

# The Motivation of a Traitor

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Date: 10 July 2016

Preacher: Rev.Prof. F. Dalrymple-Hamilton

[ 0 : 00 ] I'm just going to pray. Almighty God, you are our gracious Father.

Clothed in majesty, you are our mighty, yet you save us with mercy. Almighty God, you are an exquisite creator. With hands that carve out beauty, you are the author of life, yet you give us such freedom.

Almighty Father, you know each of us intimately. Your heart is full of love, yet you watch over us in our weakness and guide us daily.

You are our Prince of Peace. We draw near to you and drink in the promise of eternity. Father, you are our Lord of Peace.

We walk with you and seek your guidance as we learn to become more loving. In your sanctuary, we are safe, safe to let down our guard and dwell in your truth.

[ 1 : 17 ] Please, Father God, you are our risen Lord. You came for the needy, for the poor, the oppressed, the forsaken, and those that society has forgotten.

Please, risen Lord, your life renews our hearts from within. So we thank you now that we carry your promise for forgiveness.

And we ask that your spirit to work through us as we minister in you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Amen. The next hymn is... The first of this is found in Psalm 41. Reading from verse 1.

It's a short psalm. Blessed is he who considers the poor. The Lord delivers him in the day of trouble.

[ 2 : 20 ] The Lord protects him and keep him alive. He is called blessed in the land. For you will not give him up to the will of his enemies.

The Lord sustains him on his sickbed. In his illness you heal all his infirmities. As for me, I said, O Lord, be gracious to me, heal me, for I have sinned against you.

My enemies say of me in malice, When will he die and his name perish? And when one comes to see me, he utters empty words. While his heart gathers mischief.

While he goes out, he tells it abroad. All who hate me whisper together about me. They imagine the worst for me. They say, A deadly thing is fastened upon him.

He will not rise again from where he lies. Even my bosom friend in whom I trusted, who ate of my bread, has lifted his heel against me. But you, O Lord, be gracious to me, and raise me up, that I may requite them.

[ 3 : 32 ] By this I know that you are pleased with me, in that my enemy has not triumphed over me, but you have upheld me because of my integrity, and set me in your presence forever.

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Amen and amen. Then I'm turning over to John's Gospel, chapter 13.

And I want to read there from verse 16. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is he who sent greater than he who sent him.

If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. I am not speaking of you all. I know whom I have chosen.

It is that the scripture may be fulfilled. He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me. I tell you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place, you may believe that I am he.

[ 4 : 47 ] Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives anyone whom I send receives me. And he who receives me receives him who sent me.

When Jesus had thus spoken, he was troubled in spirit and testified, Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.

The disciples looked at one another, or uncertain of whom he spoke. One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was lying close to the breast of Jesus.

So Simon Peter signaled to him and said, Tell us who it might be concerning whom he speaks. So lying close to the breast of Jesus, he said, Lord, who is it?

Jesus answered, It is he to whom I shall give this morsel when I have dipped it. So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.

[ 5 : 52 ] Then after the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said, What you are going to do, do quickly. Now, no one at the table knew why he had said this to him.

Some thought that because Judas had the money bag, Jesus was telling him, buy what we need for the feast, or that he should give something to the poor. So after receiving the morsel, he immediately went out, and it was night.

Amen. May the Lord bless to us, may it be to his praise and to his glory. Continuing this night with Psalm 41, a series on the Psalms that I'm doing this time will be continued two weeks today, but in the morning, not at night.

I turn your attention to Psalm 41, verse 9. Even my bosom friend, in whom I trusted, who ate of my bread, has lifted his heel against me.

Now, the Hebrew has a very interesting way of describing the intimate, translated here as my bosom friend. Because if we translate it literally, what it actually says is, man of my peace.

[ 7 : 21 ] Uses the noun that we know, shalom. And what that means is, the person that's being thus described, like this, is a person to whom the writer is totally at peace with.

The writer has shared with this person his intimate secrets. There are no grudges against one another on either side. It's an ideal relationship.

But what the psalmist here in the form of David is complaining about is the fact that the one who was like this, whom he trusted with all his secrets, knowledge, aims, and ambitions, has betrayed me.

He whom I trusted, who ate of my bread, has lifted his heel against me. We looked at Psalm 42 last week. I made the point that these were written, and this is true of this lot here, from 38, 39, 40, 41, in the rebellion of his son Absalom, detailed in 2 Samuel 15 and 16.

And the high point, as far as the psalmist is concerned, of that rebellion is the treachery of Ahithophel, the king's counselor. He's the guy who knew all about David's aims, objectives, hopes, prayers, beliefs.

