

THAT YOU MAY HAVE LIFE

(A Study of the Gospel of John)

The Making of a Judas

TEXT: John 18:1-14

INTRODUCTION: Who was the worst sinner to have his name penned in Holy Scripture?

Was it Adam, because by his sin he caused sin and death to be inherited by every member of the human race?

Was it Pharaoh, who dared to say, “Who is YHWH that I should obey Him. I do not know YHWH, and I will not let Israel go!”

Was it Samson, a man born with such great promise but came to so little because he allowed himself to be ruled by pleasure, procrastination, and unforgiveness?

It could be wicked King Ahab whose wickedness was only exceeded by that of his evil wife Jezebel, both of whom played a major role in leading the nation of Israel to turn from following the Lord.

It could be the pagan King Nebuchadnezzar whose arrogance was portrayed in the giant statue he set up on the plains of Babylon and forced everyone to bow down upon penalty of being cast into the fiery furnace.

Or maybe Belshazzar, King of the City of Babylon, before whose eyes the hand that wrote on the wall appeared would certainly draw some votes. He dare to take the implements of the temple and use them as a part of a drunken feast in honor of pagan gods and to whom the One True and Living God declared, “You have been weighed in the balance and found wanting.”

Don't forget to consider wicked Haman, the man who conceived the plot to destroy the entire Jewish people in a single day.

Was it Herod the Great who because of his lust for power murdered man and woman alike to protect his position, and would have, except for the superintending hand of the providence of God, even killed the Christ who had come to save the wicked from their sins?

Or maybe you would vote for Caiaphas, that High Priest of Israel who clung to the form of religion and denied the substance of it all in the person God's own Son.

Perhaps Pilate who, though governor of Judea, was a coward who would not even stand up for his own honest decision?

But by now, I suspect your mind has surfaced another name, the name of

- a man who betrayed a friend who had never once done him harm
- a man who turned traitor to the most righteous and benevolent king to ever sit upon a throne
- a man who would plant a kiss upon the cheek of the Lamb of God in order to deliver Him into the hands of blood thirsty soldiers.

And most of us would agree that this Judas is perhaps the worst sinner thus far to live and certainly the most vile man to have his name inscribed in the pages of the Bible.

John 18:1–14 1 When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. 2 And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples. 3 Then Judas, having received a detachment *of troops*, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. 4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, “Whom are you seeking?”

5 They answered Him, “Jesus of Nazareth.”

Jesus said to them, “I am *He*.” And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. 6 Now when He said to them, “I am *He*,” they drew back and fell to the ground.

7 Then He asked them again, “Whom are you seeking?”

And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.”

8 Jesus answered, “I have told you that I am *He*. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way,” 9 that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, “Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none.”

10 Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus.

11 So Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?”

12 Then the detachment *of troops* and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. 13 And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year. 14 Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

It is not my purpose to spend the day condemning Judas. He is already condemned, as are all of those who did not believe in the name of the one and only Son of God and those who refused to confess Jesus as the Lord and Master of their lives.

No, I think if there is profit in considering Judas and his story, and there must certainly be profit or the Holy Spirit would not have preserved it in the gospels for us, the benefit must be in warning us against what happened to Judas.

- And let us not fall into the trap of saying, “Well, Judas was just predestined to betray Christ.” He was predestined, but remember that Romans tells us clearly that predestination is based upon the foreknowledge of God. God knew the choices and decisions Judas would make, and on the basis of the free will decisions of Judas, God predestined the outcome.
- Therefore, if we can see, if we can understand what happened to Judas, what motivated him to make the horribly wrong choices he did, then we can be warned against similar choices in our own lives.

So let us examine with care **THE MAKING OF A JUDAS**.

There seems to be no end to the irony in the name which has today become synonymous with treason.

We call him Judas, but his Hebrew name was **Ye-hu-dah**, the very same name elsewhere translated **Judah**. The name means “**Praise YHWH**.”

And yes, he had the same name as the son of Jacob for whom the tribe of Judah was named. Judas himself was from Judah, the only disciple from that tribe. He was called Judas **Isca**riot, which means “**from Kerioth**,” a town in the province of Judah. That means that Judas was from the same tribe as Jesus Himself, who entered human flesh as a descendant of the tribe of Judah.

Another Judas was also famous in Jesus’ day. His name was Judas Maccabeus. Two centuries before, Judas Maccabeus defeated the armies of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Seleucid king who had desecrated the temple by allowing a pig to be sacrificed on the altar to the Greek god Zeus. Judas Maccabeus secured religious freedom for the Jews and caused the temple to be cleansed and the sacrifices reinstated. During the days when our Lord walked upon the earth, Judas Maccabeus was still a national hero.

But Judas Iscariot erased, as it were, the honor and respect people had for the name Ye-hu-dah. Like smearing foul smelling mud on a white wedding dress, Judas besmudged his own given name.

- Being one of twelve chosen to live side by side with God’s anointed one for three years, he abandoned his position of privilege to be remembered in a hall of shame.

- He whose name would have been inscribed on one of the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem cannot find his name in the Lamb's Book of Life.
- He who could have ruled with Christ in the Millennial Kingdom over princes and kings, at the side of our Lord and Master, is now imprisoned in the flames of hell, awaiting his condemnation to the Lake of Fire.
- And today, the name Judas
 - no longer elicits praise to YHWH,
 - no longer reminds people of the coming Lion of Judah,
 - no longer brings back memories of faithful men who risk life and limb for God and country.
- No, whenever the name of Judas is spoken today it is with contempt, even from the lips of vile and wicked men,
 - for it speaks of a man who sold out a friend.
 - It is the name of a man who was willing to kill a man who Himself was willing to die.
- The name Judas has become a synonym for betrayal and treason.

Why, Judas? Why? We would ask.

Why did you approach the Master in the dark of night and put the kiss of death upon His cheek?

I. JUDAS DID NOT REALLY LOVE JESUS.

John 12:1–8 1 Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. 2 There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. 3 Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

4 But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, 5 "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" 6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

7 But Jesus said, “Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. 8 For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always.”

- Judas’ outward motive was that the oil could have been sold for a year’s wages, and that money used to help the poor.
- The Holy Spirit revealed through John that Judas’ real motive was thievery.
- It is interesting that Jesus addresses the pretend outward motive, because that revealed an issue more important than stealing the money.
- Mary was worshipping Jesus.

Mary was demonstrating love and adoration, as the song says, in sweet abandon.

- And this is what Judas criticized, because he did not understand it.

He saw Mary’s gift, Mary’s act of worship as a waste, because Judas did not love Jesus enough to want to do anything like that.

And Jesus rebuked Judas because of it.

That makes me think of **questions we should be asking ourselves.**

1. What motivates the things I do for Christ?

What causes me to show up for LCG or worship service?

What is lacking when I could come and worship or come and study God’s Word, but I don’t?

2. What makes me want to serve Jesus?

3. What makes me want to be a witness for Jesus?

Or, maybe we need to ask

4. Why am I not motivated to be a witness for Christ?

And all of this to ask the key question:

5. How much do I love Jesus?

Interestingly, Matthew and Mark both point out that immediately after this incident, Judas sought out the high priest in order to betray Jesus.

And that leads us to note the second reason Judas would betray his master.

II. JUDAS WANTED RELIGION MORE THAN RELATIONSHIP

Matthew 26:14–16 14 Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests 15 and said, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?” And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. 16 So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.

Judas was not just caught in a moment of weakness as the religious leaders approached him and tried to bribe him.

Judas sought out the chief priests.

Judas chose to change sides.

- We already saw from Judas’ reaction to Mary’s act of worship that Judas lacked the kind of relationship with Jesus that Mary clearly had.
- **Lacking a relationship with Jesus, Judas turned to religion.**

Religion in the place of Relationship is a temptation to us all.

Religion –the systematized worship and service of God.

Imagine this scenario with me:

- A group of us believers meet together for the first time in PC, and we decide to get together and worship the Lord one Sunday on the corner of 98 and Beck at 10:30.
- We meet and sing, pray, read Scripture, preach, testify. It was worship!
- We decide we need to minister to some folks in need in the area, so we agree on Monday to each bring some food and set up some tables across the street and give food and share the gospel with those in need who come by. That is service.
- We decide to meet the next week on Sunday morning at 10:30 to worship.
- We decide to give out food and the gospel every Monday.
- We do this more or less regularly for 6 weeks
- For 6 months
- For 6 years.
 - We worship the Lord at 98 and Beck at 10:30 on Sunday morning.
 - We give out food and the gospel across the street every Monday.

- Somewhere between the first few times we did it and the 6 year anniversary, it became religion.
 - That does not mean it became bad.
 - It means it became systematized.
 - It became a part of a system for us.
- Anything that we do repeatedly as an act of worship or service to God will eventually become systematic, and when it does, it is religion.
- So religion is not necessarily bad.
- **Religion should be the result,
not the cause,
of our worship and service to God.**

The ideal:

A passionate relationship with Christ

fuels religious (systematic, faithful) worship and service to God.

When we discover that our religion is running on its own,

and we are not passionate in our relationship with the Lord,

We need to rekindle a fiery love in our relationship again.

- **Remember your life before Christ.**
- **Think about the cross and what Jesus did there personally for you.**
- **Remember how God brought you to faith.**
- **Recall what Jesus did in your life when He saved you.**
- **Meditate on the goodness of the Lord in your life across the years.**
- **Recall the many acts of patient love and mercy He has done for you.**
- **Remember times you felt the passion for Him more than now.**
- **Out of all of those things,**
 - **privately worship**, sing songs of love and praise to the Lord

- **privately pray**, even repeat those things you remember aloud to Christ
- **privately read portions of His Word**
- **and let Him speak to you from it.**

When we have rekindled the passion of our relationship with Christ, then we can evaluate whether the acts of worship and service have become obsolete or whether they are still meaningful.

If we try to do this evaluation before we address the primary issue, we will most likely make the wrong decisions.

CONCLUSION: I speak to two groups today.

1. There are those of you here who do not have a relationship with Jesus Christ, and therefore you do not yet love Him with heart and soul and mind and strength. Without those things your fate will be the same as Judas' fate, for all whose names are not written in the Book of Life will be cast into the Lake of Fire.

But you can begin that relationship today by believing Jesus died for you and rose from the dead. You can trust Him, and that is the beginning of loving Him.

2. The second group are all of us who do have a relationship with the Lord, and we do love Jesus. Because He has saved us by grace when we came to Him in faith, we have no need to fear the Lake of Fire.

But the things that caused the failure of Judas can still trouble us.

- **We love Jesus, but do we love Him as we ought?**
- **We have relationship with Christ, but have we kept the passion in our relationship?**
- **Have we settled into religion?**

PRAYER

INVITATION: I am sure you know that a lot of churches no longer have an altar call, and I will spend no words bad mouthing those who choose not to. But I tell you that I still think it is important, because I believe that every time the seed of the Word of God is sown, it calls for response.

Not every response needs to be at the altar, but some do.

- If you are trusting Christ or have in recent days, Jesus said it needs to be made known. He has no secret followers.
- If you are joining with our church as a follower of Christ, the church needs to know.
- If God is moving in your life and decisions are being made, it helps to just come and humble yourself on your knees before the Lord and do business with God. You don't have to explain it to anyone else. But it helps you firm up those commitments to the Lord.

If you need to come to be saved or because you have recently been saved,

If you want to become a part of this church,

Or you want to come and pray at the steps as your own private altar before the Lord,

You come while we sing.