

Sermon outline and notes © Dr. Stephen Felker, Pastor Emeritus
Swift Creek Baptist Church (swiftcreekbaptistchurch.com)
18510 Branders Bridge Rd., Colonial Heights, VA 23834
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Mark 14:10-11, 17-21, 41-46 “The Betrayal”

Intro. I want us to think this morning about the subject of The Betrayal of Jesus. Now there are several names that have gone down in infamy: Cain, Jezebel, Benedict Arnold, Hitler, and Stalin, just to name a few. But none has excelled Judas Iscariot as a name of scorn and derision.

Now Judas was a wonderful name. It’s actually a different form of the name Judah.¹ It means “praise.” But because of what Judas did, hardly anyone uses the name Judas anymore. His actions ruined an otherwise good name. Judas committed the most despicable act that any man has ever committed, in my opinion. He betrayed the best man that has ever lived. He betrayed the Son of God!

Now when I was looking at this passage of Scripture, one thing that stands out is the fact that 3 times Judas is identified as “one of the 12” (vv.10, 20, 43). He spent much time with Jesus, eating with Him, hearing Him teach, and seeing His miracles. Yet, in spite of all these privileges, Judas never truly came to trust Christ as Savior. None of the blessings that Judas was exposed to had any spiritual effect upon him. Judas was like a dead stick. You can stick it in the ground and water it, but it will not sprout out with any limbs and leaves because there is no life in it. Judas remained spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1).

So Judas should serve as a warning to people today who profess the name of Jesus. He illustrates the fact that you can profess Christ, do good works, become knowledgeable of the teachings of Christ, be closely associated with true believers, and yet never come to true faith in Jesus Christ (cf. Mt. 7:21-23). If ever there was a man who at one time looked like a true disciple of Christ, that man was Judas. He was so like his fellow disciples that they did not suspect him of being a traitor (Lk. 22:23; Jn. 13:22).² After all, he was the trusted Treasurer of the group. Yet, he became a traitor, and had a miserable ending.

This morning, I want you to be honest with God. Are you a *true* disciple of Jesus? Could you betray Jesus, or at least turn away from Him, and from His church? Could you betray someone who supposes that you are loyal to him or her?

So let’s consider this story about Judas together. As we follow the story, let see first of all:

I. A BETRAYAL WAS PLANNED

We read in vv.10-11, “Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests to betray³ Him to them. And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. So he sought how he might conveniently⁴ betray Him.” This decision to betray Jesus did not happen

¹ See Rev. 5:5; 7:5 Gk. The name Judas may have been created to avoid spoiling the name Judah.

² John 13:26 indicates that Judas was sitting within reach of Jesus, perhaps reflecting his own ambition for a place of honor, or such was granted out of respect for his office as treasurer.

³ “Betray” is probably too strong a translation. This word (*paradidomi*) simply means “to deliver over to.” This same word is used in Romans 8:32, “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”

⁴ Actually, *eukairos* refers to Judas looking for a good opportunity to hand Jesus over.

overnight. He probably experienced this change in attitude toward Jesus months before. So you need to understand the background to what happened here.

Judas had been attracted to Jesus from the start, because he believed that Jesus would become King, overthrow the Romans, and that he would rule and reign with Jesus. After all, Jesus had the ability to become a powerful king. What verbal skills He had! What miraculous power He had! He attracted very large crowds. So Judas was thrilled when Jesus invited him to become one of His 12 apostles (3:19). And to His twelve privileged followers Jesus had promised dazzling rewards (10:29-30), and even thrones (Mt. 19:28). Judas must have listened with rapt attention to words such as these and was driven by ambition. He was probably ready to help lead a holy war against Rome.

