

I, Judas
~John 13:18-30~

Hey, Good morning. If you've got a Bible and I hope you do, flip to John 13. This morning we have the fun task of thinking on the topic of *betrayal*. I could ask you who your favorite apostle is and all across the room different opinions would pop up:

- *James* because he came to the point where he worshipped his brother Jesus, so I know Jesus is God.
- *Andrew* because He's always bringing people to Jesus.
- *Peter* because he was a man of action...got things done.

ZERO of you will say Judas. Zero! And for good reason. No one likes a traitor. But if I change the questions a little bit: "Which apostle are you most like?" and zero of us are going to say Judas...but today I'm hoping that I can show you how you and I are very much like Judas and how Jesus' love for Judas is great news, hopeful news for us. And thus, the title of the message: "I, Judas."

Before we jump into the text, we have to remember what has happened just before this.

Jesus has finished his public ministry and is in a private place with the Twelve called the Upper Room and they are going to have a meal together in celebration and preparation or Passover.

When they got into the room, they've been walking everywhere and so Jesus takes a basin and rag and washes each of his disciples' feet. As Pastor mentioned last week, this is a task reserved for the lowest servant. Jesus had no business doing this, and yet, the Master shows that the greatest leader is the greatest server.

Then he address them and this is where we will pick up our text today. Read with me:

John 13:12-20

Jesus says, "If you know these things, do them, and be blessed" and then very likely he changes tones and lowers his voice, "I'm not talking about all of you..." And just to further clarify, he quotes **Psalm 41:9**, "He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me."

Psalm 41 was written by David about his friend Ahithophel who betrayed David and then hung himself (a fate that we find awaits Judas when all this is over as well).

Jesus is saying, “Fellas, we have an Ahithophel in our midst...one in here is a traitor.”

This is exactly how clearly he states the point in verse 21.

Vs. 21

Examine this with me...he says these things and then John says his emotion becomes visible. “Troubled in Spirit.” John sees the trouble on Jesus’ face. Now we have to remember here that Jesus is God. Jesus is omniscient. He knows what is going to happen. He sees the hearts of men. This reality isn’t catching him off guard...so what is troubling him?

It’s a remarkable truth. Tomorrow Jesus will hang on a cross after all this plays out and yet here his heart isn’t troubled for Himself, but for Judas.

HIS BURDEN IS FOR HIS BETRAYER.

- Jesus is in anguish over the evil and betrayal that is stirring in his friend’s heart. This man who has shared life with him, meals with him, whom Jesus hand-selected as a disciple three years ago. Jesus loves him, and is burdened for him. CRAZY!

But none of the disciples know who he is talking about. Look at how they respond:

Vs 22-25

Isn’t it interesting that none of them point at Judas like, “I knew it! It’s that dirtbag isn’t it?” None of them have a clue, except Judas. So they’re all looking at each other like, “Is it me? Is it you?”

And Judas is right in the middle doing the same thing. He’s the perfect actor, the penultimate hypocrite. Most theologians believe that Judas was the greatest of the apostles...probably a little older, higher social standing, better education. He was viewed as most trustworthy because the apostles appointed him in charge of handling all the money. He’s the only one not from Galilee, but comes from Kerioth, which is where he got his name Judas Iscariot – Judas, of Kerioth.

He’s the one that is best put-together, so NO ONE is going to ever suspect Judas of betrayal, and the other 11 didn’t either.

And isn't it also interesting that Jesus didn't give it away. Nothing Jesus did gave them an inkling that Judas was the one...why? Because Jesus was loving him. Jesus was reaching out to Judas in love.

- Even though He knew Judas' heart, Jesus wanted to reach him.

HIS HEART WAS FOR THE ONE WHO WOULD HURT HIM.

- Remember what all has taken place over the last hour. Jesus has knelt down in front of Judas and cleaned His feet. Can you feel the electric charge of Jesus' love in the room? His heart communicating to Judas, "I know, Judas. I KNOW. I'm cleaning your feet, but your heart is filthy. It doesn't have to be like this. I know you're the Ahithophel of the bunch, Judas. Won't you repent?" He's reaching out.

- And then even the way the table is arranged.... In this day, they would lean on one arm with their legs behind them and kind of leaned into one another. So Jesus, heart troubled, announces the betrayal, and they all look around. Peter signals John, who is sitting to Jesus' right to ask, so John leans in, "Who is it?"

And what unfolds shows us that John is to the right and Judas is to the left of Jesus. The left of the host/leader is the seat of honor. Jesus has given Judas the seat of honor when they arrived. He's reaching for Judas' heart from start to finish on that evening.

So John asks, "Who is it?" and Jesus responds, and you gotta know, that his response was very quiet, and only to John. He didn't announce this to the group.

Vs. 26

In this culture, to take a bit of bread and dip it and offer it was a sign of special friendship. This is what Jesus did for Judas. So think about this: "Who is it?" / Jesus whispers to John / Dips and hands to Judas / John may understand, but the others just see Jesus giving a sign of special friendship to Judas, so they don't connect the dots.

Can you imagine how much this enhances the tension between Jesus and Judas here? Judas has already agreed to betray Jesus, and Jesus sits Judas in the seat of honor and offers to him a sign of special friendship. Jesus' heart reaching out to his enemy here, but...

Vs 27-30

A couple of months ago, I preached on Jesus' final public ministry message in John 12 (one chapter previous) and here we see the literal manifestation of that message...that some people WOULD NOT believe in Jesus and that they COULD NOT believe in Jesus. Judas embodies that. Judas would not repent, even in the midst of Jesus pouring His heart out to Judas, and then Judas couldn't repent and this would be the demise of Judas. Satan enters him and he leaves. And the next time Judas looks into the eyes of Jesus is the day of Judgment and he will not see love and the Saviors heart reaching out to Him. He will see the King of Kings, the Righteous Judge, Ruling over all, and he will receive punishment. And John summarizes the darkness that fills Judas' soul by saying in vs. 30, "and it was night."

Two things I want to note before we go:

1) PROXIMITY DOES NOT EQUAL INTIMACY

- a. Judas lived and breathed life with Jesus for 3 years. He was still lost. He never betrayed his faith, he never had faith in the first place. He never believed.
 - i. **John 6:64-65** – "But there are some of you who do not believe.' (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who (singular) it was who would betray him)." That's Judas.
 - ii. **John 13:10** – washing feet, "But not all of you are clean."
- b. Judas never had faith although he faked everyone out.
 - i. He was always there. He was the upfront. He could be a deacon, or elder, or Bible Study leader.
 - ii. I say this as a warning, and for encouragement. Just because you are around Jesus doesn't mean you love Jesus. Repent and believe! Proximity doesn't equal intimacy, and...

2) SEE THE GOODNESS OF THE SAVIOR WHO WOOS US, EVEN WHEN HE KNOWS THE DEPTHS OF OUR JUDAS HEARTS.

- a. It is wonderful news that Jesus' burden is for His betrayer and that His heart is for the ones who would hurt Him.

- b. **Romans 5:8**, “But God demonstrated His own love for us in this, that while we were still sinning (still betraying/still hurting), Christ died for us.”
- c. Christ loved Judas to the very end. He loves you and me. And the best news is that we don’t have to have the same end as Judas. We can be reconciled to God, we can be made right before God. We receive his love and sacrifice on the Cross, respond with gratitude and repentance, and live wholeheartedly devoted to Him forever. That’s available today.
- d. Friends, I am Judas. You are Judas. And Jesus’ heart is reaching out to you and me. You don’t have to end like Judas, but you can receive His love, and today will be the day of your salvation.

Let me pray for us.