

## **Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time***

### **Common Men, Uncommon Calling: Judas Iscariot, Part 1**

Scripture: Luke 6:16

Code: 42-81

As you know, we have been studying in the gospel of Luke and we have come to the sixth chapter where Jesus identifies His 12 apostles. If you'd like to turn in your Bible to Luke chapter 6, that would be a place to begin this morning. In verses 14 to 16 Luke introduces us to the Twelve. Luke 6:14, "Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John and Philip and Bartholomew, who is also called Nathanael, and Matthew, also called Levi, and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon who was called the Zealot, Judas the son of James and Judas Iscariot who became a traitor."

We have met each of the 12 apostles, at least up to the last one. We have met the first eleven. We know a little bit about the twelfth because he's an infamous man. We're going to know a lot more in the next couple of Sundays as we look at this incredible character named Judas Iscariot.

When I was a seminary student I was fascinated by Judas, I had been for a long time just as a young person because it was so incomprehensible to me that anybody could be in intimate fellowship with Jesus for the period of three years plus, see everything He did, hear everything He said and end up betraying Him. I couldn't comprehend the profound wickedness of such a human heart. I couldn't comprehend the hard heartedness of such a person. I couldn't comprehend the obstinate, unwillingness to believe. It just seemed incomprehensible to me.

I was so struck by Judas and so desirous of understanding what was working in him and what was motivating him that when it came time to select a dissertation topic for my thesis in seminary, I elected to write a thesis on Judas Iscariot. And I did. The process of gaining all the information when you do a scholarly kind of work like that sent me to a number of libraries around Southern California, three or four or five libraries in which I imbibed everything I could find on the person of Judas Iscariot. There's all kinds of fantasy about him, all kinds of apocryphal literature about him. From the earliest times on up into the Middle Ages people were writing fanciful things about Judas to try to make him appear even worse than he was.

I remember one writer wrote Judas actually died by exploding. What happened was he became so vile on the inside that maggots filled his body and as they multiplied and multiplied and multiplied he was going through town one day in a wagon and he blew up all over the town. There are all kinds of really bizarre things that were written about Judas.

One, however, need not embellish the Scripture. It's very clear that those are not the testimony of the inspired Word of God. They can all be set aside. It doesn't do us any good to say the fanciful things and no matter how much we would despise the man, how much we want to make him appear to be a man of ultimate evil, it does no good to embellish the truth. The truth is enough without adding anything to it.

When we think about history, when we think about the worse people in history, if we were going to run through history there would be somewhat of a list we could accumulate of the really terrible people in history. We would stop at certain points along the way and mark out certain killers, certain men who massacred towns or villages in more primitive times. We would bring up names, of course, that are at the top of the list such as Adolph Hitler and Joseph Stalin and others who would fall below their unbelievable wretchedness. We would continue the list to incorporate other people in the more modern times, this new rise of serial killers as they're becoming known, those who are pedophiles, those who rape and kill children, rapists and on and on and on we go. We could come up with a pretty big list of the worst of the worst, the wretched of the wretched, the vilest of the vile.

But frankly, at the top of any list is Judas Iscariot, the worst of the worst. I remember reading years ago doing some research on Adolph Hitler, reading that he was very tightly engaged with some what were called Black Monks from Tibet. They were mediums who contacted demon spirits. And Hitler was up to his proverbial neck in demonism. And he was supercharged by the forces of hell. In fact, his biographers would say that he didn't speak in his own voice. If you talked to him before he gave a speech you would hear his voice, when he got up to the podium to give a speech, it was not his voice. He was literally taken over by demonic voices.

And I guess you could say the same for these others. Many of these serial killers have some kind of bizarre preoccupation with Satan, and of course, have allowed their souls to be utterly given over to wretchedness and wickedness.

But what to me is more profoundly evil than a man under the influence of Satan, conducting himself like that, is a man under the influence of Christ conducting himself like Judas did. It's explicable to understand that under the control of the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience, that under the control of Satan wretchedness to some degree or another is going to manifest itself. And all the unconverted people, all the ungodly people, all those who do not know God through Christ in the world are in the kingdom of darkness under the control of Satan. It's only a question of degree and manifestation. But all of that is categorically under Satan's influence.

What makes Judas such a solitary figure in his wretchedness is that for three years plus he was under the direct influence of Jesus Christ. And it wasn't actually until that night at the Last Supper when he went out to betray Jesus that the Bible says, "And Satan entered into Judas." This is the

epitome of human disaster. A horrifying, colossal failure.