But in the last six months of Jesus' ministry, Judas noticed a change. Jesus started talking about a cross instead of a crown. On several occasions Jesus predicted His impending rejection and violent death (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:34). So instead of ruling with Jesus in a messianic kingdom, Jesus was demanding that His disciples take up *their* cross. And Jesus was clearly demonstrating that He would not be the kind of King Judas was hoping for. So thoughts of betrayal were conceived in the wicked heart of Judas. Now let's see what brought it to a head. First of all, we see:

A. The Commencement of this Plan - In the first 9 verses of this chapter we see the straw that broke the camel's back in his decision to betray Jesus. There we read of the lovely deed that Mary did for our Lord. She poured out very expensive perfume upon Jesus. Judas spoke out against this so-called waste (Jn. 12:4-5), but Jesus defended Mary and stung Judas with a rebuke. John tells us that Judas was the Treasurer, but also a thief (12:6). Actually, he wanted the cost of that perfumed ointment in the Treasury so that he could steal from it. So Judas had a problem with the love of money. He had a calculator for a brain, dollar signs for eyes, and deposit boxes for hands! His greed was one factor in his decision to betray Jesus. So because of his covetous heart, Matthew reports that he went to the chief priests and asked, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" (26:15).

Jesus had warned against covetousness. Judas had heard Jesus say, "beware of covetousness for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" (Luke 12:15). Jesus had much more to say about our attitude toward money, but it seems that it just didn't sink in with Judas. The Bible warns that the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil (1 Tim. 6:10). Let us remember these warnings about greed.

Let me point out another problem that Judas had that day. In v.8 Jesus had even referred to His burial, as if it were a matter pertaining to the immediate future. Judas was deeply disturbed by this language, and he drew the conclusion that to remain with Jesus meant to go down in defeat with Him.⁵ His plan to betray Jesus was solidified especially when nothing changed after our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. He was so disheartened that Jesus turned out to be far different than he had hoped, so he turned against Him and betrayed Him.

There are many people who are like Judas in some respects. They profess faith in Christ, join the church, and start doing things that Christians are supposed to do. They want to go to heaven and have their sins forgiven. They suppose that joining a church and having a superficial relationship with Christ will bring respect, healing from their sicknesses, improvement of their finances, and so forth. And so when things don't go like they expect, and experienced difficulty,

⁵ Some suggest that his motive was to attempt to force Jesus to take decisive action against His enemies. If so, he soon realized that his plan failed so he gave the money back.

they turn away from Christ and His church, and even do things to bring reproach upon the name of Christ (Mt. 13:20-21). Do you know of anyone like Judas in this respect?

So we see the commencement of his plan and next we see:

B. The Culmination of this Plan - Now Judas has determined to betray Jesus. So:

1. He Contacts Israel's Leaders – In v.10 we read, “Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Him to them.” He goes to the leaders of Israel and tells them what he is willing to do. This delighted them! Now they didn't want to kill Jesus during the Passover feast, but when one of Jesus' 12 disciples offered to help them arrest Jesus away from the crowds, it was too good to be true in their eyes. The chief priests would not allow their golden opportunity to pass, even during Passover.

Then he:

2. He Contracts a Price – In v.11 we read that they “promised to give him money.” Matthew indicates that they negotiated the price. Perhaps after some haggling, they agreed to give Judas 30 pieces of silver⁶ (26:15). That was not a very large amount of money, but it was not insignificant. It was the price of a slave (Ex. 21:32; cf. Zec. 11:12-13). So that was music to his ears.

But lest you criticize him, I wonder how many times we allow covetousness, ambition, or the desire to have our own way cause us to turn from God? And let me ask, “How much is Jesus worth to you?” They say every man has his price. What would it take to get you to turn your back on Jesus? Would you do it to get a certain well-paying job? Would you do it to close some shady business deal or for one night of an immoral thrill? Will you reject Christ because you value sin more than Jesus? But God has some people who are quite different. In Hebrews 11:26 we read that Moses forsook Egypt “esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.” Instead of selling his soul to the devil for earthly riches and power, he cast his lot with God's people for an *eternal* reward.

Afterward the traitor watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to these men in the absence of a crowd (Lk. 22:6⁷). Now let's move down a few verses and see the next scene of our story:

II. THE BETRAYAL WAS PREDICTED

Jesus and His disciples gathered for the last supper in an upper room. Not long after they began the meal, Jesus startled them with the prediction of v.18, “Assuredly, I say to you, one of you who eats with Me will betray Me.” This prediction came unexpectedly as a bolt of lightning from the blue sky! Why, it was almost unbelievable. There is no evidence that anyone suspected Judas, their trusted treasurer.

