

Sunday, March 28, 2021 | Easter Upside Down

John 13:18-30 | "The Betrayer"

In this four-week study, we'll be exploring four different scenes throughout the life of Jesus, which illustrates for us how that Jesus flipped conventional understanding on its head. What the world considers right; Jesus considered wrong. What the world considered necessary; Jesus considered inconsequential.

Two weeks ago, we read how Mary of Bethany took a jar of ointment and poured it over Jesus. She did not care what the others in the room thought. Through Mary's example, we learned that true worship has nothing to do with what others think of us and everything to do with what Jesus thinks of us.

Then, last week Today, we read how Jesus washed the disciple's feet. One by one, Jesus took those men's feet in his hands, feet that he himself had crafted, and washed away all the dirt and stink to teach them a valuable lesson. If the Son of God became a slave for mankind, what excuse do we have that would exempt us from serving one another. No task is too small. No job is too boring. No work is too basic. No chore is too undignified when one considers that the God who made the feet of man also stooped to make them clean. Menial service is meaningful service.

Today, we'll focus on one of the most despised human beings who ever lived: Judas. And rather than me set up an already well-known character, why not hear him speak for himself.

<PLAY JUDAS SERMON ILLUSTRATION VIDEOS>

READ: John 13:18-30 (ESV)

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.'¹⁹ I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place, you may believe that I am *he*.²⁰ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me."

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

¹ Morris, Leon, *The Gospel According to John*, Revised Edition, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, (Grand Rapids; Eerdmans, 1995), p. 553, explains that "lift his heel" is a metaphor derived from the "lifting up of a horse's hoof preparatory to kicking."

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**.

Generally speaking, three characters are occupying center stage during this scene. And each one is going through some internal conflict.

i. Jesus with a pained spirit.

The verb "was troubled" is an expressive one. It signifies that the one who is troubled is experiencing severe anxiety, feelings of horror, and extreme agitation.² It is the same word used when Jesus stood before the tomb of Lazarus and when he spoke about his own death (cf. 11:33; 12:27).³ Meaning, Jesus was troubled by Judas' betrayal in the same way that he was grieved over his friend's death and in turmoil over his own impending execution.

John, more than any other Gospel writer, brings Christ's humanity to the foreground. This is not to say Jesus failed as we do. No. He was perfect in every way and never once sinned (cf. Heb. 4:15). This shows us that God, who is without form, took on form, experienced what we experienced, felt what we feel so that he might better relate to us for our benefit (cf. Phil 2:5-11). Meaning, when we take God our pains, we take them to one who has known pain in its purest form. While known to Jesus from the very beginning, Judas's betrayal was still like a knife in Jesus' side.

ii. John with a perplexed mind.

As early as John 6:71, Jesus predicted his own betrayal. Up until this movement, however, Jesus always spoke in oblique—non-specific—terms. Now, he speaks emphatically, "I say to you, one of you will betray me." This catches all of the disciples by surprise. How could one of the twelve,

² Carson, D.A., *The Gospel According to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary, (Cambridge, UK; Eerdmans, 1991), p. 440.

³ Köstenberger, Andreas J., *John*, The Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, (Grand Rapids; Baker Academic, 2004), p. 412.

the chosen few, betray their Master? It was unthinkable. Yet the disciples' perplexity, save Judas, of course, speaks to how well Judas hid his own nature from even his closest friends. In fact, it's more than possible that Judas did not know he would betray Jesus until that very night (cf. Jn. 13:2).

John's question is answered by action. But before we can understand the move, we first have to know how the disciples were seated at the last supper.

The style in which the Passover was observed during this time wasn't what is depicted in Leonardo DaVinci's "the Last Supper." <INSERT PICTURE> Instead, they would've been seated in the Roman-style called a "triclinium." <INSERT PICTURE> And rather than all the men seated on one side of a rectangular table, the setting would've looked something like this. <INSERT PICTURE> Thus, it makes sense that John easily and discreetly asks a question to Jesus, Jesus answers him, but the whole group did not know the significance of the bread-gesture, save John.

