

Christ Betrayed

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[0 : 0 0] Luke chapter 22, and we'll read at the beginning the first six verses, Luke chapter 22, page 1062.

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 a 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 Jesus to them in the absence of a crowd.

Now as we've been working through Luke, we saw that chapter 21 brought us to the end, really, of Luke's account of Christ's public ministry.

[1 : 1 0] And now from here in chapter 22, we really begin to focus on the events that surround the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now as we know, the death of Jesus took place on what was the most memorable part of the Jewish religious calendar.

It was the time of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the time of the Feast of the Passover. And these festivals came together, and they were commemorative festivals that were reminding Israel, reminding the Jews of the great deliverance that God had worked for them in the past.

And how they had been delivered from Egypt, and they'd been brought out to the Promised Land. And it was a time when Israel would remember God's grace, and God's protection, and God's deliverance, and God's salvation.

They were always remembering it was there at the forefront of their thinking, although they had never seen it, but it was something that was held before them, and something that was brought to their remembrance by the Passover.

When they would kill that lamb every year, and when they would eat it, and the unleavened bread, and the herbs, and there was the wine which was all part of the Passover meal, when they would take that, they were taking that in order to remind themselves of God's grace and God's deliverance.

[2 : 3 9] They hadn't themselves been witness to it, but it had happened. Their forefathers way back centuries before were the ones that had experienced that deliverance.

When that awful night in Egypt, when the angel of death passed over, and the angel of death struck every home, killing the firstborn in every house, except in the house where the blood was on the doorposts and on the lintel.

It was an awesome night, and from that night Israel were delivered. They were set free. And God wanted them, and he said to them, I want you to remember.

I want you to remember this in your lives. So that is why every year there was a Passover where they reenacted, as it were, or in a kind of a symbolic way, what had occurred, to remind them of God's deliverance.

And as we will see soon, this gave way. That's what Jesus did. Jesus brought in something new. But Jesus took out of the Passover and gave us something new, which we, just a couple of weeks ago, were doing, where we were also remembering something.

[4 : 04] The Jews of old remembered the Passover that night in Egypt. We, in turn, are remembering the death of our Lord Jesus. So you see that there's an amazing similarity in how one has bought in, or one has just slipped into the other great commemorative feasts.

And Jesus, of course, was the Lamb. He was the sacrifice. Now, the Jewish leaders, as we see, they were desperate to get rid of Jesus.

They were desperate to take him and to put him to death. And they had tried everything. Remember how they would be sending delegates, sending people to try and trick him, to trip him up in what he was saying.

But they could never get it. And they couldn't take him publicly. They couldn't just barge in and arrest him. Because they actually feared the people. Jesus was immensely popular with the people, with the ordinary people.

And so the Jewish leaders, much and all that they wanted to, they would love to have been able to barge in by force and take Jesus. But they were afraid of the people. They were afraid that the people would stone them.

[5 : 14] We read about that on different occasions. It was only their fear of the people that prevented them taking the Lord Jesus Christ. And so there were lots of occasions they were looking to take Jesus, but they couldn't get such an occasion.

So they were facing this difficulty. How on earth are we going to get him? And then all of a sudden, everything changes. Because one of the disciples breaks rank.

One of the disciples turns his back upon Jesus. And he goes and sides with the enemies of Christ. And really, it's an amazing moment when Judas Iscariot goes to the religious leaders.

And he goes to the chief priests. And he goes to the officers. Offering to betray Jesus. And Judas, at this moment, he had all the religious hierarchy in the palm of his hand.

This was the moment they were looking for. Because Judas is saying to them, look, I will get Jesus for you. You yourselves have been beaten time and time again.

[6 : 29] But I will know when there's a moment. When there won't be anybody around but his other disciples. When he'll be on his own. And you can get him and take him.

And by the time you've got him and all that. And before people are aware it's going to be too late. You leave it to me. I'll get him for you. And as far as the chief priests and the rulers were concerned, this was absolute music to their ears.

This was what they were wanting. And now they knew they had him. And so they give Judas 30 pieces of silver. Which was about four months. A laborer's wage for about four months.

The price of a slave. We're told back in the Old Testament that if an ox gored. If an ox, their horn, or if they gored a slave to death.

Then the owner of that ox had to pay the owner of the slave 30 pieces of silver. So this 30 pieces of silver was actually the price of a slave.

