

THE BETRAYAL

Mark 14:43-52

Intro: The Bible contains the tragic stories of a number of people who are remembered, at least in part, for the sins which they committed. This, of course, started with the sins of Adam and Eve by which, in the case of Adam's sin, the whole human race was brought under divine judgment. And the tragic effects of Adam's sin continue to be observed in the lives of people in the human family from that day until this. And they will continue to be seen in the lives of people to the very end of time. In the case of those who do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, the results of Adam's sin will be experienced for all eternity. Sin is ultimately responsible for wars, all disobedience to God, dissatisfaction and unhappiness of all kinds, sickness, and death. The Bible tells us, speaking of Adam, that "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12).

Let me point out other instances where the sins of certain people have been recorded in Scripture.

By the hatred which Joseph's brothers had in their hearts toward him, they sold him into Egypt, later to be brought into Egypt themselves by the providence of God. But this led to several hundred years of slavery for the whole nation of Israel until God miraculously delivered them under the leadership of Moses.

But let us think of Moses. For most of his life he was an exemplary leader of the people, but his work for Israel was delayed for a period of forty years because he rushed ahead of the Lord. And then during the time that he was leading Israel toward the promised land, because he lost his temper and struck the rock when God told him to speak to the rock, he was denied entrance into the promised land.

Or take David, the King of Israel. He committed adultery with the wife of one of his most faithful men, and then he had her husband, Uriah, murdered in an attempt to hide his sin.

Solomon, David's son, who was used by the Spirit of God to give us all of the wonderful truth that we are presently studying in the book of Proverbs, as the years of his life rolled on, did the very things that God had

told His people not to do by marrying many heathen women and building temples for them where their heathen God could be worshiped. It is hard to believe that a man of such wisdom could violate God's will in such a grossly evil way.

Moving into the New Testament we have recently studied Peter's denial of the Lord, swearing and using oaths, to declare that he did not even know the Lord.

Other examples could be cited. But why has God told us all of these things? Does He delight in exposing the sins of His people? I believe that the Apostle Paul has given us the answer to these questions. It is not that the Lord is trying to humiliate His people for sins that they have committed in the past, but it is to warn all future generations of His people *not to do* what His people have done in the past. And the Lord has even told us the conditions which led up to these sins, that we might beware when we might be faced with similar situations.

After the Apostle Paul briefly reviewed in 1 Corinthians 10 the sins of the children of Israel, especially on their way from Egypt to Canaan, he said in verse 6,

Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should lust after evil things, as they also lusted (1 Cor. 10:6).

And in then on down in verse 11 in the same chapter we read a very similar stated. Listen, and I will read it to you:

Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition [instruction, or better, as the NIV has it, "as warnings for us"], upon whom the ends of the world [ages] are come (1 Cor. 10:11).

The world is not going to warn us against sin. The world would like for us to believe that there is no such a thing as sin, and that we ought to go ahead and do whatever we think is going to give us pleasure. Millions of people are ruining their lives every day because they don't read the Bible. And with many, if they do read it, they don't believe what they are reading.

I have told many of you what one of my seminary professors told us in class one day, and I have never forgotten what he said. But this is what he told us. He said if we want to learn about sin, don't think that you have to sin to learn what sin is. Sin blinds us, and will only lead us into

deeper sin. He said that the only place where sin is exposed for what it really is, is in the Bible. So he said, "If you want to learn what sin is, how it displeases God, how it ruins lives, and how it will ruin you, then read your Bible. That is where you learn the truth about sin."

I have always been grateful for that advice, and I hope that if this thought hasn't occurred to you before, you will take it to heart and never forget it.

This morning in our study of the Gospel of Mark we come to the story of Judas, Judas Iscariot. His story is tragic. In fact, I can't find the right words to describe how tragic it is. But the Lord Jesus told how serious his sin was when He said, as we read in Mark 14:21, "Woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! Good were it for that man if he had never been born."

We don't really know anything about his background. The title, Iscariot, may be a reference to the part of the land of Israel where he was born. We don't know really what it means. But we are told in John 6:71 that his father's name was Simon. But that doesn't help us either. Simon was a common name in those days.

But we can surely assume that he was a Jew, and that he had been brought up like all Jewish boys were brought up in those days. But he was like a lot of boys in his day, and like many are even today. He never experienced salvation. He was religious, but not saved. Maybe through the ministry of John the Baptist, he like many others was attracted to Christ, and so he must have professed to be a follower of Jesus. He must have attracted the Lord's attention because of His interest in the Lord's teaching, and so when the Lord chose the men who were to be His close associates, He chose Judas. Judas had the same kind of training that the other eleven disciples had. When they were sent out to preach, Judas also went out to preach. When the Lord gave the other eleven the power to heal diseases, and to do all manner of miracles, Judas must have done all that the others did. But the Lord was not deceived for a moment as to the true nature of Judas' heart. In John 6, verse 70, after many of the Lord's disciples had left him, and He had asked the twelve if they were going to leave Him also, Peter responded by saying, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God," or, as some MSS read, *Thou art the Holy One of God*. It was at that point that the Lord said, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (John 6:70). And the

Apostle John added that he was speaking of Judas because He knew who as going to betray Him.