What's more, while it is not explicitly mentioned, because Jesus was able to hand Judas a piece of bread, it's not too far of fetch to presume that Judas had to have been close to Jesus, possibly right next to him in the same way John was. Considering that Judas was also the group treasurer, he would've likely had some status within their little band of twelve men. So, Judas being seated next to Jesus would've been natural, whether on the left or right.

Now, if this theory holds true, there is an astonishing conclusion we can make. Of the two sides, the left side was a far more honorable place as it was also the most vulnerable side of a person and thus in need of the most protection.⁴ Hence, only the most trusted and most loyal would be allowed to sit on the left side of the hose. We know John was seated to Jesus' right as he was able to lean his head back and rest it on Jesus' chest (cf. Jn. 13:25). This means, in all likelihood, Judas was seated to Jesus' left, a place reserved for the one person who would've been the least expected to betray him.

All throughout the Gospels, you see Jesus treating the one he knew would betray him with love. He chose him. He honored him with the money bag. He washed his feet. He gave him the most coveted and honorable seat at his table. Judas had every reason NOT to betray Jesus. Yet he did anyways. Why? Because, unlike the other disciples, Judas never addressed Jesus as Lord only as "Rabbi." Jesus may have been his teacher, but he was never his Lord. And when Jesus isn't the Lord of your life, the Devil takes his place (cf. Eph 2:2-3).

⁴ Carson (1991), p. 474.

iii. Judas with a possessed heart.

If God isn't your Heavenly Father, then your earthly father is the Devil, and children emulate their fathers. So, it's not surprising that a child possessed by their father, the Devil, would devise a plan to kill an innocent man. For as Jesus once said of the religious elites in John 8:44, "You belong to your father, the Devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

Interestingly, unlike the synoptic gospels, John has no mention of demon possession save one: the possession of Judas. This is not because the other instances of demon possession did not happen; instead, John wanted to highlight the worst of them all. The betrayal of Jesus Christ wasn't merely a ploy devised by depraved men but a plot inspired by the Prince of Demons himself. For the first time in John's Gospel, Satan emerges from the background as an active participant to kill his enemy.⁵

SO, WHAT'S THE TAKEAWAY?

You can look the part but still be apart. You can look like a follower of Jesus without being a follower of Jesus.

After Judas received the morsel of bread and went out, the last thing John says is that it was night. From chapter 1, John has been laying the dichotomy between light and darkness.

READ: John 1:1-5, 9-13 (ESV)

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. ⁴In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

....

⁹The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹²But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of

⁵ Keener, Craig S., *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, Volume 2, (Grand Rapids; Baker Academic, 2003), p. 919.

God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

Echoing the words of Isaiah, the Prophet, Jesus says of his generation, “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.” (Mat. 15:8) Jesus wants your heart. It is not enough to offer mere lip-service to him. He sees whether our words match our walk. Judas’s heart was as far from Jesus even though he walked with the Son of God for over three years.

So, WHAT’S THE TAKEAWAY?

You can look the part but be apart. You can look like a follower of Jesus without being a follower of Jesus.

You’re either the Judas to Jesus’ left or the John to Jesus’ right.

Which are you?

VIDEO DESCRIPTION

Easter Upside Down | Week 3 | “The Betrayer”

TEXT: John 13:18-30

Echoing the words of Isaiah, the Prophet, Jesus says of his generation, “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.” (Mat. 15:8) Jesus wants your heart. It is not enough to offer mere lip-service to him. He sees whether our words match our walk. And Judas’s heart was as far from Jesus even though he walked with the Son of God for over three years. Thus, we are confronted with an uncomfortable truth: **you can look the part but still be apart.** You can look like a follower of Jesus without being a follower of Jesus. You’re either the Judas to Jesus’ left or the John to Jesus’ right.

Which are you?

Pastor’s manuscript can be found here: