

GOSPEL OF JOHN

Encounter Jesus – The Son of the Living God

Betrayal Within the Brotherhood!

As we come to today's passage, Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem is over. The citizens of Jerusalem are readying themselves for the approaching Passover celebration. Jesus had gathered with His disciples and washed the feet of The Twelve in an act of servanthood. The chief priests and scribes have been conniving for some time as to the best way to betray Jesus without causing public unrest. And then suddenly, the answer fell into their laps! The solution came in the form of one of Jesus' own disciples – a betrayer! After Mary of Bethany lavished expensive oil on the feet of Jesus and Jesus approved of her gift, Judas was infuriated. **Mark 14:10-11 (ESV)** ¹⁰ *Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them.* ¹¹ *And when they heard it, they were glad and promised to give him money. And he sought an opportunity to betray him.* It is interesting that Judas – this so-called friend of Jesus – approached the chief priests HIMSELF. They had not approached him.

David Legge says, “to betray someone is not the same as being their enemy. That's a great misunderstanding many have. You see, the essence of betrayal is that you can betray to death and yet still show a measure of affection toward the one you're betraying. Essentially betrayal comes from the hand of a friend, that's what makes it betrayal. Someone has put it like this: 'A betrayer embraces you with one arm, and stabs you in the back with the other'.”

Read John 13:21-26 (ESV) ²¹ *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.*

After saying these things is a reference to what we studied in last week's lesson. John tells us that Jesus was *troubled in His spirit*. Then, Jesus makes a *truly, truly* statement confirming why He was so troubled: *one of you will betray me*. When ‘friends’ or possibly even family members betray us and we are troubled, let's remember that Jesus understands our troubles. He has personally experienced the sting of betrayal from a friend.

The famous Leonardo Da Vinci painting of the Lord's Supper does not accurately represent the meal seating arrangements of that day. The guests reclined rather than sat at table. Each leaned on his left arm, leaving the right arm free. (I am not sure what a left-handed person would do!) The feet were stretched out behind the guest on his right hand, and the back of the head reached near to the bosom of the guest on the left. That is how the *disciple whom Jesus loved* got so close to Jesus.

Jesus had mentioned a betrayer before (**John 6:70**) but at that time it seems the disciples just ‘blew it off’. This time they were really listening. However, the disciples did not immediately think of Judas as a betrayer. He was good in his charade of a Jesus follower. Matthew adds to the story in **Matthew 26:22 (ESV)** ²² *And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another, “Is it I, Lord?”* We have spoken on more than one occasion in class about hearing a sermon on salvation and becoming fearful that we are not saved. These disciples, except for one, certainly did not want to possess the heart of a betrayer. Barnes Commentary says, “This showed their innocence, and their attachment to Jesus”

Peter who was not sitting as close to Jesus told *the disciple whom Jesus loved* to ask who it was that Jesus was speaking about. Jesus’ answer to John about His betrayer would not have been heard by everyone in the room. You know how it is when you have a large group of people around a table and numerous conversations all going on at once. John asked the question. Although Jesus answered, it would only be later in the Garden when John and all the others fully understood Jesus’ words concerning His betrayer.

I am told that it was customary in those days to hand a morsel to some special one at a banquet as a sign of affection. Jesus used a symbol of love to answer John’s question. No wonder John was confused as *Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.”* So Jesus dipped the morsel and handed it to Judas! Even after setting up his deal with the high priests, Judas had the audacity to reach out and take the token of love knowing that he would soon betray Jesus! Judas had arrived at the crossroads of his life – one road – the ‘narrow way’ would lead to eternal life – the other road – the ‘broad way’ would lead to destruction. (**Matthew 7:13-14**) Judas made his final choice of the broad way even though Christ kept His arms open to Judas up to the very last moment. Matthew adds a bit to the interaction between Jesus and Judas. **Matthew 26:25 (ESV)** ²⁵ *Judas, who would betray him, answered, “Is it I, Rabbi?” He said to him, “You have said so.”* I don’t know if Judas was still in ‘cover-up’ mode or if he just wondered if Jesus actually knew about his meeting with the chief priests. From what happens next, we see that Jesus did know what Judas was about to do!

Read John 13:27-30 (ESV) 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.*

Satan is not all-knowing. Apparently, he did not understand the Plan of God. We read in **1 John 3:8 (ESV)** ⁸ *Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.* Tyndale in his commentary writes, “If the devil had known his power would be ‘destroyed’ by the death of Christ, he might not have been ‘prompting’ Judas to betray him or be ‘entering’ him to bring about the betrayal.