However, this should not have come as a total surprise. Even Scripture predicted that the betrayal would take place. The psalmist had written, “Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me” (41:9).⁸ Furthermore, Jesus had predicted on at least 2 previous occasions that someone would deliver Him over to the chief priests

⁶ These pieces were tantamount in value to Hebrew shekels.

⁷ In fact, all three synoptic Gospels referred to Judas looking for the right opportunity to hand Jesus over (Mt. 26:16).

⁸ Psa. 55:12-13 also says, “For it is not an enemy who reproaches me; then I could bear it. Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me; Then I could hide from him. But it was you, a man my equal, my companion and my acquaintance.”

(9:31; 10:33). What was new is the prediction that one of His *own* close disciples would be the one to do such a dastardly deed!

In the opening ceremonies of the 2024 Olympics, a bunch of transgender people modified and mocked Leonardo da Vinci's painting of the Last Supper. His painting depicts this very scene when Jesus predicted that one of His disciples would betray Him. Well, it seems quite clear to me that Western society has turned from Christ and betrayed Him.

Now notice with me two thoughts about this prediction. Let's see first of all:

A. The Reasons for the Prediction - Why did Jesus give this prediction? First, He gave the prediction to show that He was fully in control of the situation. He was not being taken by surprise. He voluntarily will yield to His betrayer to accomplish our salvation. And when you go through the pain of betrayal or some other trial, remember that God is not taken by surprise by your trials. He is always there for you and will help you through that difficult situation. Secondly, He was giving Judas an opportunity to repent. Jesus did everything possible to awaken the conscience of Judas. Let Judas ponder what he is doing. The revelation of this detailed knowledge should have put Judas on guard even at this late hour to return those thirty pieces of silver! Illustration: when I was a child and teenager, my friends and I did some things that were wrong. But suppose my parents found out what we were planning and told us. Don't you think that would've put a stop to it? Of course, yet somehow Judas proceeded with this plan. Thirdly, Jesus let Judas know that he knew of his plan to warn of the consequences if he proceeds. The Bible is full of examples of the fact that God graciously warns before He judges. So in v.21 Jesus warned, "It would have been better for that man if he had not been born." Now if death is the end, that statement is not true. But because eternal hell is a reality, what Jesus said here *is* true. Now this warning should have touched the hardest heart, but it did not sway Judas! He stubbornly proceeded with his plan.

Will you heed the warning of Jesus? He said in Luke 13:3, "unless you repent you will all likewise perish." You will perish in a place called hell. But if you repent and trust in Christ as your Savior, you can change that destiny. But if you don't and end up in hell, it would have been far better if you had not been born!

Next, notice:

B. The Responses to the Prediction - Christ's shocking announcement evoked several responses. In v.19 we read, "And they began to be sorrowful, and to say to Him one by one, 'Is it I?' And another said, 'Is it I?'" After expressing sorrow, the first was a question of wholesome self-distrust, yet in the original, the question expects a negative answer, "It is not I, is it?" At some point, probably after considerable hesitation, Judas' also reacted with a question of loathsome hypocrisy, "Surely, not I, Rabbi?" (implied in v.19 "one by one" and Mt. 26:22).

If you have not discovered that you have a depraved sin nature, you haven't learned the truth about yourself. The Bible teaches that the human heart is capable of doing great evil (Jer. 17:9). There are many people in prison today who never would have thought that they would ever do what they did. How many of the people under Hitler's sway would have thought five years prior that they would help murder 6 million Jews? That is why the Bible says, "If any man thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). We should not be overconfident when we hear the warnings of the Word of God. We should not rely upon our own strength to resist temptation. We should put our trust in the Lord. It is only by the grace of God, the power of God, and other factors that we may resist temptation, and remain faithful to the Lord.

So how sure are you that you wouldn't sell the Lord out under certain circumstances? How many times have you in a sense betrayed the Lord by yielding to temptation at work, at school, or around certain people?