[7 : 40] And that was the price. It wasn't much money. That was the price that they offered to Judas. It's quite amazing for Judas because the gospel show that actually he was a thief and he had a love for money.

Because Judas actually could have named his price. I'm sure they would have doubled, trebled. They would have given him anything in order to get the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so Judas really at this moment, it's the ultimate betrayal. And it's amazing how the name Judas has remained within our culture to this very day.

Even people who have no religious inclination, they still talk of a Judas. It's amazing how some of the Bible language and some of the Bible incidents have found their way into our everyday language.

We talk about a giant killing act which talks of David and Goliath. We hear often people will say, oh, well, the writing was on the wall for a particular person or a particular group of people or whatever.

[8 : 46] And that, of course, comes from the book of Daniel. And again, a Judas is always talked about as somebody who really sells somebody. Somebody who will betray another person.

He's a Judas. In fact, that is into our everyday language. The sad thing about Judas is this. Although Judas was often, often at the side of Jesus, he was never on the side of Jesus.

Remember that. There's a distinction. You can be at someone's side and yet not on somebody's side.

Judas spent three years at the side of Jesus. He went with him lots of times and to lots of places. And while he was at the side of Jesus, he was never on the side of Jesus.

And that is what matters. And you have to ask yourself this question today. You see, in a sense here, we are all at the side of Jesus because we are where he is.

[9 : 53] We're told that we're even as few as two or three gathered together, that Jesus Christ is in the midst. So today we know by faith and by the word of God telling us such that Christ is in a mysterious way through the work of the Spirit is present with us.

So we could say today we are at the side of Christ. But what we've got to ask ourselves is, are we on the side of Christ? Or are we just at the side?

You make sure that you're on side. That you are on side with Christ. Because at the end of the day, nothing else matters. This is the all important issue that has to be settled.

You make sure that you are on the side of Christ. And Judas stands as a warning. One of the most frightening warnings that we'll ever find in the Bible.

Because here is somebody who worked with Jesus, worked for Jesus, and yet was never one with Jesus.

[11 : 04] It's quite extraordinary. And you see, working with Christians and being involved with Christians, even holding office in church, is not a guarantee of salvation.

Now we obviously assume that any person who is holding office in church has been saved. And before a person holds office in church in the way that our system works, a person has voted into office.

And it's only somebody who is first a member in the church and has to go through the system. But you know, it is possible. It is possible. And Judas is one of the frightening warnings that a person can.

They can be deceived in themselves or they can seek to deceive others. And they can become part and partial of church life. And yet never be rooted to the head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's one of the most Solomon-searching things. And that is why we must all examine ourselves. Indeed, that's what we find the disciples doing when they begin to ask Jesus, is it I?

[12 : 19] And so the story of Judas is a tragic one. The man of privilege. The man who had so many favors. The man who not only walked with Jesus and talked with Jesus, a man who had a position of privilege amongst the disciples.

He was the treasurer. He was given a position of trust and authority amongst the disciples. He abused that privilege and that authority that had been given. But he was never, never one with Jesus Christ.

You know, it is, as we say, one of the most solemn, solemn things. Now, there was nothing obvious about Judas that would mark him out.

You know, sometimes people think that if you looked at Judas, you would know straight away that he had that kind of oily, slimy face. And you'd say to yourself, just one look at him, and you'd say, oh, these eyes are so devious.

And there was something about his features and his face. And you'd say, oh, one look at that. Wouldn't trust him further than I could throw. Not at all. There was nothing as far as that person could see about Judas or even the way that he seemed to conduct himself that brought any suspicion apart from with Jesus himself.

[13 : 35] Jesus knew. But even the other disciples didn't know. When Jesus said that one of them was going to betray him, the other disciples didn't automatically say, oh, that'll be Judas.

They actually turned it in on themselves. And they said, Lord, is it me? See, and in a sense, that's a response of grace, isn't it?

Is it me? The person who sometimes is not maybe united to Christ, there is this sense of self-righteousness.

But you know, when a person is in Christ, that self-righteousness is being broken. And when the challenge comes out, there is this beginning to examine oneself. Where am I?

Oh, where am I? What have all perished thought that I would ever do such a thing? There's a fear in it. And the other disciples, they all manifested that.

[14 : 38] But here is Judas, and as we say, he was just, there was nothing obvious about him, but Jesus himself, Jesus himself had identified the problem.