We looked at the eleven, we found them to be common men. I suppose from some viewpoints, unqualified for such a noble calling as being the official representatives of Jesus Christ, the first preachers of the gospel after Christ, those responsible for the founding of the church, overseeing and even in some cases doing the writing of the New Testament. They seemed a low lot to be chosen for such a high task, and hence our series has been called "Common men, Uncommon calling."

We saw how that these common, unqualified men were transformed and they were empowered and the Lord Himself enabled them to preach and to teach and to heal and cast out demons and become powerful, official representatives of His Kingdom. And we looked at their character, we looked at their personality and in some cases we learned a little about their life and ministry and even about their martyrdom. We have enough information to know that they were successful and we're living proof of their success. We are their progeny.

But in the midst of it, there was this one colossal, monumental failure, Judas Iscariot. In all four lists of the apostles, Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts, he is last...he is last. And always there's a statement with his name about his being the betrayer of Christ so that no one would ever overlook that or forget it or miss it. And what makes the story of Judas so dark is that it's against the background of the brightest light that ever shone in the face of the world, and that is the light of the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ. And because of the brilliance of Christ, the darkness of Judas is clearly seen. His is the foulest deed ever done by any human being. His is a treachery beyond comprehension.

His name is the legendary byword for betrayal and nobody on the face of the earth names their child Judas. There are 40 verses in the New Testament in which there's a reference to the betrayal of our Lord and each of them there is some implication of the incredible sin of Judas. Judas is always painted as a willful sinner, always painted as one who chose his path of iniquity. He's never painted as some kind of a victim of destiny, victim of sovereign choice by God for which he had absolutely no control and to which he made no contribution...not at all. He is loaded with culpability in Scripture.

The church from the very outset after his life has put him in the lowest place. Even Dante in The Inferno in his passage through hell, you find Judas as depicted as occupying the lowest place with Lucifer and that he is enduring the most punishment possible by God. And part of his punishment is that Judas in Dante's view is barred and shunned from even the caverns of the damned. He's beneath them. Dante came to that thought because when Judas died it says he went to his own place. In Dante's view that is a solitary place at the bottom of hell.

And the gospels tell us all we know about Judas and after the gospels and his death in Acts 1 his name disappears from Scripture. But here he is in Luke 6 and at this point none of what will happen

is known. And so he's just in the list. Well, by the time Luke had penned this, it was known and so he identifies him as Judas Iscariot who became a traitor.

Now because there is a lot of information about Judas, it's going to take us a couple of weeks to look at it, and that's as it should be. This is one of the most profound, one of the most compelling and one of the most painful if not THE most painful record of a human life on the pages of Scripture. Let's kind of break it down.

Let's look, first of all, at his name. Judas Iscariot. Judas is a good name. In fact, just prior to him was Judas the son of James. Judas was a common name. In fact, it's the Greek form of Judah, the Greek form of Judah. Judah, meaning "Jehovah leads." Well, when this little baby was born, some mother and father wanted God's will for his life and named him "Jehovah Leads." I'm sure there was in their heart some kind of prayer that this little one would grow up to step into the leading of Jehovah God. It might indicate that his parents were devout Jews, Jehovah leads. Judas is the Greek form of the Hebrew Judah, just changes the "h" to an "s". It's a wonderful name. You wouldn't mind naming your child something that meant "God leads."

And so, we could assume that his life started out with a lot of hope on the part of his mom and dad and the family around him. And then it says Iscariot, apakeriotu(?) in the Greek, from Keriioth, from Keriioth. That is not the name of his father because in John 6:71 his father's name is given as Simon. Some Jewish man named Simon and his unnamed wife had this little baby and they named him Jehovah Leads. Certainly they were like any parent with a newborn in their arms, hopeful of all the best of God's direction in his life. Apakeriotu means from the town of Keriioth, from Keriioth.

Where was Keriioth? Well there was a Keriioth in Moab, that's not the Keriioth. But there was another Keriioth 23 miles south of Jerusalem. If you were to go from Jerusalem in a direct line south, you'd go a few miles and you'd pass through Bethlehem. You go about 21 miles further and you'd be in Keriioth, mentioned also in Joshua 15:25, and as I said, not to be confused with Keriioth over in Moab, far to the east across the Jordan.

Now the area of Keriioth was really a very rural farm area. And there were a number of little hamlets, little farming villages that banded together to form a sort of loosely held-together town called Keriioth.

