

How Much Is Jesus Worth?

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[0 : 00] Now the passage that we would like to consider this evening together is in Luke 22, Luke chapter 22 and verses 1 to 6, where we find this account of the Lord's deliverance by Judas Iscariot, his betrayal indeed by one of the twelve disciples that he had chosen to be with him as his disciples.

Now the feast of unleavened bread drew near, which is called the Passover, and the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to put him to death, for they feared the people. Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve. He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them.

And they were glad and agreed to give him money, so he consented and sought an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of a crowd.

The beginning of chapter 22 is the beginning of Luke's account of the crucifixion. The crucifixion taking in the way in which Jesus was tried before he was sent out to be crucified, and beginning here with his betrayal by Judas Iscariot.

And indeed, all the gospel writers include these events in their description of Christ's crucifixion.

And as we said way back when we started studying the gospel of Luke, we noticed then that everything really builds up in the way that Luke, in common with the other gospel writers, give their account of the ministry of Jesus.

[1 : 43] They do it in such a way that they do it in such a way that builds up to the climax of his crucifixion. This is the great passage that Luke has been leading us to in his account of the ministry of Jesus, which is why he gives it such a lot of detail all the way through, indeed, to the end of chapter 23.

And the timing of these events was very significant. It's very difficult, in fact, when you take all the gospel records together, it's very difficult to work out a precise calendar of events, and the precise time of day, for example, at which certain things such as the death of Jesus himself, in comparison with the Passover lamb when it was slain.

It's very difficult to be precise about the moment at which that Passover lamb would be slain in relation to the death of Christ on the cross.

But the timing is significant, nonetheless, because we read here in Luke that the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called the Passover. Well, these two were actually not exactly the same feast.

They were two distinct feasts, but they ran into each other, which is why they were commonly called, really, by the same name, sometimes called Feast of Unleavened Bread and sometimes called the Passover.

[3 : 08] Both things really were joined together, as the Lord had given the Jews these ordinances in the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Passover, to be kept in close relation to each other.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, in common with the Passover, celebrated the deliverance of the people from Egypt.

And, of course, that involved the sacrifice of a Passover lamb. So that you've got the combination in the events of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, a celebration of deliverance, and a celebration of deliverance by a sacrifice, which took the place of the people in Egypt, so that instead of them coming under the death which came into the houses of the Egyptians, that death instead fell upon the Passover lamb.

And because of that in their place, they were delivered. That's the reason why the Lord commanded them to put the blood of the lamb that was slain for the Passover on the doorposts and the lintel of the doors, so that the people would be very conscious as they saw that blood.

And as God said to them, when I see the blood, I will pass by you, I will pass over you. Death will not come into your homes, because there's a death there already in your place, in place of your death.

[4 : 42] Well, that was something which down through the years, the Lord kept in the memory of his people, of the Jewish people, as they combined the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Passover.

And it's so significant that in the Lord's providence, as it happened very deliberately on his part, the time of Christ's death at Jerusalem coincided with the Unleavened Bread Feast and the Passover, so that it would be demonstrated that the death that Jesus was to die was itself the fulfillment of what had foreshadowed it in the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Well, the first stage of that is the betrayal. The first stage of the death of Jesus, the first stage of what leads to his death, is in the betrayal of Judas Iscariot.

And there are a number of things that we want just to mention this evening and try and apply them to ourselves, from what is itself a very solemn and a very sad passage.

It's been a bit of a solemn day. In a sense, we've looked this morning at how Lot chose the vicinity of Sodom for his dwelling place and the bad effects that that had on his life and the importance for ourselves of choosing the right place where to situate our lives.

[6 : 16] And that, of course, is in Jesus Christ and in the salvation that God has provided for us in him. Well, such is the way of the Bible sometimes. We do need to come across these solemn facts, but only to remind ourselves that the truth of God contains many solemnities that are designed for our good and our instruction.

First of all, here is an account of what we can call a cosmic battle. Luke begins certainly with the emphasis on the human, but then he moves very quickly, as we'll see, to speak about Satan, something which is above the human in the spiritual heights, in the unseen world of the spirits, where Satan is the chief antagonist against the things of God.

He's first of all talking about the chief priests and the scribes, and they were seeking how to put him to death, for they feared the people. Now, Luke doesn't tell us much about them, but we know that the chief priests were actually largely made up of the Sadducees.

We came across the Sadducees somewhat earlier as a religious group, a group that had certain views which did not include a belief in the resurrection.

