

AND WE BEHELD HIS GLORY - Studies in John's Gospel

Part fifty-two - Sunday, July 14th, 2024, 10 a.m.

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THE UN-LORD'S SUPPER

John 13:21-38 - "After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." [22] The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. [23] One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side, [24] so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. [25] So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, "Lord, who is it?" [26] Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it." So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. [27] Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly." [28] Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. [29] Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor. [30] So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night. [31] When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. [32] If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. [33] Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.' [34] A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. [35] By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

When Paul reminds us all to “**examine ourselves**” at the Lord’s Table one wonders if he had it in mind that there was a traitor at the very first Lord’s Supper. Judas ran out to sell Jesus for money during the first communion service. And he was holding on to the piece of broken bread as he left the room.

Our Lord’s last twenty-four hours continue to fill the Apostle John’s mind as he writes what we know as the last nine chapters of his historic account. And, in today’s text, Judas and Peter take a big part of the stage. We get to watch Jesus encounter a **traitor** and a **terribly confused believer**. And there are rich lessons from both as we gather around the cross of the Messiah.

- 1) **OUR LORD REVEALS THE TREACHERY OF JUDAS GRADUALLY TO CAUSE ALL OF THE DISCIPLES TO A DEEPER SEARCHING OF THEIR OWN HEARTS**

IPAD TEXT - John 13:21-22 - “After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, “Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” [22] *The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke.*”

This is the **third** time Jesus focuses the disciples' attention on the hidden traitor right in their midst. John actually introduces the battle for Judas's heart in **13:2 - "During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him...."** - IPAD TEXT

Then Jesus exposes the wickedness of **one** of His disciples in **13:10-11 - "Jesus said to him, 'The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you.'** [11] **For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, 'Not all of you are clean.'"** - IPAD TEXT

This is followed by another mention in **John 13:18 - "I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, 'He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.'"** - IPAD TEXT

But notice, there is still no specific mention of **Judas**. Jesus is pointing out only the fact of **betrayal in His inner circle**. The disciples have no idea who the betrayer might be.

It is only in 13:25-27 that Judas is finally singled out - **“So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, “Lord, who is it?” [26] Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.” So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. [27] Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “What you are going to do, do quickly.” -**
IPAD TEXT

But didn't Jesus know right away Judas was the one who would betray Him? And if He did, **why** this rather lengthy, drawn out process of exposure? What is Jesus trying to do?

And I believe the answer is Jesus is **involving** the rest of His disciples in re-assessing and examining the purity and loyalty of their own core group. This is a treachery more heart-breaking than that of **Pilate** or **Caiaphas** or any of the **Jewish leaders**. This is a different **kind** of rejection and betrayal. And Jesus wants to have His own followers **dwell** and **linger** and **search out** the fact that such actions can arise from among **their own** number.

The **community of Jesus' followers** isn't always what it appears to be on the surface. **That's** the point of Jesus' gradual exposure - the deliberate **peeling back of layers** of what lurks under the surface of professed devotion.

We know from the testimony of the synoptics that this is **exactly** the effect of Jesus' clue-probing words - **Matthew 26:22 - "And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another, 'Is it I, Lord?'" - IPAD TEXT**

These are poignant words. Notice that **all** of the disciples (all but Judas) are described by John (who was there) as "**very sorrowful.**" They are humbled and broken-hearted that **they** might be less loyal to their Lord than they imagined. Could their own hearts be growing cold? Could their hearts have shifted in gradual ways they hadn't noticed? Jesus awakens this **wonderful sorrow**. Jesus forces these **magnificent questions**. Jesus **re-grounds their own hearts**.

This is the theology driving Paul's exhortation in **2 Corinthians 13:5 - "Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!" - IPAD TEXT**

It is only as we put Matthew's account together with John's we can see it was probably **after** this time of introspection they finally turned their attention **outward**. The question Peter urges from John's lips becomes "**Lord, who is it**"(25).

2) EXAMINATION OF HEART IS A NECESSITY BECAUSE ONE CAN LOOK LIKE A FOLLOWER OF CHRIST WITHOUT *BEING* A FOLLOWER OF CHRIST

IPAD TEXT - John 13:23-29 - “One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus’ side, [24] so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. [25] So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, “Lord, who is it?” [26] Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.” So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. [27] Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “What you are going to do, do quickly.” [28] *Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. [29] Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the feast,” or that he should give something to the poor.”*

There is no indication that John told Peter what Jesus revealed about Judas. And John’s account seems to hint Jesus didn’t tell the rest of the disciples right away that the betrayer was Judas. The disciples don’t even know why Judas left the room in such a hurry. They thought he went out to buy groceries.

Those in the community who don't truly follow Christ want to **look** like they follow Christ. This is what makes their doom so certain. One only has to remember the study from **John 12:42-43** to see how the desire to please those of our group can overrule the call to loyalty and commitment to Christ - **“Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; [43] for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.” - IPAD TEXT**

This self-deception manifests itself in Judas over and over again. In **John 12:3-6**, when Mary pours expensive ointment over Jesus' feet, Judas has to fake concern for the poor when the real cause of his grief is he loves money. When Matthew records Jesus' final meal with his inner circle the disciples all ask **“Lord, is it I?”** when Jesus reveals one of them is a traitor. Interestingly, Judas is forced to fake the same words after all the others have spoken:

IPAD TEXT - Matthew 26:21-25 - “And as they were eating, he said, “Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” [22] And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another, “Is it I, Lord?” [23] He answered, “He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me. [24] The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.” [25] *Judas, who would betray him, answered, “Is it I, Rabbi?” He said to him, “You have said so.”*”

Don't miss what is happening here. It's a powerful picture of human nature. After all the other disciples have questioned Jesus Judas can't stop himself from asking the same question. Does he really think Jesus won't answer him honestly? The question is his undoing. But he *has* to look like all the other disciples. That's been his habit all along and he simply can't stop himself now. He fakes himself into disaster.

The church lesson is ***nothing blocks repentance more than the ability to hide in the congregation.*** I need to remember that in the professional ministry. We ***all*** need to remember it when we sit with the multiplied hundreds and listen to God's Word. It's those other people all around you that make it ***feel safe*** to not respond repentantly when the Holy Spirit speaks through His Word.

3) **THERE IS DEEP SIGNIFICANCE IN JESUS' GIVING OF THE
BROKEN BREAD TO JUDAS**

IPAD TEXT - John 13:26-30 - "Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it." So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. [27] Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly."

I think there are two reasons Jesus identifies Judas with the broken bread. This first is the obvious fulfillment of the prophetic words of the Psalmist in **Psalm 41:9** - **"Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me."**

This is yet again another reminder from our Lord that His impending death isn't a **failure** of any plan, but a **fulfillment** of Father God's perfect will. Jesus chooses a sign that will **increase their faith** the more they reflect on it after He's gone.

The second reason is just my opinion. I believe there is something in the giving of the bread, which will be a more fully developed theology in Paul's writings on the Lord's broken body and shed blood, but which, even now, might call to the disciples' minds back to the teaching of Jesus in **John 6:33-35 - "For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." [34] They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." [35] Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; *whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.*" -**
IPAD TEXT

"Whoever comes to me...."(35). Could that include Judas? I believe that tell-tale sop of bread handed to Judas is Jesus' last effort to awaken his darkened conscience. The very sign of Judas's betrayal is the greatest sign of our Lord's ability to nourish and restore. And Judas runs from that room with that bread in his hand. Self-deception is a cruel slave-driver. There comes a time of great inner reversal. There comes a time when the merciful exposure of inner sin only ***deepens*** the commitment to that sin. There comes a very dangerous time when the entrance of the truth only deepens the rebellion present in th heart.

Grace can be resisted and the fake polished image sustained only so long. It is interesting to me that while Satan had been “**putting things into the heart of Judas**” for a while (see 13:2), it is only after this final rejection of Jesus’ gradual unveiling of Judas’ heart that Satan is finally said to actually **enter** Judas - **John 13:27 - “Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him....” - IPAD TEXT**

No wonder Paul warns the church that a lot can happen at the communion table.