Possibly what the Lord meant here was the same that he had in mind later when He told a group of Jewish religious leaders,

44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

45 And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not (John 8: 44-45).

I think that one of the main ways that the story of Judas can be a warning to us today is by recognizing that it is possible to align ourselves with a church, and with the people of God, and even to be interested to some extent in Jesus Christ, without really being a child of God by faith in Christ.

Judas had done an excellent job of pretending to be a true disciple. Maybe he had even deceived himself into thinking that he was saved. Do you remember when we were talking about the Lord's words to His disciples that one of them was going to betray Him, that each disciple in turn asked if he were the one, but not one of them said, "I know the Lord is talking about Judas."

But the Lord knew Judas' heart. In John 12 we learn that Judas was critical of Mary because she had anointed the Lord with precious ointment. He said that it could have been sold and the money given to the poor. But John, writing much later about that incident, said that Judas was not concerned about the poor; he was the treasurer of the disciples, and had made a habit of putting his hand into the till, so to speak. He wanted that money for himself. Many Bible teachers feel that Judas was expecting the Lord to establish His kingdom on earth, and had been interested in the Lord because he believed that being a disciple he would be a good candidate to become what we might call, the Secretary of the Treasury.

But when the Lord kept speaking to His disciples about His death, Judas began looking for money elsewhere. And so he went to the Jewish authorities and agreed *to hand over the Lord to them (this is what it means to betray Him)*, and they were delighted and agreed to pay him

thirty pieces of silver. This all brings us to our text for today. Look with me now at Mark 14:43.

The scene is the Garden of Gethsemane. The Apostle John tells us that Judas knew where he would find the Lord because the Lord and His disciples, including Judas, had often gone there together. So the Lord was not trying to hide from the authorities; He was really where He knew that Judas would lead the Jews to find Him. The Lord, not the Jews, was in control of the whole situation.

Look at verse 43 and see the crowd that Judas had now identified himself with. Judas is referred to as “one of the twelve.” He was supposed to be on the Lord’s side. But instead he identified himself with these religious leaders who were intent on murder. They were demonstrating that their religion was just a sham. They were power hungry religious pretenders who would kill anyone who got in their way. The Bible tells us that the Devil had entered into Judas. See John 13:27. The Devil was leading the Jews and Judas to seek the death of Jesus of Nazareth. Let me tell you that when any religious group uses their religion to justify murder, there is something terribly, terribly wrong.

Judas had told the Jewish leaders that the one he would kiss, would be the one they should take and lead him away. And when they came to the Lord, Judas kissed him, and called Him, “Master, Master.” What he said was, “Rabbi, Rabbi.” This was the title which the Jews used when seeking to honor their teachers. What a despicable hypocrite Judas was! Was he saying that what he was doing is what he had learned from our Lord? Nothing could have revealed the true nature of Judas’ heart more than this that he was doing.

But at this moment Peter flew into action, determined to prove that He was willing to die for the Lord. He cut off the ear of a man who was a servant of the high priest, but we can be sure that Peter was not trying to cut off his ear; Peter wanted to kill him. John tells us in John 18:10 that his name was Malchus. Luke tells us that the Lord touched Malchus’ ear, and healed him. Cf. Luke 22:51. Nothing more is said about Malchus, but I wonder if we might see Malchus in heaven. It would have been very difficult for Malchus to continue to think that the Lord was the terrible person that his masters had made the Lord out to be. I wouldn’t be a bit surprised to find him in heaven. The Lord was practicing what He preached, that He was to do good to those who hated Him.

Our text concludes with the Lord speaking to those who had come to arrest Him. See verses 48 and 49. The Jews had had many other opportunities to take the Lord. Why hadn't they done it, He asked them. We all know, or should know, it was because our Lord's time, His time to die, had not yet come.

Who was the young man mentioned in verses 51 and 52? All we know is what we read here. He is not mentioned in any of the other three Gospels. He may have lived in the vicinity of Gethsemane, had heard the commotion, had gotten out of bed, covered himself with a linen cloth, and came to see what was going on. The fact that it is said that "he followed Him," referring to the Lord, may have meant that he was a believer. When the Jews tried to take him, he escaped, and did what the disciples had done.

It shows the real danger that the disciples were exposed to. They had a right to think that they would also have been killed as followers of the Lord. But we must be careful about boasting about what we would do in a similar situation. We are always going to be weak in ourselves when the going gets rough. The only way we can stand is in the strength that the Lord gives us.

Concl: As I close, let me emphasize that Judas is an example to us, a warning for us to do as the Apostle Peter admonished the readers of his second epistle, to make their calling and election sure. Being born in a Christian family, does not save us. Going to church every Sunday is an excellent idea, but that does not save us. Even the knowledge of the Bible, and especially of the Gospel, does not save us. It is only as we realize that there is nothing that we are, nor anything that we can do, that will change our hearts. Only God can make that change, and He does it by drawing us to Christ and enabling us to believe in Him as the only One Who can save us from our sins. Christ died to save sinners from the penalty of their sins. He died that He might save us. Let our trust be in Him, and in Him alone. Judas had religion, but He did not have Christ.