And, of course, we saw how Jesus faced up to their view of the world and of spiritual things without believing in the resurrection.

[7 : 48] But here they are, the chief priests are largely made up of these Sadducees. And one thing about the chief priests, as the Sadducees certainly amongst them, was that they scorned the common people as they saw them.

They were very high-minded people. They had a lot of power, they had a lot of influence, they controlled much of what happened in regard to the temple and the rituals of the temple, but they scorned the common people.

They had no place, no time for ordinary people. They just regarded them as a rabble. And that's a word that's used in the Gospel for the view that the chief priests, the Sadducees, had of the common people.

The scribes, however, were largely made up of Pharisees. And while Pharisees were very legalistic in their outlook, nevertheless they were, you might say, the party of the people.

They gave regard to the ordinary people that the chief priests certainly did not. And so the people felt much closer to the Pharisees in that sense than they did to the chief priests.

[9 : 05] But what Luke doesn't tell us, specifically, although it is actually there when you really look into it, the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to put him to death.

In other words, they had come together, though they had many differences and really didn't have all that much time for each other in many regards. Yet here they are together, combined together, using their combined resources with one particular purpose, and that's to get rid of Christ.

And that's something that Luke tells us elsewhere about, with regard to another couple of people, a couple of individuals, where you find them there speaking about, in chapter 23, about Pilate and Herod.

where you find that Jesus was sent to Herod to be examined by him. He was sent by Pilate, and he came back from Herod with a message from Herod that he had found no fault in him whatsoever.

But there in verse 12, Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day. For before this, they had been at enmity with each other.

[10:30] Isn't it amazing how hatred for Jesus brings those who are normally enemies in so many other regards, but they're brought together under this hatred of Christ.

And you still find it. There are coalitions, if you can put it that way, not talking about political coalitions, though there might be political elements in it. Coalitions in the sense of various parties that really have little time for each other in terms of philosophies of life, or ideologies of life. But when it comes to Jesus, and the claims of Jesus, and the rights of Jesus, and the rights of God, they come together quite willingly. They put aside their differences in regard to this matter, because they are combined as a coalition antagonistic to the rights of Jesus Christ.

They came together seeking how to put him to death, for they feared the people. They were afraid of the people, and that's why they couldn't act openly up to now.

They knew that if they took steps to arrest Jesus, the people would rise up against them. So they had been put off taking action until now.

[11:54] But they were combined with one resolve against this Jesus, and combined with a resolve to get rid of him, to put him to death.

Now the Lord gives us very due notice in his word that we should expect this.

The world does not have time for Christ in its reckoning. Worldliness cannot fit Jesus Christ and the claims of Christ into its ideology.

People who come together for whatever views they have of other things are very often together simply because they have a common hatred of the claims of this Jesus.

And you find that in our society today. You look at all the different groups that see things very differently in many respects as to how their lives should be lived.

[13:01] But when it comes to the Gospel, to the claims of the Gospel, to God's believing people in the world and their stand for Jesus, you will find that when you take your stand and when you raise your voice and when God's faithful people seek to stand against some of the things that are happening, all of these different kinds of people come together with one accord to actually oppose the Gospel and God's people stand for it.

Why? Because they cannot stand having this idea that Jesus Christ is Lord and claims their conscience as he claims every other conscience to.

Don't be surprised about that. It's always been a fact from the days in which Jesus lived in this world. And that's why he warned the disciples or instructed the disciples, don't be surprised if the world hates you.

Remember that it hated me before it hated you. But then Luke moves on. He begins with that human element, that human dimension.

These chief priests, these scribes, this coalition that they have together. But then he comes to verse 3. Then Satan entered into Judas Iscariot who was one of the number of the twelve.

[14:30] Now this is something which all the Gospels give particular notice to because it is such a significant thing in these events.

It is such a significant thing in the whole history of Christ's ministry that out of the twelve disciples one actually was a devil.

That's how Jesus described him on another occasion. This is no mere human struggle.

Jesus is not involved simply against the antagonism of these human beings that are ranged against him, these religious authorities. Jesus is actually involved in a cosmic struggle, in a struggle, in a battle with unseen powers, powers that he alone knows the full extent of, the powers of the unseen world, the powers of the devil, the powers of the devil's accomplices, the powers of the devil's helpers, the powers of Satan, and all who are with him against the Lord and against the Lord's cause at this moment as they have been constantly against God since they fell.

