

The Gospel of John: that you might believe...and LIVE **Jesus is the Lover of the Undeserving**

John 13:18-30

Intro: The history books are littered with the names of famous traitors. Even the word, traitor, is an ugly word in any language. There are few people more despised than those who betray their country, cause or trust. Most governments have reserved their most harsh punishment for those who commit acts of treason.

Alcibiades (Picture): (*al-sib-i-adeez*) During the Peloponnesian War, this Athenian general & boyhood friend of Socrates, betrayed Athens's plan to the city's bitter rival. As a result, the Spartans defeated the Athenians in 412bc.

Philippe Petain (Picture): Hailed as the savior of Verdun in WW1, this French General became the head of the Vichy government in the early 1940's. However, he was eventually tried and convicted of treason for working with the Nazi's during WW2.

Benedict Arnold (Picture): The most famous American traitor was an accomplished war hero before he betrayed his country by switching sides in the middle of the Revolutionary War in 1780. After fighting against his own countrymen (in a losing effort, btw), he died in exile in England, scorned by both British and American citizens.

The Bible is full of similar stories of traitors, too. But the most notorious traitor, both in the Bible and in all of human history, was Judas Iscariot.

"After more than 3 years of living with the incomparably perfect Jesus, observing the miracles He performed, and hearing His teaching, Judas betrayed Him to His death. The dark, tragic story of Judas reveals the depths of evil to which the human heart is capable of sinking, even in the very best of circumstances."

John MacArthur

Gospel Writers: Every word of the Bible is from God, but it is amazing how the Holy Spirit used the personalities and styles of the 40+ human authors of scripture. This is never more apparent than when the 4 gospel writers refer to Judas. Because they wrote their account after the events surrounding the death & resurrection of Jesus, you can feel their sense of contempt for Judas. For instance, in every list of the disciples in the gospels, Judas always appears last. Except in Acts 1, where he doesn't appear at all! **John** is writing some 60 years after the events we are about to read in John 13 and you can still sense the indignation and contempt he feels for Judas. Listen...

Text & Prop: 4 Ways Jesus Loved the Undeserving in John 13:18-30

I. Jesus Loves the Undeserving with a Warning - 18-21

Note: Judas had never believed in Jesus (John), he had not been bathed in the blood (Jn 13) & he had not been among those given to Jesus by God (Jn 17:12). How close can someone get to Jesus without being saved by Jesus?

Note: Jesus has just washed the disciples feet (including Judas's) saying: *"Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."* **John 13:16-17**

Then, I picture Him lowering His voice as He utters the next phrase: *"I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.'" John 13:18*

Simply Put: Guys, not all of you in this room are blessed because one of you is going to lift up his heel (kick me while I'm down) against me in betrayal: A reference to Ps 41 where David is lamenting the betrayal of a trusted advisor.

Question: Did Judas have a choice? **Answer:** Yes! Judas's duplicity and treachery was foreseen and then used by God in His divine plan. Our knowledge is after-knowledge, but God's knowledge is foreknowledge. Judas was no robot, programmed to betray Jesus against his own will. Judas freely chose to do what he did and was fully accountable for his actions and paid (and is still paying) a very high price for them. Judas had a choice & so do I.

"And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed." **Luke 22:22**

Opportunities: Judas had every opportunity to turn from his sin. Not just in this moment, but throughout the Gospels Jesus regularly alluded to the condition of Judas's heart. All of these were warnings to Judas, inviting him to repent and believe in Jesus. Judas heard all of Jesus' sermons...

"Unless you repent you will all likewise perish." **Luke 13:5**

Jesus loves the undeserving with a warning...

II. Jesus Loves the Undeserving with Discretion - 22-25, 28-29

Note: Up until the very hour of his betrayal, Judas was protected by the very Jesus he was about to betray. Obviously, Jesus knew what Judas was planning to do, but did not openly reveal the darkness of his heart to the others. **What would have happened?** Imagine if ole' Samurai Simon Peter had gotten wind of Judas's plans. He could kiss his ears goodbye.

