

**Sermon Series Four: Believe and Live**  
**(The Gospel of John: *The Preparation and Passion of the Messiah***  
***Birth of the New Testament Church - John 13-21*)**  
**John 13:18-30**  
***“Betrayed”***

All of us, upon reflection, can still feel the sting of betrayal. The word “betrayed” is an ugly word in any language. No treachery is worse than betrayal by a family member or friend. 1) Julius Caesar knew such treachery. Among the conspirators who assassinated the Roman leader on March 15, 44 AD was Marcus Brutus. Caesar not only trusted Brutus, he had highly favored him as a son. According to Roman historians, Caesar first resisted the onslaught of his assassins. But when he saw Brutus among them with his dagger drawn, Caesar ceased to struggle and, pulling the top part of his robe over his face, asked the famous question, "You too, Brutus?" 2) When she showed up at Coventry House she brought with her a can that never left her side. Often she would be seen in the rocking chair in her room with the can in her lap. After months of being asked, one day she revealed what was in that can. It was the ashes of her mother. A mother who had placed her in a garbage can two days after she was born. When her story was followed up on, it checked out perfectly. 3) Superstar skater Sven Kramer had just won the gold in the 5000 meter race and now he thought he had one the gold in the 10,000 meter race. He had set an Olympic record time a full four seconds ahead of the second-place skater. He was elated until he found out that his coach had told him to switch lanes during the race which had disqualified him. He had trusted his coach when he personally would have never switched lanes himself. 4) But perhaps there is no more treacherous place than the Internet where cloaked in anonymity friends, neighbors, and family can engage in a cesspool of character assassination. On a site called Dee’s Place Jennifer had been the target in a post which described her as “a method-out doped-out mother of two with AIDS.” Not one word of it was true! As a result of this betrayal, her family had to move out of town.

No doubt you have heard the names of Benedict Arnold, “Tokyo Rose,” and “Axis Sally.” But without a doubt you’ve heard the name, Judas Iscariot. When asked who betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, seven-year-old Kenny, replied, “I know! It was 'Judas the Scariest!’” We do not know when Judas first met Jesus or why he followed him for three years. But what we do know is that he was a thief, that he never gave his heart to Jesus, and most probably followed Jesus thinking that Christ would be the political deliverer that would free the Jewish nation from Rome. When Jesus revealed that he was stealing from the disciples’ moneybox his pious hypocrisy was unmasked, and he immediately went to the chief priests and volunteered to hand Jesus over to them to die for 30 pieces of silver (nearly \$8000 today; See Matthew 26:14-16). *As we come to our text this morning, we will discover how one should act when they receive the ultimate betrayal.*

**I. Be comforted: Jesus knows what you’re going through! (13:18-21)**

<sup>18</sup> *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.’* <sup>19</sup> *I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he.* <sup>20</sup> *Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.* <sup>21</sup> *After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, “Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.”*

**1. He knew your betrayal in advance.**

The betrayal of Judas did not come as a surprise to Jesus just as your betrayal does not come as a surprise to God. Jesus was not a helpless victim. He knew from day one of his ministry that this would happen. Indeed Jesus tells his disciples in advance so that when the actual act of betrayal occurred, their faith would be strengthened rather than shaken. They would remember that Jesus knew this event long before it happened because of his omniscient foreknowledge. Only God could know that! Further, having a traitor in their midst would not destroy their credibility as his disciples and put an end to their mission. Their life ministry and commission were in full force and had only just begun. If Christ knew which disciple was going to betray him, he most assuredly

knew all the events of their lives that would follow it. They would have the privilege of preaching the gospel to the world and those who welcomed them as Christ's messengers would be welcoming Christ and God the Father who sent him.

When you are betrayed by a friend, a business partner, a church member, or a spouse, it is a sad and distressing thing to have your trust violated and exploited. But you are not alone when such things happen, because Jesus has been there and is there experiencing your betrayal too! He will steer even the most evil acts of others to accomplish good things in your life and other's lives as a result. Just believe it!

## **2. He feels your pain.**

Jesus had poured every waking hour into the life of his disciples - including Judas! Jesus' emotions are in a state of turmoil, his whole inner self convulses at the thought of one of his closest followers betraying him to his enemies. He is humanly in extreme anguish. The unrequited love, the sheer ingratitude, the amazing unbelief, the treachery of returning evil for good, the divine knowledge of the horrific consequences that awaited Judas, the all-knowing understanding that the journey to the cross had already begun, had Christ churning inside. Imagine the intensity in his voice as he declared with absolute certainty that one of them would betray him.

Never forget that Christ experiences every one of your experiences and that includes those acts of betrayal against you. And because he is God he feels the pain even more deeply than you do. The Bible tells us that he shares your agony and shares your tears. He absolutely knows what you are going through! The Creator and sovereign Lord of the universe takes notice!

## **II. Be loving: Jesus has set the example for you! (13:22-26)**

<sup>22</sup> *The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke.*

<sup>23</sup> *One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side, <sup>24</sup> so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. <sup>25</sup> So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, "Lord, who is it?" <sup>26</sup> 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.*

### **1. Jesus chooses to love rather than to retaliate.**

If ever there was a time when Jesus could legitimately strike back and use the bewilderment and astonishment of the disciples to his own advantage, it was now! Someone among them was about to do the unthinkable. It would certainly be an unsettling feeling to know that a traitor was in their midst. Even worse, they were inflicted with self-doubt frozen by the thought that they themselves could be the one. Jesus could have used this moment to stir up the most intense feelings of hatred and to cause them to surround and “do in” his betrayer. But instead of soliciting hate, Christ again gives us an amazing example of extravagant love.