It's a great cosmic battle. It's a battle of massive dimensions. Something we cannot take into our human minds.

[16:02] We've seen recently how the Apostle Paul, as we saw in the prayer meeting in Ephesians chapter 6, put it that we don't wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the spiritual darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

That's what the battle is ultimately against. That is the power that Jesus was facing in his ministry in this world. That's now what comes to the fore as Satan entered into Judas Iscariot.

Somebody has compared it, and it's using language with all due reverence, somebody has compared it to a gigantic struggle on a cosmic chessboard.

As the pieces are being moved about, Satan moves his pieces, the Lord moves his. And when it came to the death of Jesus, you can imagine Satan saying, Check.

It seemed that he had the Lord in a corner under his control. There he is, hanging on the cross. There he is now, the dead Jesus.

[17 : 30] The devil's move to check. And then there's chapter 24.

There's a resurrection. Checkmate. It's the Lord's victory. It's the Lord's way of victory through death and resurrection.

And the delivery of the Lord by Judas. Yes, it's his responsibility and he has to answer for it. But it's part of the Lord's sovereign plan in the way that Jesus will come to the cross and give his life a ransom for many.

But there is this dimension to it. This cosmic struggle, this great battle that is taking place between the Lord and the powers of darkness.

Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot. And it mentions specifically who was of the number of the twelve. It reminds us of something that for the Lord must have added to his sufferings.

[18 : 55] Jesus had to live with the fact that one of his twelve disciples was the betrayer. It wasn't at this moment that Jesus came to know it.

He always knew it. He had to live with these twelve disciples, taking them from place to place, speaking to them, teaching them.

They saw his miracles, he explained them to them. They had the parables explained to them. They had so many things that they had in the company of Jesus. And all the time, Jesus knew that Judas Iscariot didn't really belong to him spiritually.

That he wasn't united to him spiritually. That he wasn't committed to him spiritually. That he was false at his heart. That he was someone who was ultimately going to betray him.

And now the moment has come. We can't imagine what that must have been like for the Lord. We can't imagine how that must have itself added to the many sufferings that he had and the many sources of sufferings that were really in his experience.

[20 : 10] He had to live with the company of a devil all the way through his ministry since he appointed the twelve.

And that's something that comes so strongly to the surface where Jesus mentioned in John's Gospel to Peter where Peter somewhat confidently as is typical of Peter having seen so many disciples departing when they couldn't any longer follow Jesus many turned back and walked no longer with them so Jesus said to the twelve do you want to go away as well?

Peter gave this famous answer this wonderful answer Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life and we have believed and we have come to know that you are the Holy One of God.

Jesus answered them did I not choose you the twelve? and yet one of you is a devil. What a surprise that must have been to Peter.

He thought he was speaking for the twelve. Judas didn't appear to be any different even when it came here and later in the chapters we'll see that the Son of Man as Jesus said to him goes as it has been determined but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed.

[21 : 38] The hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. And they began to question one another which of them it could be who was going to do this.

They had trusted Judas. He appeared trustworthy. He was their treasurer. They gave him the money bag. He looked after the collections out of which money would be given to the poor. Nothing in the life of Judas up to now had given the appearance that he was in any way different to the other in heaven. And all the time he is a devil.

He is a servant of Satan. He has no part in Christ. He is a traitor. He is a dark figure.

Yes and Judas willingly betrayed him. Yes it says Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot but it wasn't Satan who went away and conferred with the chief priests and the officers how he might betray him to them.

[22 : 51] This is what Judas himself did. This was Judas' plot. This was Judas' idea. Yes Satan entered into him but you can't blame Satan for Judas' actions.

Judas has to answer them. When it comes to the day of judgment Judas will not be able to say but Satan made me do it. He gave himself to Satan.

He gave himself willingly to be his agent. And Satan took him over and occupied his very life at that moment.

And he willingly betrayed his Lord. That's why you've got in verse 22 the Son of Man goes as it has been determined but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed.

There's the Lord's verdict over the whole thing. The word woe there is equivalent to our word alas. It's not an idea of vengeance.

[23 : 54] It's not God being vindictive. It's not Jesus being vindictive. It's simply Jesus saying alas woe to this man who can fathom what the eternity of Judas will be like.

Woe to that man. by whom he is betrayed. When Judas sold Jesus he sold his soul.

He sold his life. He sold out his future. He sold over his eternity to evil to the devil to Satan.