[ 8 : 50 ] But he's the man who stood against him. Now, in the Gospel of John, this psalm is directed toward Judas Iscariot.

John 13, 18. I am not speaking of you all. I know whom I have chosen. It is that the scripture may be fulfilled. He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.

Now, I want to talk, first of all, about the identity of the traitor. This is no longer Ahithophel in 2 Samuel chapter 16, but is spoken by our Lord in this upper room discourse that we have in John 13 as identifying Judas as the betrayer of Jesus.

This sermon is all about Judas the betrayer and what we can learn from it.

We know very little, actually, about his early life. But in John 13, 2, it reads, and during the supper when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him.

[ 10 : 17 ] Now, something of the background can be looked at in the name Iscariot. Now, the older scholars all took this as rendering into one Greek word of two Hebrew words which are Ish Kerio.

Man of Kerio. Kerio. Now, Kerio is the name of a town in southern Judea. And in Joshua chapter 15, where the land is being distributed, we read this in verses 20 and 25.

This is the inheritance of the tribe of the people of Judah according to their families. The cities belonging to the tribe of the people of Judah in the extreme south toward the boundary of Edom where Kerio of Hezeron.

So, Judas comes from this town in the very south of Judah. Now, that particular deduction by itself has implications because what it means is Judas amongst the band of the disciples is the only one from Judah.

All the rest were Galileans. Now, you find that this name Iscariot, Ishkeriof, man of Keriof, is also given to his father Simon.

[ 11 : 55 ] In John 6, verse 71, we read, He spoke of Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was to betray him.

What can we find out about his father? The title, Man of Keriof, may indicate that his father had considerable assets and property in this land of Keriof, on this district, this town.

Now, in the 19th century, there was a lot of good biblical scholarship going on. And one of the persons who wrote was a guy called George Adam Smith.

He's buried in the cemetery at Collington. And he wrote a book called The Historical Geography of the Holy Land. And here he notes that in southern Judea, the land consists mostly of stony ground with grass, and his only suitable for sheep farming.

You can't grow anything there. And if that is correct, and if our understanding of Iscariot is correct, we could say of the father of Judas, Simon, he was what we would call today something like a gentleman farmer.

[13:19] It also means that if the ground is like this, employment in this part of Judea, is scarce. And the only employment open to Judas would that he would have been brought up and trained in the financial affairs of his father's business.

And this is where we get it from in the Gospel of John. Jesus appointed him as treasurer to the disciples. And so we read in John 12, verse 6, this he said, this is Judas speaking, not that he cared for the poor, but that he was a thief.

And as he had the money bag, he used to pilfer what was put into it. So here's the picture. Here's this man of Kerioth, coming from the southern bit of Judea, and has been visiting Jerusalem.

When did he come under the ministry of Jesus? The Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, they mainly concentrate on the Galilean ministry of Jesus right in the north of Israel.

But John alone talks about the early Judean ministry of Jesus from chapter 2, verse 13, to chapter 4, verse 2.

[14:54] And in that event, the first event that occurs in this early Judean ministry of Jesus is the cleansing of the temple, John 2, verses 13 to 25.

And I would suggest to you that it's this point that Judas, on a visit to the temple, saw what Jesus was doing. In verses 23 to 25, that chapter of John 2 ends like this.

Now, when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover feast, many believed in Jesus' name when they saw the signs that he did. But Jesus did not trust himself to them, because he knew all men and needed no one to bear witness of man, for he himself knew what was in man.

Now, it may be that in that particular description of the men of Jerusalem, that Judea, or Judas, rather, is in fact included in that description.

He was certainly chosen by the Lord to be one of his disciples. In Luke 6, 12, 13 to 16, we read, In these days, Jesus went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God.

[16:25] And when it was day, he called his disciples and chose from the twelve whom he named apostles, Simon whom he named Peter, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

traitor. And that's a very significant phrase, because what it means is, he didn't start out like this. Something corrupted him. We go to the mind of the traitor.

I am not speaking of you all, I know whom I have chosen. It is that the scripture may be fulfilled, he who ate my bread has lifted up his heel against me.

In terms of being at the Passover, Matthew, Mark, Luke, they talk about the final Passover that Jesus attended. But in the Gospel of John, there are three Passovers.

There's one in chapter 2, there's a second one in chapter 6, and there's a final one in chapter 13 that we read. And it is a fact that when we come to understanding the motive of Judas Iscariot, it is that at an early stage, Satan had entered into him.

[17:57] And during the supper, this is all taking place in this last supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him.