Recognizing what was happening with Judas and that he was now determined to betray him, Jesus told him to get on with his wicked work: *What you are going to do, do quickly.*”

When Jesus answered John indicating the identity of the betrayer, He was not heard by everyone but when He told Judas to do what he was going to do quickly, all the disciples heard. But they ‘assumed’ that Jesus was telling Judas to buy something for the feast or give something to the poor – a wrong conclusion. Many people ‘assume’ things about God’s Word when they have never studied it. The disciples jumping to a wrong conclusion regarding what Jesus said is a reminder that we need to study the Bible to make sure that we are not just putting our own ‘spin’ on the Word of God. **2 Timothy 2:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.*

So Judas left. John tells us: *And it was night.* A short sentence – easily passed over. But, these words are significant. Previously John had recorded the proclamation of Jesus in **John 8:12 (ESV)** ¹² ... *“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”* Judas’ choice to not follow Jesus caused him to walk in darkness. It is always night when people turn their backs on God.

Read John 13:31-32 (ESV) 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.*

Negativity had left the room and the mood changed! John does not relate in his gospel about Jesus instituting the Lord’s Supper like Matthew, Mark and Luke did. By the time that John wrote his account, the Lord’s Supper or Communion would have been a well-understood part of Christian worship. When you read **Matthew** and **Mark**, it seems as though Judas was gone when the disciples shared in the ‘first’ Lord’s Supper. If you read **Luke**, you might conclude that Judas was still there. Wiersbe says, “It was after Judas’ departure that He instituted the Lord’s Supper, something that Judas as an unbeliever certainly could not share.” I tend to agree with Wiersbe. However, Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 11:27 (ESV)** ²⁷ *Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord.* So, there is the possibility that Judas was present and was guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. If that is the case, Judas would have been the first to take the bread and the wine unworthily. Whether Judas was present or not is not a topic worth debating.

John turned to Jesus’ word regarding glorification.: *Now is the Son of Man glorified...* But before the glorification would occur, Jesus would suffer terribly. Recently, I quoted Wiersbe as saying: the Son of Man must be glorified by being crucified. Judas leaving is the sign that the glorification is at hand. Glorification could be an entire separate study. I will just quote **1 John 3:2 (ESV)** ² *Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.*

Jesus wanted to prepare His disciples for the time when He would no longer physically be with them. When we hear the word commandment we often think of the Ten Commandments given by the LORD

to Moses on Mt. Sinai. However, on this fateful night, Jesus gave a new commandment – it was a commandment for then but it is also a commandment for NOW!

Chapter 13 begins with *love* when Jesus said in **John 13:1 (ESV)** ¹ *Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.* Now the chapter concludes with *love!*

Read John 13:33-35 (ESV) 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."*

To love one another is called by some One Anothering. Simply to love others was not a new commandment. The Israelites had been commanded to love their neighbor. **Leviticus 19:18 (ESV)** ¹⁸ *You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.* But Jesus raised the bar when He said: *love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.*

To love others as much as Jesus loved others would be revolutionary. It is so easy to measure our love for others by how much they love us. However, our yard stick, our measuring tape for love, should be the sacrificial love that Jesus displayed for us on the cross of Calvary.

J Vernon McGee shared a personal story that highlights the importance of loving one another. He says, "When I was a boy, my dad died and I went to work to support my mother and sister; so I stayed with two aunts and a bachelor uncle. One aunt was a Baptist and the other a Presbyterian. My uncle was an unbeliever and a beer drinker. Every Sunday he would get up just in time for the noon meal. For dinner every Sunday we heard all the Baptist dirt and the Presbyterian dirt. Years later, when my uncle was in the hospital, one of my aunts wept and asked me, "Vernon, why doesn't he come to Christ?" I almost told her."

McGee goes on to say, "Friend, may I say, we do not win the lost by being Christian cannibals. **Galatians 5:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ *But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.* This is the type of thing that is turning the unsaved away from the church today. This is the reason they don't come in to hear the gospel. They hear the gossip before they can hear the gospel! Do you realize that the most important commandment for a Christian is not to witness, not to serve, but to love other believers?" Loving one another is the place to begin bringing our lost world to Christ! We can do it! Just consider what He did out of love for us!