He joined the ranks of those devils who will forever be in the pit that has no bottom where they will be tormented day and night forever.

That's the picture of revelation. And you can see the face of Judas amongst them and remember he spent three years with the Lord.

[25 : 10] How solemn is that? Three years in the company of Christ. Three years under the ministry and teaching of Christ.

Three years looking at Christ's person and knowing how different he was. Three years seeing his miracles, listening to his parables, being aware of the way the crowds took to him and said nobody ever spoke like this man.

Three years of hearing his fellow disciples saying things about this Christ as their Savior. And yet these three years end in the gloom of this devilish action of delivering this Jesus, his master, into the hands of evil.

Never let it be said that a mere acquaintance with the gospel is a guarantee of our salvation. There will be many in hell who will regret the day they were born because having had a lifetime of gospel privileges they chose instead not to accept this Christ.

And you and I have to see that we are not one of them. God is saying to you today and to me, look at Judas Iscariot. Look at the privileges he had.

[26 : 59] Look at how like the other disciples he was. And yet he knew in his heart that he was not one of them. This was not a Christian who lacked assurance.

This was not a real disciple who just had a weak faith. This was not the kind of disciple that you and I often are that many Christians are, who go through life struggles and sometimes wonder at times, at least, have they really been converted at all, who have these concerns about their soul but bring them to the Lord and deal with them between themselves and the Lord.

Judas had nothing of that. He was never in the situation where he loved the Lord, where he sought assurance from the Lord.

He was simply a man of the devil whose aim has now become to deliver Christ over to the authorities.

What a way to end being in the company of Christ for all that time. And they were glad.

[28 : 15] They were glad he went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them. And they were glad. And they agreed to give him money. Of course they were glad.

This was solving the problem for them. They couldn't take action themselves because they feared the people. They were wondering how they would go about putting him to death. Would they ever get the opportunity somehow or other quietly without many people being present?

How could they deal with this Jesus? That was the great question. How could they put him to death without stirring up the people? And now things have been delivered into their hand by no less than one of the twelve.

He solved their problem just like that. And they were glad. And that made them glad. It was now done for them.

And it was even better that it was one of the twelve. That was far more effective. something that had a punch to it. There are eyes looking at this congregation tonight.

[29 : 31] Myself included. And these eyes are just longing for defectors. For the likes of you to leave the company of disciples and go over to Satan.

Nothing delights the enemies of the Lord more than to receive defectors from the company of disciples that follow Christ.

And nothing confounds these enemies of the Lord more than to have defectors leave them and come to join the church. Come to be converted and come to stand like Saul of Tarsus in such a way that pronounces and proclaims and preaches the very truth that he once despised.

That's what you want to see. That's what we're praying for. Oh may the Lord keep us. May the Lord protect us. May the Lord give us to use our advantages to the full.

May the Lord cast his guard around your life and around my life because you and I need it. May he keep our ways so that we don't stumble. May he keep us from defecting from the faith.

[30 : 49] May he keep us from making a shipwreck of our faith because if we do nothing will delight the enemies of the Lord more than to be able to say yes there goes another one.

And Judas stands forever as a signpost to yourself and to myself and to congregations such as our own here. A signpost that says let him that stands that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

Pray every day that the Lord will keep you. That the Lord will protect you and empower you. That the Lord will bring you onwards in your spiritual life.

That you will grow and increase in the grace and in the knowledge of Jesus. Because that's your only security. The moment you depart from that you're in danger.

The moment you leave yourself open to the devil. You're leaving yourself vulnerable to being used as one of his agents. And he tried it with Peter although the Lord came to Peter's aid.

[32 : 02] And he will try it with you and he will try it with me. And he tried it with Judas Iscariot and was successful. They were glad.

What a coup. What a great advantage. What a cause of celebration. Nothing less than one of Christ's twelve. And he's come over to us.

And he's prepared to deliver this Jesus into our hands. Well, that raises the question of our second point.

How much is Jesus worth? They agreed to give him money. Luke doesn't tell us how much it was. He consented. He sought an opportunity to betray him.

And he agreed to give him the money and he agreed with the amount. Now Matthew tells us that the amount was thirty pieces of silver. silver. And that may not be significant, but it happens to be the price of a slave.

[33 : 07] In Exodus chapter 21 verse 32 you have a provision made by the Lord that if somebody's slave was gored by an ox and therefore was put out of action and maybe killed, that person had to be compensated for the loss of the slave.

