

The Betrayal of Jesus

Mark 14:43-50

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⁴³ And immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. ⁴⁴ Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man. Seize him and lead him away under guard.” ⁴⁵ And when he came, he went up to him at once and said, “Rabbi!” And he kissed him. ⁴⁶ And they laid hands on him and seized him. ⁴⁷ But one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant⁵ of the high priest and cut off his ear. ⁴⁸ And Jesus said to them, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? ⁴⁹ Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But let the Scriptures be fulfilled.” ⁵⁰ And they all left him and fled.

During the American Revolutionary war, in the 1700s, a man by the name of Benedict Arnold was one of George Washington’s best generals. Benedict had fought against the British and had earned a name for himself. Benedict, however, had a weakness. His weakness was his love for money. After his first wife had died, he married again. His wife wanted to live large, and therefore Benedict began to cut corners. Eventually, Benedict became a traitor. In 1780, Benedict Arnold was in charge of West Point but made a secret agreement to surrender West Point to the British in exchange for money and a military role. The plot, however, was exposed and when George Washington wanted to meet him, he was gone. Benedict could have been one of America’s heroes but he died a betrayer. Benedict Arnold’s treason is one of the most famous betrayals in American history.

How does someone who appeared to be loyal to a cause end up a betrayer?

In Benedict’s case, historians say his change was due to a combination of things but one major motivation was his greed or love for money.

Unlike Benedict, Judas Iscariot was a greedy thief and a pretender. Judas put on a good show as if he cared for the poor.

- When Mary anointed the feet of Jesus, Judas protested to say as if say the costly nard should be given to the poor (John 12:5,6, 13:29). Judas did not really care for the poor. Only for himself.
- Jesus explicitly said that Judas Iscariot was a devil. “*Did I not choose you, the twelve? And yet one of you is a devil.*”. John 6:70. Some may ask “Why then did Jesus choose

Judas Iscariot?” We should leave that to God’s sovereignty. We just know Judas is here in the garden. He is responsible for actions. And he is about to betray our Lord.

I have *three* exhortations as we expound this passage:

First exhortation: Beware of *apostasy* and *antagonism*

In verses 43 through 45 we see Judas’ betrayal in two parts – How he arrives and how he gestures.

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1. Notice how Judas arrives. Judas doesn’t come alone. He comes with a whole band of temple guards. The temple officials don’t come empty handed. They come with swords and clubs. Swords were daggers or large knives. Clubs were wooden sticks. John the Gospel writer tells us that this group came also with torches and lanterns (John 18:1). Why torches and lanterns? Because it was night time. The people identified in the group are those sent by the chief priests, scribes, and elders – they are part of the Sanhedrin or Temple Council. This arrival in the garden is just the culmination of their growing hatred, animosity and envy of Jesus. Jesus’ teaching and his popularity had become a threat to their authority and influence.
 - a. When Jesus taught at a synagogue in Nazareth, what did they do? They tried to push Jesus off a cliff (Luke 4:29).
 - b. When Jesus forgave and healed a paralytic, they called Jesus a blasphemer (Mark 2:7).
 - c. When Jesus healed on a Sabbath, they held counsel with the Herodians to destroy Jesus (Mark 3:6).
 - d. The scribes from Jerusalem called Jesus as someone possessed by the prince of demons (Mark 3:22).
 - e. When Jesus taught a parable against the leaders of the temple, they tried to arrest Jesus but could not (Mark 12:12).
 - f. But we saw in Mark 14:1, when the Passover had come, the Temple officials wanted to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. How awful! And Judas was the right man to accomplish their evil plan. Little do the Temple officials nor Judas realize that they are being played by Satan. The murderous plot to kill Jesus was finalized and Judas was going to hand over Jesus to them with a sign or gesture.
2. The second thing you see is how Judas was going to identify Jesus. Because it was

dark, Judas' plan would be fail-proof. Judas would kiss Jesus. That would be the sign for his arrest. The word for *kiss* is *phileo* – display friendly love or affection. And that is exactly what Judas does. Verse ⁴⁵ And when he came, he went up to him at once and said, “Rabbi!” And he kissed him. In the Gospel of Luke, we see Jesus, just before Judas kissed him said, “*Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?*” Luke 22:48. Even after hearing that Judas proceeded to kiss him. John's Gospel tells us that it was Jesus who asked the crowd whom they were seeking. And when Jesus identified it was him, they all fell back to the ground, perhaps in dread and fear.

Judas Iscariot does not treat with Jesus with respect when he says, “Rabbi”. His words betray his heart. Judas is fully sold to Satan. His conscience is seared to the point of denying God himself. His rational thought process has left him. Why? Because evil and sin have consumed his heart, soul and mind. He knew the greatest commandment was to love the Lord with his heart, soul, mind and strength. But Judas uses all the strength of his soul, mind, soul, mind to lie to and betray the Lord Jesus. How is this possible? Someone said, “Your private life determines your public legacy”. Judas allowed himself to be filled with the spirit of Satan not the Holy Spirit. There is nothing worse or despicable than claiming to be a follower of Jesus and being devoid of the Holy Spirit.