We find in Luke 22 the same thing. The feast of unleavened bread drew near, which is called the Passover. And the chief priests and scribes were seeking how to put him to death, for they feared the people.

Then, Satan entered into Judas, called Iscariot, who was the number of the twelve. Now, we take the bit that Judas has been around very early in the ministry of Jesus.

So, when we come to the final Passover that Jesus hosts and ministers at, he knows what it's like, because he's already been to two in chapter two and six of John's gospel.

Now, the gospel of Luke, alone of the gospels, details the activities of Satan during the ministry of Jesus. In chapter four, this is at the beginning of the gospel, it is noted that after the temptation of Jesus, the devil departed from him.

[ 19 : 23 ] It says this, when the devil had ended the temptation, he departed from him until a more opportune time. When we reach chapter 22, we find that the devil has returned and found not only an opportune time, but an opportune person to act through, and that person is Judas.

When we come to consider this action, we might wonder how such an action could ever have taken place when he had listened to the ministry of Jesus, had noted what he had said, had seen the cleansing of the temple actually twice.

But it started in a small way, and it started with the sin of greed or avarice.

because he was skilled in money management, he became the treasurer to the group. This, Judas said, not because he cared for the poor, because he was a thief, and as he had the money bag, he used to pilfer what was put into it.

Then later in John 13, 27 to 29, then after the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, what you are going to do, do quickly. Now, no one at the table, why he said this.

[ 20 : 58 ] Some thought that because Jesus had the money box, money bag, Jesus was telling him, buy what we need for the feast, or that he should give something to the poor. But it is a truth that comes from this particular person, as told in the gospels, that when Satan has got a hold of someone's life, he will work on that person until he destroys them.

Not so Jesus. When Jesus Christ has got hold of a life, he exalts that life so that it is like him.

That's the difference. There are no verses that reveal what Judas actually thought, but there are other verses that speak something of this process.

Now, there are verses that occur in Hebrews 6, 4-6, and they read like this. For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they then commit apostasy, since they crucify the Son of God on their own account and hold him to contempt.

These are indeed difficult verses to talk about, but there is a progression. once been enlightened, tasted the heavenly gift, become partakers of the Holy Spirit, tasted the goodness of the word of God, and tasted the powers of the age to come.

[ 23 : 00 ] Who do these refer to? They refer to individuals who committed the unforgivable sin.

Now, this is a thing that perplexes people, but we find it in the Gospel of Matthew and Mark, where Jesus is talking to the Pharisees and he says, all blasphemies against the Son of Man will be forgiven.

But every blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, any person who does this, is guilty of an eternal sin and there is no forgiveness.

And in his action, Judas did this. Because what he's talking about, Jesus, that is, in the description of the unforgivable sin, the Pharisees had said, he casts out Satan by Beelzebub, which means the master of flies.

So, in other words, what's happening there is that the Pharisees are ascribing the work of God through Jesus to the devil himself.

And this is what Judas has done. Why did he do this? The surmise is that Judas, having seen the cleansing of the temple twice, perhaps thought of Jesus not as a spiritual Messiah who had come to liberate mankind from their sins, but thought of him as many others did at the time, as some kind of political Messiah who would throw off the domination of Rome and reform the temple.

[ 25 : 03 ] That is perhaps what he thought. We can't prove it, because it doesn't actually say that in Scripture, but it's implied. So, we come thirdly to this, the end of the traitor.

I am not speaking of you all. I know whom I have chosen. It is that the Scripture may be fulfilled. He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.

The end of the traitor, the end of those who would deny Jesus as their Lord and Savior. The chief priests and the scribes had enough.

they regarded the ministry of Jesus in what he said as a threat to their existence. So, he had to go. Luke 22. 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.

[ 26 : 14 ] then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was the number of the twelve. So, these establishment individuals who want rid of Jesus suddenly find they've got an ally.

One of the twelve, Matthew 26, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, what will you give me if I deliver him to you?

And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him. And the act of betrayal is recorded in Matthew 26, 47.

While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs from the chief priests and elders of the people.

The moment of betrayal is identified to this large crowd by a kiss. The betrayer had given them a sign saying, the one that I shall kiss is the man, sees him.

[ 27 : 36 ] and he came up to Jesus and said, Hail, Master. And he kissed him. But of course, this moment of betrayal was being worked out.

It actually started again in the midst of the Passover. So lying thus close to the breast of Jesus, he, the beloved disciple, said to him, Lord, who is it?

Jesus answered, it is he to whom I shall give this morsel when I have dipped it. So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.

Thus was betrayed the son of man into the hands of ungodly sinners. They had got their way. This threat to their existence was now removed.

