bring redemption to the world. Totally got him. So Satan's trying to stop Jesus, but he finds out no one can stop Jesus. If anyone can stop him, is it Satan? I don't know. Not even close. Oh, anything you think you're gonna do? I've already worked it into my cosmic plan to bring about redemption. So good luck. The only way Judas could outsmart God maybe is to repent. He's not gonna do that. He got him. Jesus' betrayal does not stop him from saving his people. That's powerful. This evil act of Satan and Judas cannot stop God's plan. It actually accomplishes his plan.

There is actually one more magnificent insight from Jesus to point out as we end our time together. And that's this. Jesus decides to go to the cross, but he does so in spite of being betrayed. Now who would've blamed Jesus for living a perfect life, being God, and then all of a sudden saying, okay, that's a bit much. Now my friends are betraying me. I think I'm done. I'm not going to the cross. You all, you all did this anyway to yourselves. I think I'm gonna go back up to heaven and hang out. I think I'm gone. Who would've blamed him? He did nothing wrong. He doesn't owe salvation to anybody, but he doesn't do that. He goes anyway. He could have said, I'm not dying for this. And he still goes. In fact, love and service are magnified when there's resistance. Love and service become larger when there's more resistance for giving out

the love and service. Does that make sense? This is really a big, this is a really big point. So it's not just Judas denying Jesus that magnifies it. Actually it's us denying Jesus too. See God, when Jesus goes to the cross, he goes for all sins past, present and future. So he's going to, he's going to the cross. He's going for, he's going for the sins of those in that time, he's going for the sins of all of us in the future. And his act covers the sin of those who believe in him in the future. And so, quite literally like we betray God with sin. That's what it is. It's an act of declaration of war. And yet God still goes to the cross. He loves us. And he cares for us. Man. That's, that's a hard truth from me, I think, right now. Many of us deny Jesus with our sin. I deny Jesus with my sin. Many of us in here, we deny Jesus with our unbelief. And some of, some of the acts we commit could kind of feel, leave us feeling lonely and sad and isolated. You know what I'm talking about? You ever do something so crazy, and so, so maybe quite honestly, stupid or sin forward, maybe it was sinister and you hurt a lot of people and a lot of people maybe got upset with you. And it broke a lot of relationships. As a kid, I was, I had a really rough childhood. I think I've shared that with you. My mom passed away when I was 13. And I went to a new high school when I was 14, which is great. I was excited to be there. And I was really focused on turning my life around because I had lost a lot. I had lost my parents. I had, you know, I had lost all my friendships and I was trying to rebuild, somewhat rebuild my reputation for being a good student. And so I was trying to get good grades as a 14 year old kid and trying to work my way through what it meant to be a part of a community again. I had lost all of that and in some ways I never really knew it. And so I got to my new high school and one time I'm sitting on the bus, we're headed back from a track meet, and the track meets are fun in high school, by the way, they're a ton of fun. You just kinda sit around and talk. And one girl she's kind of talking up front. So I go move up closer and I wanna hear what she's saying. And she said, you know, if anyone's looking for some extra cash, I got a way you can make some extra money. And I grew up really poor. I just said that, tough childhood. So I was like, well, okay, how can I make some extra money? So I get up a little closer. And she says, oh, I work for the lunch line. You know, when you buy lunch, does any of you buy lunch? You just all have your Power Ranger, you bring your own thermos. I bought lunch. Okay. And so you go, you go and you buy lunch and you say, I work at the lunch line. If you ever wanna make a quick buck, all you have to do is come to my line, whatever you buy, just pay cash, and I'll give you more money back than you paid and you'll make a couple bucks. And as a 14 year old, very soft brain kid, I thought it's genius. I can make a million dollars doing this. So the next day, I go on a Monday, we go back and I see the line that she's in. I wait in line patiently and I always get a bagel. So go up to the line. I get a bagel, \$2 for the bagel, which is a rip, it's California, gave her \$2. She gave me back a five. Took the \$5 bill, went and I went back, put it in my pocket. I was like, I did it. I made some money. I can do this every day. Little did I know when the girl was bragging on the bus and I was talking to her, there were other people listening and they rightly went and told the administration. So I get like, I get pulled outta class in second period one day and being dragged up to the office, and I got suspended from school as a freshman in high school for stealing money, couple dollars. Not worth it at all. The worst part about it wasn't being suspended. The worst part about it was where I was at my life. I mean, I was trying to rebuild my life. I had lost so much. I lost my mom. I lost my dad. I was like, I gotta make my, I gotta make my mom proud. I gotta make my coaches proud. And my, my classmates proud and I couldn't go to the next track meet. And so all my teammates were mad at me. My coach