A true believer may make claims about his or her faith, may stumble, may struggle but one sign of a true believer is that they have the Holy Spirit in them.

How do you know you have the Holy Spirit in you?

1. The first evidence of the Holy Spirit in you is your *conviction* of sin. To contrast Judas with Peter, you see Peter confessed he was a sinner before Jesus. Peter confessed, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man” Luke 5:8. People in their natural minds and attitudes don't like to be called sinners. When you became a believer, you would have experienced a conviction of your sin. As believers it is good that the Holy Spirit reveals our sins to us in order to sanctify us.
2. The second evidence of the Holy Spirit in you is your *confession* that Jesus is Lord. Peter *confessed* Jesus was the “Son of the Living God” (Matthew 16:16). No true believer will ever deny that Jesus is Lord. Confession, full acknowledgement of Jesus' Lordship is the evidence of the Holy Spirit.
 - a. *...no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.”* 1 Corinthians 12:3.
 - b. *“every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist”* 1 John 4:2-3

By contrast, Judas has a spirit of the anti-Christ. Judas' kiss was masked with a heart sold to Satan. His actions belie his true nature. Satan's nature is to lie, cheat, and

destroy. A believer who has the Holy Spirit will long to be holy.

3. A third evidence of the Holy Spirit in you is that a believer takes *comfort* in God's Word. You see a true believer takes *consolation* and *refuge* in the Word of God. When the Holy Spirit is in you, he will direct and reveal to you the hidden mysteries of God through the word of God. That will be a great satisfaction and contentment for those seek delight in God's Word. The Bible is God-breathed. It is the work of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21).
4. A fourth evidence is *courage* to witness for Jesus Christ and His Gospel.
"..they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness" Acts 4:31.

So, Judas comes and betrays Jesus with a kiss.

Second exhortation: Beware of fleshly *accomplishment*

Verses 46 through 49.

⁴⁶ And they laid hands on him and seized him. ⁴⁷ But one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. ⁴⁸ And Jesus said to them, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? ⁴⁹ Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But let the Scriptures be fulfilled."

Jesus is grabbed by the crowd. He is seized. While all this is taking place, one of them cuts off the ear of the servant of the high priest. John's Gospel identifies the man as Peter. And the servant's name as Malchus. Jesus rebukes Peter one more time when he sees this violence.

But Jesus said, "*No more of this!*" Luke 22:51

"Put your sword back in its place because all who take up the sword will perish by the sword. Shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?". John 18:11

People who think that the Gospel or Christian morality is advanced or accomplished by coercion, intimidation, hegemony or even violence are simply blind to Jesus' teaching. Christ's kingdom is advanced by Gospel proclamation, prayer, sacrifice and good deeds in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus even heals the man's ear that was cut off. (Luke 22:51).

But all that doesn't matter to Judas or to the crowd. They are out for the kill.

Jesus has the last word before they take him away.

This was their hour of darkness. But in God's sovereignty, it is the fulfillment of Scripture.

Third exhortation: Beware of *abandonment*

⁵⁰ And they all left him and fled.

We see that the disciples fled the scene. This was the fulfillment of Jesus' prediction that the Shepherd would be struck and the sheep will be scattered.

Jesus does not promise a trial free, a temptation free or a tribulation free life. But Jesus does promise his presence his strength and his grace that is sufficient.

As we conclude, let us see be aware of the blinding effects of sin. Judas was completely blinded by sin, his conscience seared and his soul marred by evil. He apostatized and opposed Christ. Let us be aware of our flesh. When a trial comes, let us run to Christ and not from him.

"In forming an estimate of sins, we are often imposed upon by imagining that the more hidden the less heinous they are". John Calvin

Let us also embrace God's sovereignty in the betrayal of His Son Jesus Christ.

Jesus' betrayal paved a way for our approval with God. As heart breaking and appalling was Jesus' betrayal, it was God's plan that the Son of God should be rejected by sinners, suffer and die. Yet God's vindication of His Son is his resurrection.

Let us fill minds with the word of God. Let us read it. Let us reflect on it. Let us meditate on it. Let us memorize it. Let us delight in it. Let the Holy Spirit reveal our sins to us. Let us confess our sins to God. He will comfort us.

----- Discipleship Questions-----

MESSAGE SUMMARY: The Betrayal Of Jesus Christ. Mark 14:43-50

HEAD: These questions help you examine the truth of God's Word.

1. How can you reconcile the fact that Jesus was so distressed and yet says his hour of betrayal was fulfillment of Scripture? What did Jesus display even in his hour of betrayal?
2. HEART: These questions help you wrestle with what you believe.
 - In what way do you believe that sin blinds you to God and his good purposes for you? In what way are we to be warned by Judas' apostasy and the disciples' abandonment?
 - What is God convicting you of and to believe in light of this message?

HANDS/HABITS: These questions help you bring the truth into your everyday life and develop behaviors that change your habits.

HANDS For personal reflection: What would you change to allow the Holy Spirit direct your life?