

Betrayal, Denial, Mockery **Luke 22:47 - 71**

[The King James Version of the Scriptures used unless otherwise stated.]

Today, we begin by looking at the fulfilment of the dreadful plot between the chief priests, scribes and captains connected with the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. This is recorded in the opening six verses of this chapter, Luke 22. We read there that “they sought how they might kill him.” That is, Jesus! For this, we commence with verses 47 to 53, which I shall now read.

Betrayal (verses 47 – 53)

“And while [Jesus] yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. But Jesus said unto him, “Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?” When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, “Lord, shall we smite with the sword?” And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. And Jesus answered and said, “Suffer ye thus far.” And he touched his ear, and healed him. Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, “Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.””

We need to get the right impression and understanding of the seriousness of what Judas was doing. To do this, we shall do well to consider the basis on which he was filling his role amongst the disciples of the Lord Jesus. We shall first of all have to consider his position in this special group of men. The Lord Jesus had set them apart from their normal occupations. This was in order to help Him in the fulfilment of the purpose for which He had come into the world. Let us think about the privileges that Judas enjoyed as one of them.

Privileges

First, like the others of the twelve disciples, Judas was chosen by the Lord. Mark 3:14 and 15 tell us:

“[Jesus] ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out devils.”

These were privileges indeed! Think about it. They were to be with their blessed Lord, night and day. They were to have good, beneficial duties allocated to them. They were to be given the power on His behalf to heal many citizens who were in constant pain and difficulty. They were also to be given the capacity to remove from the multitudes the evil spirits which in many cases had been indwelling them for long periods.

Secondly, the Lord washed their feet (John 13). Think of it! The Creator and Sustainer of the universe was doing for them what was commonly the role of the servant. He was washing their feet, cooling and soothing their bodies which He Himself had brought into being.

Thirdly, Judas was given a special responsibility. The Lord appointed him to the office of what we would call the treasurer on behalf of the Lord and His disciples. He was indeed noticeably sensitive to the financial implications of things that others did. For instance, in John chapter 12 verses 4 and 5, we read:

“Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, “Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?””

But, the record goes on to say, immediately, in verse 6 of the same chapter, that his motive was not as pure as it might sound to strangers.

“This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.”

Fourthly, there is no doubt that many of us would like to be generously disposed in our judgment of Judas. We might well want to think that if others of the disciples were granted special favours, Judas might be understandably both envious and jealous. But, no! The moment came when there was a special disposition of the Lord. In granting a special favour connected with the establishment of The Lord's Supper, it was Judas, and none other, to whom the Lord gave the sop. The solemn record is given in John 13:13 - 30:

“So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, “Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, “He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.” Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.” When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.” Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, “Lord, who is it?” Jesus answered, “He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it.” And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And, after the sop, Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, “That thou doest, do quickly.””

Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. Some of them thought that, because Judas took care of the financial affairs, Jesus had said unto him, “Buy those things that we have need of against the feast”; or, that he should give something to the poor. He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.” That last comment has a moral significance as well as giving the actual time of day. It was indeed a dark time, morally as well as circumstantially. This was the crucial moment in the history of Judas Iscariot. Whatever his

motives might have been in the past, would he now respond positively to this great favour? Would he give his true allegiance to Jesus? He was here at the crisis of his life. What was he to do?

He certainly accepted the sop, but look at the words which follow. "He, then, having received the sop, went immediately out, and it was night" (John 13:30). How solemn! To go out from the presence of Jesus, after having received such a mark of special favour! Night physically? Certainly! but not only that; it could be said to be night morally and spiritually, too. Why? Because he went out from the presence of The Light of the World to plot the betrayal and murder of his Master, as we read later.

Fifthly, another significant point is that Judas was always included in the record of the list of the twelve, but he was always placed last. He was also always referred to as a betrayer, or traitor. The Holy Spirit leaves us in no doubt at all about his intentions.

Sixthly, Judas went out and about with the other disciples, as commissioned by their Master. However, this merely demonstrates that we can appear outwardly to be just the same as other, true, faithful servants of the Lord, but that our outward show will be put to the test sooner or later. Now, along with the privileges enjoyed by Judas as one of the twelve disciples, there were also associated responsibilities. Let us consider one or two. Having said that, there is a very delicate distinction and balance between the sovereignty of God, the privileges granted to Judas and his personal responsibility as to how he exercised them. All these have their place.

First, he betrayed his Master. Note, he never called Him Lord, only Teacher.

Secondly, he undoubtedly eventually showed a measure of his awareness of personal responsibility for what he did. Matthew 27:3 – 4 record his eventual remorse (although not true repentance):

"Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." And they said, "What is that to us? see thou to that."

Thirdly, this response led him to bring his life on earth to an end by committing suicide as recorded in Matthew 27:5.

"And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself." Then again, it is clearly stated in Acts 1:25, "Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place."

That is a very clear statement there. In other words, he got what he deserved. It was his due.

Now, it's always easy to consider what other people should be asked, so that we can work out their motives, attitudes and ambitions. Perhaps, at this stage, it will be a good thing for us to take stock, and ask ourselves some very challenging questions. It is for this reason, among others, that we are wise to consider the character and history of Judas Iscariot. On the surface, and certainly to the vast multitudes who constantly thronged round about the Lord Jesus and His disciples, Judas would appear to be no different to the other disciples. Like most of them, possibly from humble stock, it could perhaps be said of him, in the language of a modern day politician, "He'd never had it so good."

