

JOHN: THE MOST TRUSTED DISCIPLE

Saturday, March 30

Reading: John 13:21-30

John 13:26 *Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. 27 As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. So Jesus told him, "What you are about to do, do quickly."*

When Jesus announced that one of the Twelve would betray Him no one suspected Judas. They trusted him so much they had elected him to manage the finances for the group. The fact that he was a thief (John 12:6) was not known until later. The other gospels record that each disciple asks Jesus if they were the guilty one. Judas was not even a suspect. As they reclined at the table, John (the disciple whom Jesus' loved) would be on Jesus' right with Judas on His left. From across the table, Peter motions for John ask Jesus the identity of the betrayer. Jesus tells him that it is the one to whom He will give the bread. Jesus then gives it to Judas.

Jesus now reveals to Judas that He knows of the betrayer's plans. He tells Judas to act quickly. However, Jesus is the only one who knows why Judas is leaving. Even John does not seem to have caught the significance of Jesus' words and actions. The disciples simply think Judas was going to buy some needed item or to give money to the poor, a common practice at Passover. If they had known his true purpose, Judas would have never made it out of the room.

LESSON ONE: "He Gave the Bread to Judas." Jesus consistently reached out to Judas. At the meal, Judas is reclining on Jesus' left – the place of the honored guest. To receive food from the host was also a sign of special friendship. Later in the garden, Judas will use another sign of friendship to betray Jesus – a kiss. In His response to this action, Jesus calls Judas "friend" (Matthew 26:47-50). Jesus gave Judas every opportunity to repent. Instead of accepting Jesus' offer of forgiveness, Judas allowed Satan to take control. No matter how deep a person's sin, Jesus' arms are always open. Is there someone you know who many feel is beyond God's forgiveness? Pray for that person today. Jesus has love and concern for the lost and so should we!

LESSON TWO: "And It Was Night." This little phrase tells us more than just the time of day when Judas left the upper room. It is also a picture of the condition of Judas' heart. He has left the light of Christ and walked out into the darkness of rejection and sin. For around three years Judas had witnessed Jesus' miracles and heard His message. He had the privilege of living with the Savior and being sent out to proclaim the good news. But somehow he never really gave his heart to Jesus. Before we come down too hard on poor Judas, let's take a look at our own lives. How many times have we betrayed Jesus by the words we say or the way we act? How many times have we "sold out" our faith for the world's "thirty pieces of silver?"

The life of Judas is a warning to all of us that knowing about Jesus or even looking and acting like a Christian on the outside does not mean we are saved. We can know all the facts and even believe in our heads what the Bible says and still be lost because we have never allowed Jesus to change our hearts.