And the price of a slave, the value, the worth of a slave was thirty pieces of silver. And that seems significant because the Lord as a servant was despised by Judas Iscariot.

That's not the kind of Messiah that he was looking for. And maybe this indeed was something that he himself had suggested, that the price of a slave would be just right, would be just appropriate for such a man as this Jesus.

He wasn't worth anything else. He was just like a slave should be. Let's sell him for the price of a slave. That's all he's worth.

What is Jesus worth? Remember the question that's come up so often in Luke's Gospel. Who is this man?

[34 : 29] What is he worth? Well, let's ask three people that you find in the Bible, to round off our study tonight, three people that you find in the Bible, how much is Jesus worth?

We'll begin with Moses. Ask Moses, Moses, how much is Jesus worth? And Moses will reply, as you find in Hebrews, chapter 11, verse 26.

He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, a prince of Egypt, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a time.

Why? Because he considered the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. Ask Moses, what is Jesus worth?

What's he worth? His sufferings and suffering for him are actually worth far more than the riches of Egypt were to me. And if Moses is saying that suffering for Christ is worth more than all the treasures of Egypt, what is Christ himself worth?

[35 : 48] And Moses will say, he's priceless. You can't put a value on him. So let's ask Paul.

Let's listen to Paul giving his testimony, as you find in Philippians chapter 3. How much is Jesus worth to you, Paul? And this is how he answers.

I consider all things but loss. And indeed I count them but dung, even the things that were gained to me, those I now count as loss, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and to count them but worthless rubbish, that I may win him, that I may be found in him, that I may know him, that I may be found in the power of his resurrection, that I may know this.

But what he's saying is this, he's priceless, he's inestimably valuable, I gladly say that I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as if they're worthless things compared to this, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, of knowing this Jesus for myself, that's the most precious thing that I have, he says, this Jesus and knowing him, he is so precious in all of that, I can't put a value upon him, it's impossible, it's beyond my calculation.

And then there is a woman called Mary, who in John chapter 12, very significantly comes to the Lord, anoints the Lord with this precious ointment.

[37 : 45] a pound of expensive ointment that was kept for this purpose by her.

She anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of the disciples, he who was about to betray him, said, why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?

He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief. And having charge of the money bag, he used his help to help himself to what was put in it.

Jesus said, leave her alone against the day of my burial. She has kept this. See what Mary was saying. She had an insight into the death of Jesus that not even the disciples then had.

And she was saying about Jesus in his death as far as she could see it at that moment in relation to her needs and her needs as a sinner especially. It's so precious that the most valuable thing I have in my possession I gladly spend it all upon him I gladly break it and pour it out upon him because he is priceless.

[39 : 18] What is he worth to you? How valuable is he to you? What is his worth in your own estimation?

If you say he's worth everything to me then you'll be following him. You'll be serving him. You will show your love for him. You will do the things that he requires of you.

You will obey him and take the steps that you know he's asking you to take. And when you do that you will never be a loser by it.

You will always have him come and say leave him alone. Leave her alone. She's mine. I'm looking after her.

I know why she's done it. Because she knows that I'm priceless to her. her. And you know the greatest thing of all is that when we come to have him held as priceless to us we discover that we are priceless to him.

[40 : 41] Yes that's true. Why else would he die if we were just things to throw away? if we weren't valuable to him?

If we really didn't mean all that much to him? Why did he let himself be betrayed? Why did he go to the cross?

Why did he take the pains of hell and bear them for us? It's because we are precious to him so that we would find him precious to ourselves.

Well then in the words of Hebrews 13 let us therefore go forth to him outside the camp yes we need to leave the camp we need to leave the world we need to leave the enemies of Jesus we need to leave those who are against him let us go forth to him outside the camp bearing his reproach yes we need to bear his reproach we need to carry what it means to be a Christian in this world he's worth it for here we have no continuing city but we are seeking one to come to pray oh lord our gracious god we marvel at the things that happened in the course of your ministry for your people we said solemnized at these great events which we know led to your own apprehension and to your own death at last and lord we thank you for the accuracy of your word where you have brought these things to us this evening so that we might contemplate them that we might give our due consideration to them that we might act accordingly oh lord take us away we pray from all opposition to you take us fully on to your side take us into the number of those whose business

each day it is to speak of their lord to show their love for him practically to do this in such a way that will defend your rights and come to bring themselves to be among his people we pray that you would bless your word to us once again go before us now we pray accept our worship for Jesus sake amen