Because way back, three years earlier, Jesus had said, or nearly three years earlier, have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil. Jesus knew.

And you know, in a sense, that's the key to what is happening here. We've got to take into the picture the devil. And the devil was able to use Judas so easily.

Because Judas was not ultimately one of Christ's. Now, that doesn't mean that the devil will never use somebody that belongs to Jesus.

Sadly, he does. And we've always got to be careful. There was a time when Peter spoke to Jesus and tried to put Jesus off Cush. And Jesus warned Peter that it was the devil that was speaking through him rather than the Lord.

[15 : 44] But this is why Judas was able to betray Jesus. This is why Judas was able to walk away from the loving, tender, inviting, caring words of Jesus, and walk out into the darkness, and indeed walk away from the light into the darkness, and ultimately into hell.

It's a fearful picture. It's like there's this person who's at the very gates of heaven, who has had opportunities and privileges that few people in this world have ever had.

And yet he walks away with the words, the personal words of Christ, ringing in his ears from the gates of heaven, and he will plunge into the darkness of hell.

There isn't a more terrifying, awful picture, really, in the Bible than that of Judas. You know, my friends, privilege always carries with it responsibility.

Privilege is a wonderful thing. But we can abuse it. We can lose it. We've got to make use of it. Because at the end of the day, if we don't use the privileges that we have, what use are they?

[17 : 02] They're of no value, no worth to us. And today we all have the privilege of sitting under the gospel. We have the privilege of a Christian community.

We have privileges that are absolutely extraordinary in God's goodness and grace to us. Are we using them? Or are we holding them lightly?

As if they mean little. You know, if we don't take the privileges to heart, do you know what can happen? We can begin to get hard.

We can begin to just take them for granted. We can begin to shrug our shoulders and allow these things to drift by. Well, that's what happened to Judas. All these privileges, rather than softening him, they hardened him.

And you know, when you look at Judas and the way that sin works, you see, sin is deceitful. The heart, we're looking at that, was it on a few Wednesdays ago, in that passage in Jeremiah, and it moves on at the end of it, how the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

[18 : 09] And that's the way that sin works. You see, sin is so deceptive. And sin often leads from one sin into another.

You see, Judas was a downward spiral. And one sin was leading to another. There was just where he wasn't accepting the privileges, and there was his love of the money, and there were the various things, and there came the day when he was ready to sell a savior for the price of a slave.

Sin, my friend, if we give in to it, will lead us into more sin. Sin is never happy. Sin is devouring. It is captivating.

It captures. And you know, whether it's in our effort to set up sin, or whether it's in our effort to cover sin, sin continues to multiply.

Sin is so deceptive. You look at the like of, for instance, David. David added one sin upon another, and upon another, and upon another, as he tried to cover his tracks.

[19 : 22] That's the nature of sin. And even if we're trying to set up sin, to enter into sin, in a way that it will make it as easy as possible for us, we're continuing to sin.

Sin is a ripple-out effect. And the danger of sin is that it doesn't just affect yourselves, but it affects others as well. And betrayal is such an, it's just such an integral part of the outcome of sin.

But this, as we said, this passage shows us that behind the scenes working are the powers of darkness. They're always lurking there. And my friend, from the dawn of history, Satan has been lurking, waiting to pounce on how often he has pounced in the history of this world.

Why? Because he hates God. And his great aim in this world is to bring down the glory of God, to destroy, to hinder, to hamper the glory of God in this world.

From the very dawn of history, when God made this world and declared over it, it's very good. All the different days, and the different phases, and the different stages. And God looked at everything, and he said, it's very good.

[20 : 37] And then when he made man and woman the highest point of his creation, and then God rested, there's this idea of just this total satisfaction in the Godhead.

And Satan is saying, I am going to destroy and mar the glory of God. And we know what he has done. And so it worked down throughout history.

And you see, when God sends his son into this world, to save the world, and Jesus is born as a little baby in Bethlehem, you can see straight away the powers of hell at work.

Because the moment Jesus is born into this world, what does Herod do? In a moment of irrational behavior, he destroys all the babies in Bethlehem to wipe Jesus out.

Who's at work? Satan? In the background. All was in the background. But all was working. And you see it in the irrational behavior of the world.

[21 : 41] In its attack upon the church. Down from the dawn of history. In the background, Satan. All was there. And what manifests, what reveals the glory of God in this world?

