

Unparalleled Treachery

Luke – Chapter 22

Passover was near, the chief priest and scribes wanted Jesus dead, but there was one problem, the people. The population of Jerusalem would grow from eighty to one hundred thousand to about three million people during Passover. Just a few days before, Jesus as he entered the city to shouts of joy as the people said, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest”. Jesus came to the temple early in the morning to teach and “all the people” came to listen, learn and grow. However, the Jewish leaders were not impressed. In fact, they hated Jesus, were humiliated, by Jesus, continually questioned Jesus, were defeated in every confrontation by Jesus and now Jesus entry into the city only fueled the fire. They wanted Jesus dead, now, but they didn’t know how to do it.

Meanwhile, “Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, belonging to the number of the twelve”. Judas had the unbelievable privilege of being chosen as one of Jesus’ twelve disciples. He had been taught by Jesus, travelled with Jesus, performed miracles through the power of Jesus, was entrusted with the money bag, but something was wrong. But what? The Apostle John sheds some light on the problem. When Mary anointed Jesus feet with costly perfume Judas says it should have been sold and the money given to the poor. But in chapter 12 verse 6 of John’s gospel we are told, “Now he (Judas Iscariot) said this not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it”. In John 13:2 we are told, “...the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon to betray Him.” So, Judas “went away” to find the Jewish leaders and provide them with an opportunity to carry out their malicious desire. Judas wasn’t responding to a group of people who talked him into it; he chose to do it and initiated contact with the Jewish leaders. The chief priests and officers must have been stunned when one of Jesus own comes to them with a purpose, to orchestrate Jesus’ capture. The chief priests, scribes and Judas collaborate, design a plan and wait for the right time execute it. The religious officials extatically agree to the plan and provide Judas with a stipend, 30 pieces of silver, the cost of a slave. We will look at the second time Satan enters Judas when we study John’s gospel. Their plan was complete, so Judas returns to Jesus and the others.

Why did Judas betray Jesus? Some think it was greed; others postulate Judas wanted to expedite the arrival of the Messiah, who would defeat the Romans and establish His kingdom by forcing his hand; still others suggest Judas realized Jesus was not going to meet the expectations of the Jews of the time and turns against Him. However, scripture does not plainly reveal Judas’ reasons.

But there is a greater concern for all who are reading this little homily, Judas could not have believed, in his heart, Jesus was God’s son, who takes away the sins of the world. Even though he was an eye witness, lived, listened, and learned from the Master Himself, Judas falls into the category of 1 John 2:19, “They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.” However, Judas was and is a sterling example of a hypocrite, charlatan, and imposter. His façade was so complete the disciples could not identify him as the one who would betray Christ. But Satan was not deceived and used him as a key part of Christ’s journey to the cross.

After Jesus is bound and sent to the governor, Pontius Pilate, Judas “felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, ‘I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.’” At this point Judas had two options. Either he could have gone to Jesus for forgiveness, restoration and salvation or destroy himself because of the weight of his guilt. He found a tree, adjusted the rope and hanged himself.

As we examine the life of Judas, we need to remember the Apostle Paul’s words in Galatians 6:7-8, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.” I wonder, how many people, who attend Sunday worship services, help in various ministries, volunteer to fill a need are doing so out because they are genuinely faithful and how many are going through the motions, just like Judas, building a detailed façade, appearing to be someone they are not. In the midst of unparalleled treachery, heinous sin and guilt driven suicide, Jesus Christ is lifted up, pays the penalty for sin and provides a path unto salvation. The façade kills but genuine faith saves, which are you?

1. Luke 22:1 What is the timing and context of this chapter?

2. Who worked together to betray Jesus? What does the name 'Judas' and 'Iscariot' mean? What is meant by the phrase "...then Satan entered into Judas"? (2-6)

3. It's Friday...but Sundays coming! List in order the events of this darkest of all days for Jesus. (7-38)

4. Gethsemane! Why did he tell the disciples to pray? What is "...this cup". What does this account reveal about the nature of Jesus? (39-53)

5. (54-71) List in order the events of this passage including Peter's denials and the mock trials. (54-71)