We know that Judas did not repent when given both a warning and the opportunity. What makes his guilt all the heavier is the fact that he not only planned the treachery and ignored the warning of Jesus, but now we shall see that:

III. THE BETRAYAL WAS PERPETRATED

In John's gospel we read that Satan put it in Judas' heart to betray Jesus. Satan is always looking for someone to influence for evil. At some point Jesus leaned over to Judas and said, "What you do, do quickly." Then John 13:30 says, "So, having taken the morsel, Judas went out immediately, and it was night." It was not only night physically, but there was darkness in the heart and soul of Judas.

Where did he go? He must have hurried off to the chief priests, the men who had hired him. Judas must have rushed out to them and said, "Jesus knows of our plot! You'd better go get Him *now*. He may leave town. Act quickly, preferably tonight, when no crowds are around. Don't delay!" Even though according to v.2 they did not want to arrest Jesus during the Passover, they decided to proceed with their plot that very night. So they got the arresting officers immediately. It was God's plan that Jesus die during Passover, for He is the Lamb of God, sent to save us from our sin! So let's see the plan unfold. First of all:

A. Judas Arrived with the Soldiers – Mark reports in v.43, "And immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders." Judas did not know for certain where the group might have gone after leaving the Upper Room, but since he knew that Gethsemane was the place often visited by the Master and His disciples (John 18:2), the traitor was able to make a good guess, one that proved to be correct.

Judas led (Lk. 22:47b) the company of armed men, consisting of temple police, who were Levites (14:49; cf. Luke 22:52; John 18:3). There was also a detachment of hundreds⁹ of Roman soldiers, together with their commander (John 18:3, 12). Since there was always a danger of Jewish rebellion, especially at Passover, and since they no doubt accused Jesus of being a revolutionary, the requested legionaries were quickly obtained. What a strange coalition: Jewish police and Roman soldiers! Furthermore, we see that the force that had been commissioned to capture Jesus was very well equipped. The clubs we may assume were in the hands of the temple police. The Roman soldiers carried the swords. The leaders of Israel sent such an overwhelming force of armed men out of fear that Jesus might try to escape, or out of concern that Jesus and His disciples might try to resist arrest. This group was led by Judas (v.43a), and some of the religious leaders of Israel (v.47). Yet even a legion of soldiers and police officers could not have kept Jesus from escaping had He not been willing to lay down His life! (43-44; Jn. 10:18).

Can you imagine how Jesus felt as He saw Judas and this group approaching? Betrayal is one of the most painful experiences, especially when someone close does so. What compounded

⁹ John 18:3 mentions a "cohort", which literally would have been 600 men.

the sin was that Judas betrayed Jesus into the hands of “sinners” (v.41), led by a bunch of religious deceivers with hearts intent on murder (v.1).¹⁰

Note that John 18:5 says, “And Judas stood with *them*.” Who do you stand with today? Do you take your stand with Jesus and the people of God, or with the people of this world? In the battle for morality and decency, where do you stand? Do you stand with the devil’s crowd or with God’s people? At the close of the message today, I will give you the opportunity to take a stand with Jesus by confessing Him as your Savior, or by joining His church.

Something else we see is this:

B. Judas Agreed on a Signal – In vv.44-45 we read, “Now His betrayer had given them a signal, saying, ‘Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him and lead Him away safely.’ As soon as He had come, immediately he went up to Him and said, ‘Rabbi, Rabbi!’ and kissed Him.” Though it was a full moon enhanced with the light of torches (Jn. 18:3b), Jesus would likely be standing among His disciples in the shadows of the olive trees. So Judas felt he should give some sign to identify who should be arrested. He would use a kiss, a customary greeting in that culture, especially for a beloved and respected rabbi (cf. Luke 7:45). The word translated “kissed” (*kataphileo*) in v.45 is an intensive form of the word used in v.44 (*phileo*) and could indicate more than just a peck on the cheek! He kissed him affectionately, repeatedly or at least included a warm embrace with his kiss. Then in Luke 22:48 Jesus said, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of man with a kiss?” Can you imagine that? A gesture of love and affection was turned into an act of betrayal. What a despicable act!¹¹ Oh, what a hypocrite Judas was!

