

The Evil Among Us

“And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me” (Matthew 26:21). These words which our Lord spoke at the Last Supper should chill us to the bone. To think that someone could be privileged enough to company with God on earth during His three and one half year mission and not only miss salvation, but be a vital part of the very evil which our Lord came to redeem us from, is almost beyond comprehension. We are, of course, referring to Judas Iscariot.

History is marked with our Judas, Brutus and Benedict Arnold types. In this earth there is probably not a better grouping of people that want to do right and correct wrong in our world than members of The United States military. It is most difficult trying to get our minds around a man just promoted to Major in the United States Army taking up a murderous spree against the very people he was supposed to be helping. He was reared on United States soil. He attended some of our very finest universities. It has been speculated that our government spent one half million dollars educating him in the medical field. How ironic that his job was to treat people who suffered from the very world he introduced some of these new recruits to. This goes contrary to everything an American born and bred kid was taught. Just this past week before the shooting, Lt. Colonel Cain and I were conversing, as we often do, about the engagement of the wars in our world from the Civil War to the present Iraq/Afghanistan Wars. Lt. Col. Cain was saying, on the battlefield when the soldiers are fighting, they are fighting for the guys around them, as he pointed to his personal circumference. Two days later a Major at Fort Hood is not protecting his comrades' back; he is shooting them in the back!

In life we must be confronted with this fact: not all that say they are with us are with us. I am not a trained psychologist, I am a Bible preacher. I will say, the Word of God does not take the back seat to understanding the emotional make-up of the human psyche. As a matter of fact, God made man's emotional make-up and he knows what makes it tick. Even in the cases where chemical and surgical help is involved in medical practice, I credit Almighty God, the Giver of the intelligence, to discover cures and helps. The Bible says, *“But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man”* (John 2:24,25). We may ask ourselves how can these things happen. Treachery is not a stranger to any of us. We have seen it in the work place, in our schools, extracurricular activities and, as has already been illustrated in Judas, even the Church. Our Lord gave a parable that details this kind of treachery: *“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this...”* Matthew 13 (Matthew 13: 24-28). Allow me to answer a nagging question that may be on some of your minds as we write these words. You may be asking, “Where do these treacherous works begin?” Again, our Lord gives an answer to that: *“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man”* (Mark 7:21-23). *What goes on in the mind is vital! Wise Solomon said, “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...”* (Proverbs 23:7). *Jesus said, “Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you”* (Luke 17:21).

How shall we combat the evil within our ranks? We need to understand there are four types in every good organization. There are:

1. The sincere, but deluded

The word “sincere” comes to us from the ancient world. It originally meant “without wax.” The ancient potters who were honest, when they would bake a pot in the kiln and discover a crack running through it, would cast it aside and not use it. On the other hand, a dishonest potter would fill the crack in with wax, paint over it and sell it. By the way, the discerning buyer would hold the pot up to the light and if he saw the sunlight through the pot, he didn’t buy. It is not too much a stretch to say a person who is not sincere is a “crackpot.”

There is great help for a person who is sincere. Look in the sadistic cults and not all will be made up of people who are vicious and innately wicked. Many an innocent lamb was slaughtered by a wicked influence. In warning the youth from wicked influences, Solomon admonishes, “Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler” (Proverbs 6:5). Again Solomon said, “Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life” (Proverbs 7:23). The phrase, “...and knoweth not that it is for his life” says it all. These are they who fall for false doctrine and do so in the beginning stages in ignorance.

This is why we need to have a steady diet of correct teaching. Biblical truth will “hold the light” up to the potential “crack pots.” The Bible says, “The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple” (Psalm 119:130). Let us teach what the Apostle John taught, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (I John 4:1).

2. The evil and not secluded

These are perhaps the most dangerous ones we can have in our flock. The wicked who know right, but do wrong on purpose. “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Matthew 7:15). “Ravening” means hungry and hunting for prey. Allow me to give you an example. There was a young man that sang in his church choir and did so enthusiastically. He loved ministers and imitated them. He would sometimes get on a soapbox in public parks and imitate ministers proclaiming the Word. Once he found a little bird with a broken wing and wept over it as he tried to fix it. His little playmates were eyewitnesses. Yet this same young man grew up and was responsible for the death of six million Jewish people, not counting the millions of others. You see, Adolf Hitler was at one time a sincere young man who fell under the teaching of the ravenous Friedrich Nietzsche, the propagator of the “God is dead” philosophy. When evil is not secluded, even the sincere will be deluded.

3. The neutral, but not recruited

This is one reason I travel around the world to preach to young people. There are many, especially our youth, who have not yet decided their path in life. They have not drunk the poisonous nectar of this world and are still open to the truth. In any organization there are the ones on the fence not yet committed to the cause. The Word of God says, “...Choose you this day whom ye will serve... but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” (Joshua 24:15). So, we say the same thing to all who read and have not yet cast his or her lot among us.

4. The committed and included

They are those in this category that I say, “Stay with the stuff” and do not give up because of the evil among us. “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Galatians 6:9). Committed and included is where I want all our people. Let us keep and invest our future in God’s safekeeping. “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust...” (I Timothy 6:20).

- *Pastor Pope* -

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