was livid. Spanish teacher, livid at me. My family was so mad. She's like, you're walking home from school. And I got out that day and I started walking home, I lived four miles from school, so it's quite a walk, and I'm walking and I'm feeling horrible shame. Guilt and shame. I feel like no one, no one in the world cares about me. No one loves me. And I'm feeling all of that kicking rocks down the street. And then I see this car start driving by, it's this old Subaru, this is one of my old my football coaches. And I'm like, oh no, he's gonna, he's gonna tear me another one. Like he's, here he comes. And he starts slowing down. I tried to duck a little bit and tried to shrink, but I was a big 14 year old. Couldn't do it. And he sees me and he starts slowing down and the window starts going down and I'm like, oh no. And I just try to act like I don't see him. And he goes Eddie Williams. And he looks at me and he goes, you're still a good kid. And that, when he said that to me, I hadn't had anybody speak life into me in years, nobody. And all it took was for him to just say, you're still a good kid. I still believe in you. And he just drove off. And I thought I can do it. I can, I can be better than this. Like, I can grow. I can, I can change. Even though I felt so abandoned. So lost. All the brokenness. Everything I had done wrong. Feeling like a little bit like maybe, why don't I just give up. It's easier.

Jesus does the same thing. In our lives, of our transgressions and our sin. You might be feeling all this condemnation for all the guilt and shame and all the horrible things you've done. Maybe you don't feel like you've done a lot, but you've done some stuff and you're feeling it. And in so many ways, as much as we want to hear it ourselves, we just can't. And no matter who turns our back on us, no matter who, which friends have left our lives and the countless amounts of family that have turned their back on you or the friends that have walked away, Jesus rolls his window down, and he says, "Hey, I love you. Because of the love I've given you, you're still a good kid and I'm gonna still pay the penalty for you. And I'm gonna go to the cross for you. And I'm gonna die for you because I love you." God is glorified in his service on the cross because of all of the things he had to face on the way there, including all of our sin that's welled up that he has to die for. And all of the shame we could feel, even though Jesus was betrayed on the cross, we know he will not betray you. So much so that he put his money, his blood, where his mouth is, and he shed it on your behalf. Do you want that God in your life today? You can have him. You know what it takes? It takes repentance. It takes repenting of your brokenness and believing in the God of the universe and walking in the light as he is in the light. Let's do that today. Let's pray.

Lord God, we desperately need your forgiveness. We are all like sheep. We've gone astray. All of us have moments and instances in our lives, some maybe sometimes even long sessions of our lives, where we just have our back to you. And we know what it feels like to just be lonely and lost, and sometimes we wallow in it and it feels good sometimes Lord, but you have better for us. I pray for my friends that they would repent of their sin. They would turn their back to the lifestyles of brokenness and loss, of lust and greed, and gluttony, and envy, and slander, and gossip, and brokenness, and toxic shame, and unbelief, that they would turn back from those things and turn their face to a good God who even though he was betrayed by Judas would not betray us. I pray for a spirit of repentance on us as we go this evening. And would your name be glorified as we repent to you? Our good God and savior. We love you in his name. Amen.