### **2. Jesus chooses to love extravagantly!**

He says, remember this disciple “*who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.*” In a land where food was often hard to come by, to betray one who has shared hundreds of meals with you was not only arrogance in the face of hospitality, but was seen as taking cruel advantage, a “kick in the seat-of-the-pants, a horse kick” symbolizing a complete and final break in fellowship. It was to walk out on a friend forever.

How does Jesus react to this? **1) He lovingly reveals his betrayer quietly.** Peter gestures in some way to John to ask Jesus who the betrayer is. John whispers to Christ and Christ apparently very quietly answers him. “*It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.*” How different that reaction is from what many of us would do. We would be texting, emailing, face-booking, tweeting our friends (if not everyone we knew) seething with vengeance and reprisal. **2) In giving Judas this tasty morsel Christ is making a final gesture of love to him.** This was a common gesture in the Passover meal given as a sign of honor or friendship. Indeed, it is very possible that Judas was seated on Jesus’ left - the place of honor. Right up to the end, Jesus does all that he can to save Judas from judgment and an eternity in hell that awaited him. Jesus’ action in singling Judas out for a mark of special favor is Christ’s final appeal for him to abandon his treacherous plan and to be a faithful obedient disciple. We too, when betrayed, should do all that we can to heal the breach in the relationship. We should reach out with a phone call, a visit, or an invitation to share a

meal with us. In these moments we should do everything possible to reconcile and to forgive.

### **III. Be Reminded: your love may be spurned!**

<sup>27</sup> Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly." <sup>28</sup> Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

Just as Judas did, they may accept your food, but not your love. Instead of reconciling or repenting they may resist your efforts to make things right. Further, just as Judas did, they may have everyone fooled. The fact that Judas had the money box, and was the treasurer of the 12, shows that the other disciples trusted him implicitly. He was the consummate hypocrite. Even when Christ tells him to go and get his dirty deed done, the overwhelming majority of the disciples did not suspect him. They think that Jesus is telling Judas to buy what is needed for the festival. Or perhaps he has been dispatched to give something to the poor which was a very important part of Jewish religion. On Passover night, the Temple gates were left open from midnight on allowing beggars to congregate. During that time alms giving was regarded as particularly meritorious when done in Jerusalem.

### **Conclusion**

We have much to learn from the tragedy of Judas's betrayal. 1) He is history's greatest example of lost opportunity and wasted privilege. For three years he sat at the feet of Jesus, God in the flesh, and witnessed firsthand his miracles and yet he turns his back on him and misses out on the miracle of Pentecost and being one of the foundational apostles of the church. 2) He is a powerful example of what the love of money does to a person. For him, money and power was more important than his own salvation. When Jesus became king, think how much money he would have then! 3) He is a great example to heed the words of the apostle Paul in examining whether you are in the faith - whether you are an authentic believer and follower of Christ. 4) His life is a frightening

example of the deadliness of hypocrisy and the danger of coming under the influence and control of the devil. By selling Jesus to Christ's enemies he sold his own soul to the devil. His actions brought on not only the dark night of his soul, but the dark night of the cross! 5) He is also a reminder that there is ultimately nothing that we can do, or the devil can do, to thwart the plans and purposes of God. 6) He is living proof of the immeasurable patience, mercy, and lovingkindness of Christ. **Haddon Robinson writes: Twenty years ago, my wife Bonnie and I, went through what was for us the most difficult experience of our lives. We were sued by a young woman we had tried to help. On several occasions Bonnie had gone over to clean her house, and we'd had her over for dinner. When we got that suit, it just felt like we'd tried to wash someone's feet and got kicked in the mouth. She blamed us for things for which we weren't responsible. I saw how lawyers work. They were constructing a case I didn't believe was there. That suit came after we had begun teaching at a seminary, and I think I was down emotionally. Bonnie and I used to walk together and commit the situation to the Lord. In fact, every time we drive that way, Bonnie says to me, "Remember the walks we had?" I wish I could tell you I was pure and noble, but at that time, I would have been happy if this woman had gotten run over by a truck. But love doesn't think like that. I found that as we prayed about it every day there came a time when I could no longer talk about it to the Lord. I'd say, *Lord, you know what's on my heart, and you know the details. You do it.* And then there came a time when I prayed, *Lord, you know that I think she's done us wrong. But I may be wrong. If vengeance is necessary, you do it.* And again and again I found myself thinking, *I serve a God who has forgiven all of my sins, and they are many. And on the basis of that I can begin to forgive her.* I tell this story not because I'm an expert about how to show forgiveness, but I do know that when, in the power of the Spirit and the love of God, you work with it, you can take that truth about love off the page and see it work in your life. Alfred Lord Tennyson said of Archbishop Cranmer: "To do him a hurt was to beget a kindness from him. His heart was made of such fine soil that if you planted in it the seeds of hate they blossomed love." I want that to be true of us. And we're better at it than we think we are, because the**

**Spirit of love lives in those who put their trust in Jesus. So when you are smarting from the sting of betrayal:** 1) **Be comforted:** Jesus knows what you're going through! He knew your betrayal in advance. He shares your pain. 2) **Be Loving:** Jesus has set the example for you! Jesus choose to love rather than to retaliate - to love extravagantly! 3) **Be Reminded: your love may be spurned!** But ultimately, God will turn your sorrow into joy. As you throw yourself upon God, you will find that the warmth of God's love ultimately will be 100 times greater than the pain of your betrayal. So with that in mind, let's take on the day!