Above all, it's his people. And that's why today, as in all other days, the Lord will seek, sorry, not, Satan will seek, to destroy.

He has never changed his course. Destruction. Destroy. Ruin. Mar the glory of God. And he will do it in any way that he can. And that is why we need to be on guard.

We need to be praying. We need to have the armor. We need to be praying for one another. We need to be together. United to stand, divided of all. It's so important to be one together.

Satan is out. Out to destroy. And sadly, we see that Judas was here. He was open to Satan. And he closes his mind to all Jesus' teachings and warnings and exhortations and goodness.

[22 : 47] And he's a way to sell Jesus. And let us be quite persuaded of this, that the action of Judas, when the other disciples discovered, must have hurt them terribly.

We don't really read about, so much about that, but it must have been, it must have been so sore to them. And as we said, we must be on guard.

Now, sometimes, sadly, believers in the church will follow the course that Peter followed. Peter denied his Lord.

Peter denied his Lord with oaths and curses. That night, Peter looked and acted anything like a Christian. If you'd gone into that hall and you had heard Peter's language, and you had heard Peter's, the way he spoke, you would have said to yourself, well, that man, most certainly, is not a follower of Jesus.

And that's the very thing that Peter was trying to do. He was trying to convince people that he wasn't a follower of Jesus, that he didn't know Jesus. That never happened again in Peter's life.

[24 : 00] It was a turning point. Of course, the turning point was in the shores of Galilee. But the great difference between Peter and Judas was that Peter went out a broken-hearted man.

Jesus turned and looked at Peter. Peter remembered the words of Jesus. He went out and he wept bitterly. It wasn't just that he wept buckets, but he wept bitterly.

It was like an iron in his heart. And poor Peter thought that he had blown it to such an extent that it would never be the same again. And that's why he says, we read about it in John, he says, let's go fishing.

In other words, the words literally are let's go back to the fishing. Peter thought that his days of being a leading light for Jesus were over.

But Jesus had other plans and Peter was restored and Peter, in fact, came to an even greater effect. He became the mouthpiece. He became the great leader of the church and it just shows the restorative power of Christ, what the Lord is able to do.

[25 : 10] But Judas was different. Judas went away, not to come back. And, you know, sometimes, sometimes the Lord's people do backslide and it always hurts the church when people backslide.

But there will be a difference because those who backslide and are truly united to Christ, they'll come back. They'll come back. Might be a while, but they'll come back.

And there's something about them that will show there's something there that just won't go away. Whereas, those who have maybe come out and followed the Lord for a while and have gone away, they've gone away.

They have chosen to go away. And they've gone far away. They have made a conscious choice to depart. That's what Judas made, that conscious choice. The backslider and the backslider can be in the far country for a long time.

And yet, there's something that won't go away. Won't go away. Why? Because deep down there's still this little flame. It might be so low that you can barely see it yourself, but it's still there.

[26 : 26] One day, it will be fanned up again. And that flame will begin to burn. And the Lord still is able to see that little flame. Maybe others, there might be one or two of the Lord's people are still able to see that flame.

That's the difference. Those who have turned their back, they've gone. They've gone. They don't even want to go to church anymore. They're not interested in these things anymore.

And Judas was such a one. He went away. My dear friends, remember that this word, this gospel, it's going to do one of two things.

It's either going to soften us or it's going to harden us. If we are under the word week in, week out, it's doing one of two things. It's either softening or hardening.

What's it doing in your life? Do you feel drawn today to Christ? Do you see it yourself? And you're saying even maybe in the quietness of your heart, Lord, you know that deep down it's what I want.

[27 : 35] I want to be on your side. I want you. I don't want to be on the outside. I want to be on the inside with you.

Is that what your heart is saying? Well, if so, that's a good thing that it's saying, deal with that. Move on. Move to the Lord.

Get close to Him. Or are you here today saying, this means nothing to me. You know, I don't think you are.

I honestly don't think so. Well, come in and get on to the Lord's side. Let us pray. O Lord, we pray that all of us may seek to be on the Lord's side, that we will not drift away from this gospel and this Christ, but that we will want to close in and experience the warmth and the communion and fellowship with Jesus.

Lord, do us good, we pray. Bless each one of us. Take us all to our homes and safety and all whom we love. Bless us all. In Jesus' name we ask it.

[28 : 50] Amen.