Privileges: Judas was free to enjoy all the spiritual privileges as the others did. Yet, they did him no good. **The Same Sun** that melts the snow also hardens the clay. In spite of all Jesus had to say about money, Judas still stole from the treasury:

"(Judas) had the money box; & he used to take what was put in it." **John 12:6**

Hypocrite: (Greek: Hypo-krites = Actor) Judas was a superb actor, as accomplished as anyone could ever find. Some scholars believe that Judas

was the most well-educated and socially accomplished disciple. If he were here today, he would drive up in the nicest & cleanest car. He would be dressed in the sharpest clothes and expensive sunglasses. If Judas were here he would know all the words to all the songs, he would walk around being friendly to everybody, probably using all the right spiritual phrases. Yes, Judas was one of the most effective hypocrites of all time because nobody suspected him to be a traitor. Only Jesus knew, and Jesus kept it that way. He let him carry out his charade, providing Judas enough time and cover to repent before God and embrace Jesus. Oh, there were hints from time to time about Judas, but they were subtle enough that the other disciples had no idea...but Judas knew that Jesus knew.

Note: Even after Jesus identifies Judas as being the one who would betray Him, the other disciples don't believe it and assume that Judas is headed out to buy food or to give something to the poor. A truly stunning performance!

Ill: Once a fellow walked up on a group of 4 boys standing by an old stray dog on the streets of Boston. *"What are you doing?"* They replied, *"Telling lies. The one who tells the biggest lie gets the dog."* Shocked, the man replied, *"Well when I was your age, I never thought of telling a lie."* The boys looked at one another, shrugged their shoulders and said, *"I guess he wins the dog."*

Step Further: That guy was not much of a hypocrite, but Judas had it down to the tee. He was good, but I'll bet there are some in the room today that could give Judas a run for his money on pretending to be something on the outside that you know you are not on the inside. Judas had everybody fooled, except for Jesus. And you may have everybody fooled here, but you haven't fooled Jesus. Judas got 3 & ½ years of hypocrisy before finally being exposed by Jesus...how much time do you think you have left? If Judas would have gotten honest about his unbelief, sin and selfishness I have no doubt in my mind that Jesus would have saved him and made him new. Furthermore, I think Samurai Simon Peter & the guys would have forgiven his offenses and loved him anyway. But, we'll never know. Will you?

Jesus Loves the Undeserving with a warning & with discretion...

III. Jesus Loves the Undeserving with a Gesture - 26

Seating Chart: From John's account, we can deduce that Judas was seated directly to Jesus' left, which would have been a place of honor. Just before his betrayal, Judas was requested to sit right next to Jesus!

Offer: At that time, to take a piece of bread from the table, dip it in the common dish & offer it to someone was a gesture of special friendship. Jesus reached out to Judas, *"Judas, here's my friendship. Here's restoration. Judas, here's my heart. All you have to do is take it, old friend. Will you?"*

"Jesus' action, in singling Judas out for a mark of special favor, may have been intended as a final appeal to him to abandon his treacherous plan and play the part of a true disciple." **F.F. Bruce**

IV. Jesus Loves the Undeserving with an Offer - 27, 30

Result of Rejecting Jesus for the Last Time: The offer was on the table, but Jesus knew exactly what happened in Judas as soon as he rejected the final gesture of friendship, loyalty & forgiveness. The hardness of his heart made it possible for Satan to move in and take full possession of the man.

"Up to this moment, Judas had been possessed by an evil intention. Now he was possessed by the evil one. The Lord knew what had happened. The devil himself now leered at Jesus through the eyes of Judas." **John Phillips**

From Now On: The name Judas is synonymous with treachery, hypocrisy and treason. Once Judas left the room that night, he would never know again, in this life or eternity, another moment of happiness. John describes this hopelessness as he concludes verse 30: *"It was night."* **Call the Band!**

Concl: The bad news is that you and I are just as undeserving of the love of Jesus as Judas was. We have been warned like Judas was warned, we have been given time to stop pretending to be something we are not, we have been shown love by Jesus through more than a gesture (the cross) and we have been given an offer of friendship, loyalty and forgiveness. The bad news is that we are just as undeserving of the love of Jesus as Judas was. But...

SONG: YOU LOVE ME ANYWAY (SIDEWALK PROPHETS)

Invitation: Once Judas rejected Jesus' final offer (the bread), he hit a point of no return. Although Jesus still loved him, Judas was now under the control of Satan and could not repent. I believe the fact that you are here today is evidence that you can still repent, you can still trust Jesus and, undeserving as you may be, the love of Jesus has been extended to you. Will this be your last opportunity? I don't know, and you don't know. But, I will tell you that you can turn from your sin and trust Jesus right now!

"The gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope." **Tim Keller**

Lead People to Christ!

Jesus is the Lover of the Undeserving **Reading List**

Monday: Isaiah 1:18

Tuesday: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Wednesday: Ephesians 1:13-14

Thursday: Psalm 51:1-19

Friday: 1 Timothy 1:15

Saturday: Matthew 26:47-56

Sunday: Matthew 27:1-10