What about the consequences? When Judas, his betrayer, saw that he was condemned, he repented and brought back the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders saying, I have sinned in betraying innocent blood.

[ 28 : 56 ] They said, what is that to us? You see it to it yourself. this idea or this action where Judas brought back the 30 pieces of silver was the way in the time of Jesus that you reacted against a bargain you had made and made it null and void.

So, for example, if Barry and I had houses in Jerusalem and I sell my house to Barry and he gives me the money and then I change my mind and I think, I don't want to sell that house.

The procedure was, you took the money back to the temple treasury. That's what's happening here. And you write to Barry and say, I'm sorry, I'm not going to sell my house after all, and I've given the money to the treasury.

So he tookles off to the Jerusalem temple and collects his money. That's why Judas threw down these 30 pieces of silver. He was trying to make the bargain null and void.

When Judas, his betrayer, saw that he was condemned, passed judgment on is what it actually means.

[ 30 : 25 ] And it may be that in this act of betrayal, Judas, still holding Jesus to be a political messiah, thought that at the moment of this crisis, Jesus would manifest his messianic power and reveal the true majesty of what he was.

If that's correct, like many others in our own day, he had totally misunderstood the mission and ministry of our Lord.

When you have people in public places discussing the person of Jesus, they will say, oh yes, we believe in the ethics of Jesus, but not the dogma.

They're saying something similar to what Judas perhaps thought in his heart. And his next action was that throwing down these pieces of silver, he departed and went and hanged himself.

Was that the end of the matter? Not really. Jesus said this, the son of man goes as it was written of him, but war to that man by whom the son of man is betrayed, it would be better for that man if he had not been born.

[ 31 : 54 ] You get another reference to that particular action. Jesus appearing before Pontius Pilate said this, you would have no power over me unless it had been given to you from above.

Therefore he who delivered me to you has the greater sin. A sin that lies on the stain and the conscience of Judas that will not go away.

What was the judgment? In a speech by Peter in the Acts of the Apostles chapter 1 where they are discussing who could replace Judas in the apostolic band he talks and says to take the place in this ministry of apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.

And I take it that Peter is being very gracious there. Jesus had indicated very clearly what that place would be. What does it mean to go to your own place?

There was a Jewish teacher called Maimonides. He lived in the medieval period. He wrote a book called A Guide to the Perplexed.

[ 33 : 30 ] And if you've ever read it, you'll find that you're even more perplexed by the time you finished than when you started. But he said this, whoever betrays an Israelite into the hands of the Gentiles has no part in the world to come.

What about the people who have betrayed the Son of Man today into the hands of godless men? They have no part in the world to come.

Psalms 41 is for the psalmist who says in conclusion, but this I know that you are pleased with me in that my enemy has not triumphed over me, but you have upheld me because of my integrity and set me in your presence forever.

Quite different to what Peter says about Judas who has gone to his own place. So is this just a lesson in history or does it have something to say to us?

I believe it does. To betray Jesus isn't also done, only done by giving him into the hands of Pontius Pilate.

[ 35 : 01 ] God because if we think about betraying Jesus today, and I say this to myself as well as to anyone else, the way that you can betray Jesus is not by living the life he has called you to live.

That is betraying Jesus. Jesus. Now what does Jesus say when Judas meets him? He says, friend. There's no sense of indignation there. judgment even.

Friend. What about the times when Christian people will say to us things that are deeply hurtful? Which things not only should they have never said at all, but it should never have even been on their minds.

[ 36 : 20 ] It says something about the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ that enables us to react not in retaliation, but with the grace that will forgive.

Forgiveness is in your power and mine when such things happen. there's a third way. We can betray Jesus if we fail to preach the gospel that he has called us to preach.

It's not just about ethics, that's important, but it's about the dynamic person of the Son of God who has come into the world to be your friend and mine and to save you and set you free from the domination of sin and to give you the hope of eternal life.

A hope by which you can face death in the face and triumph. If we do not preach that gospel, we have betrayed Jesus.

So, in this message where we thought about Judas Iscariot and where he came from and what his motives were and how he ended up, there's a lot that we can take on board and apply it to our own lives.

[ 37 : 57 ] Remembering that the first epistle of John tells us he who says he abides in him lives in Christ. ought also to walk in the same way that Jesus himself walked.

Christ likeness in everything. Let us pray. Our God and Father, we thank you that we've been able to think of the ministry of God's word and what it has to say to us.

And as we continue further in your presence, we ask that you would continue to minister to us by your spirit and help us to live the life that Jesus called us to live, to be the light of the world.

God. In his name we ask it. Amen. We sing our communion hymn number 1300.

00.