Have you ever been betrayed by someone close to you, who gave gestures and words of love? I have! Perhaps you were betrayed by a spouse, or your own child? Or perhaps you were betrayed by a friend, or co-worker, or another church member. If so, you know how terrible it feels to be betrayed. Well Judas serves as a warning against the terrible sin of betrayal. May God help us to be faithful and loyal to Jesus. I’m afraid that quite a few people are more loyal to a sport’s team than the Lord! And may we be faithful and loyal to our family, our church family, and our friends.

Well, betraying your family and friends will have consequences. But the most serious consequences await those who betray the Lord Jesus. So let’s see last of all that:

C. Judas Attained a Sordid End - Now at this point Mark lets the story of Judas end, for he wanted to go on to other matters. But God did not let it end here in all of the gospels. The end of Judas should serve as a warning to everyone. You see, after this incident Judas became very bothered in his conscience. Now keep in mind that God has created us with a conscience. Even Judas had a conscience.

A certain man was tried for murder and he was found not guilty. But some time later that man wrote to his lawyer these words, “You saved me from the electric chair, but you cannot save me from my conscience.”

So as a result of a troubled conscience, the Scripture says that Judas was remorseful and upset that Jesus was condemned to death (Mt. 27:3). So he sought to return the money. However, they refused to accept the money, for it was blood money. So Judas just flung the money into the temple and left (see Mt. 27:4-5). Then, he went out to a certain field, and proceeded to hang himself for the terrible deed he had done. But after a while, somehow the rope must have broken, or

¹⁰ Furthermore, it was indescribable suffering to think that the men who were supposed to be leaders in Israel, highly religious and devout, had sent this force instead of welcoming Jesus as the long-expected Messiah.

¹¹ Cf. the story of Joab and Amasa (2 Sam. 20:9-10).

someone cut him down. He fell headlong and burst open in the middle. His entrails gushed out (Acts 1:18). What a terrible way to end a life that could have been far different.

Well, you say, “That was the end of Judas.” But that was not *the* end! The Bible says he went to his own place (Acts 1:25). He soon lifted up his eyes in hell, and forever he has agonized over the fact that he betrayed the Son of God!

Folks, here we see another illustration of the truth that sin has consequences!

Conclusion: I realize that some would be offended to suggest that there is any similarity between Judas and people today. And yes, in some respects, that is very true. Yet Judas was lost for the same reason millions are lost today. People are still covetous, selfishly ambitious, hypocritical, and disloyal. Judas did not repent of his sins and truly believe on Jesus Christ. At one time he believed in Jesus as a King, but he never believed in Him as his personal Savior. Judas shows us that knowledge, professing Christ, privileges, church membership, praying, and talking about religion are all useless things if our hearts are not converted. Make sure you are a true disciple. In fact, 2 Pet. 1:10 says, “Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure....”

Furthermore, to every believer here today, I want to challenge you to renew your commitment to be loyal and faithful to Christ, His church, your family, your friends, and your associates.

Finally, Judas stood with the wrong crowd. You need to take your stand with God’s people, His church. Perhaps some would join this church on this day!

Sources: William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible Series: Mark* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956); James A. Brooks, *New American Commentary: Mark* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991); Stephen Felker, *Devotional & Explanatory Notes on the Entire Bible* (Col. Hghts, VA: Published by Author), 2007; David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary: Mark* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996); William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975); H.A. Ironside, *Expository Notes on the Gospel of Mark* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1948); J. Vernon McGee, *Thru The Bible*, Vol. 4 (Pasadena, CA: Thru The Bible Radio, 1983); Larry Pierce, *Online Bible* [Ver. 5:80] (Ontario: onlinebible.net, 2021); J.C. Ryle (1816-1900), *Mark: Expository Thoughts on the Gospels* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1993); Robert L. Thomas and Stanley N. Gundry, *A Harmony of the Gospels* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1978); Jerry Vines (notes from sermon tape of 5/6/84); Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Diligent: Mark* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1987). Other sources listed in the footnotes. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982).

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