He was included in that very select band of men who were in the company of Jesus daily for about three and a half years. He was one of those who went about in pairs, in the Saviour's Name, preaching and teaching, and performing miracles and healing the sick. He was also the treasurer.

He looked after the money given to Jesus and His disciples for the provision of things necessary for the journeys they undertook, and for caring for the needs of the many poor people they met every day. In particular, as we have already considered, we have read in John 13:21 – 30 of an occasion when Jesus bestowed a great favour upon Judas. He offered Judas a great favour – the sop – the tastiest morsel of the meal – usually reserved as a special token of esteem and affection for an honoured guest. Such a guest, receiving the sop, would rightly count it a great privilege and honour. The main questions that arise, and we need to consider, are:

1. Why did he choose to be one of the disciples of Jesus?
2. Was he really true?
3. Was he merely going along for the side benefits?
4. Why did he choose to betray his Master?

What were these side benefits? Let us think of some of them.

1. Free food and accommodation wherever he went.
2. Money! As treasurer he was probably in control of much more money than he'd ever seen all his life.
3. Influence! He was obviously in a position of respect and influence to many good people as the treasurer of one of the most well known groups of men in the country.

Perhaps, at the back of his mind, or, maybe, even in his daily thoughts, was the idea and hope that, very shortly, Jesus would set up His Kingdom. If and when that occurred, Judas would be the obvious candidate for the position of Chancellor of the Exchequer, as we would term it. These are all valid questions in the light of later events. Perhaps, as well as judging Judas, we should ask ourselves similar questions.

The moment comes when we need to turn from thinking about Judas and apply the lesson and challenge to ourselves. So let us concentrate on the clear message that comes to us from the history of Judas Iscariot. He was on the verge of great blessing and joy, and turned his back on it. He was regularly in the company of those who were real, but, when the test came, he was found wanting. How sad, to be so close to such wonderful blessing, and such a wonderful Saviour, and yet to miss it all, and by his own personal choice, at that.

The challenge to us is obvious. Have we, too, come to where we are now merely for the side benefits of Christianity? Could it be said of us that, possibly, we have no real interest in the spiritual activities. Let us accept the challenge. Let us beware of the example of Judas Iscariot. Those who turn back, when on the very brink of blessing, very often finish in a far worse state than those who never had any interest at all. We might well say, and mean it, that we have not identified ourselves with and entered into the joys and pleasures of the fellowship associated with Christianity just for what we can get out of it. But we need to test ourselves as to the sincerity of the witness we are pleased to give as to the reality of our Christian profession. One thing is sure. In one way or another, our Christian profession will be tested to the full sooner or later.

Now, while the dreadful betrayal of his Master by Judas Iscariot rightly commands our attention for the moment, we must not ignore the other important lessons recorded for us in this portion of Luke chapter 22. They also necessarily command our attention, submission and putting into practice. Perhaps this is why it was necessary to include tests of two further cases of incidents which test the reality of people's Christian profession. The reality of the personal profession of Simon Peter, and the danger of **denial**, were themselves put to the test in verses 54 – 62 of today's chapter:

“Then took they [Jesus], and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. But a certain maid

beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, "This man was also with him." And he denied him, saying, "Woman, I know him not." And after a little while another saw him, and said, "Thou art also of them." And Peter said, "Man, I am not." And, about the space of one hour after, another confidently affirmed, saying, "Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaean." And Peter said, "Man, I know not what thou sayest." And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, "Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.""

You know, I have come across several staunch Christians who have said, with total sincerity, that they were not unhappy to read that Peter, with all his boldness in many ways, now and again made mistakes that were true of them also. Clearly, we cannot boast of following the example of Peter so that we can plead that we make no more mistakes or faux pas than Peter ever did. No doubt, if we felt like that, we would feel less guilty about our low standards of Christian witness.

Thirdly, mockery (verses 63 – 71)

The other example given is that of men who mocked the Lord Jesus. One thing is sure. We never ever come across an example in Scripture of anyone commended because they made the person, activities or the words of Jesus examples of jokes to be followed or used as excuses for belittling the honour and holiness of the Son of God.

"And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him. And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, "Prophecy, who is it that smote thee?" And many other things blasphemously spake they against him. And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying, "Art thou the Christ? tell us." And he said unto them, "If I tell you, ye will not believe: And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go. Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God." Then said they all, "Art thou then the Son of God?" And he said unto them, "Ye say that I am." And they said, "What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.""

God forbid that we should ever give way to disparaging thoughts and even mocking words about our Lord and His people that we hope will make us more popular with unbelievers we want to impress in one way or another. These thoughts bring before us a personal challenge to those of us who would like to be known as present-day Christians. By all means, let us taste and enjoy the good things freely available. But, in going along with the Christian testimony in the meantime, let us hold in our hearts some of the solemn words we have considered today as we go along. Let us bear in mind that the crucial test of our response to the love of Christ will take place at The Judgment Seat of Christ, another prime Christian Bible subject which, for the moment, we must leave for another day.

In the meantime, let me say, thank you very much for your patience and interest in listening to this Truth for Today talk number T1198, entitled Luke 22:47 – 71, which brings before us the dangers of Betrayal, Denial and Mockery.

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