Now as you can tell by what I'm describing, it was not in Galilee, that was where the other eleven were from, it was in Judea. He's the only apostle from Judea and that's why it doesn't say here, "Judas the son of Simon," cause that wouldn't give us the hint that we need that he wasn't one of the group. He started out as an outsider, remained an outsider and is forever in hell an outsider. Seven miles from Hebron in this peaceful little rural town was born a baby who in spite of all the hopes and dreams of the parents who named him Jehovah Leads would become the most despicable man ever to live, who would take a position opposite God that was so severe one couldn't imagine a more

severe one, to spend forever in eternal hell. He's the only non-Galilean, the only Judean. So he began as an outsider.

And maybe that was important because he needed to work his way into the treasury. He needed to get to the money and it helped that nobody knew him, or his background. So from his name, let's talk about his call. How did he ever get into this group? How did he ever arrive here? I mean, you know if you're working in a ministry, you're working in a church and you're trying to pick leaders, you're very cautious, and very careful, and you go through all kinds of drill just to make sure you don't get somebody in a position of leadership who is not qualified to be there, and so you can ask the question...how in the world did this man ever end up as an apostle? How did it happen? Was Jesus blind-sighted by the guy?

Well, there are some theologians who say that Jesus didn't know what was going on, He thought Judas was a good guy. He only knew the visible part of his life, the manifest part of his life. Didn't know nothing more than that. Which, of course, is ridiculous since in the second chapter of John the first time Jesus started His public ministry it says, "He knew what was in the heart of man so that nobody needed to tell Him anything about man." That doesn't fly.

Another question is...since Jesus knew exactly what kind of man this man was, why did He make him an apostle? Why? Well, because he had a divine purpose to fulfill in the plan of God. God knew it, Jesus knew it. I don't think Judas knew it. And I'm confident that the other eleven had no clue. They embraced him as a fellow apostle. They never had a question about his legitimacy. And apparently in the beginning he was attracted to Jesus.

By the time he had reached this age, a young man, maybe in his early twenties, his heart had been given over to material things. He was driven by avarice, that's the best word...avarice which is a dominating and compelling greed. But that kind of wickedness, that kind of ambition is not just singular. Attached to his driving greed was something of his devout background, some...some idea that there really was a Messiah who really was going to come. And he had been looking for the Messiah.

His view of the messiahship was a material view of the messiahship. It was an earthly, political, military, economic view of the Messiah and that was not foreign to the rest of the Jews, that's the way they all viewed it. They thought when the Messiah comes He's going to create a welfare state, He's going to fulfill all the Old Testament prophecies, the desert will blossom like a rose, we'll all have free food, everybody will be well, all things will be good, all our enemies will bow down, He'll rule over the whole world. The Romans will be destroyed, thrown out. And this is what they looked for. They were not looking for a spiritual Messiah to come and deal with the sin of their hearts. In the end, they executed Jesus because He wasn't what they wanted.

But in the beginning, they were all looking this way. I mean, even James and John were saying, "You know, when You come into Your big Kingdom, can we rule on the right and the left?" They were...they were self-promoting, they wanted to be in the big seats, in the big chairs at the head of the Kingdom, in the positions of power and prestige and financial benefit. So he wasn't that different at the outset. And he followed Jesus from his side because he wanted to. There was no determinism going on here. He's not some kind of robot. He's not some kind of mechanical man who had no thought of his own. He was doing what he wanted to do. He admired Jesus. He believed that this man is very likely the Messiah. He heard His words, he saw His mighty works, he saw Him raise people from the dead, he saw Him heal people, he saw this massive amount of miracles, the profound teaching of Jesus, feeding crowds of people, creating food, there was never anybody like Him, he needed that, he was astute enough to know this man appears to be the Messiah, I am going to hitch my wagon to this star. He'll take me where I want to go.

He never really had a spiritual interest. It was all a material interest. But the others sort of had a mixing of the spiritual and the material. But you need to understand from the very beginning, when Jesus started preaching, Judas showed up by his own will, his own volition, his own choice from wherever he was he made the trek, he heard about this one who had all this power, he heard about Jesus, he showed up, he was awestruck by Him. He determined, "I've got one life, I've never seen anybody like this, I'm hooking up with this man, He's going to lead me to the place I want to be."

And so, don't ever think for a moment that Judas wasn't acting on his own volition, he was precisely acting on his own volition, acting on his own will, driven by ambition for power and position because it would bring to him money, driven by greed. But on the other side of the story, while all this is working in his wicked heart, from the divine side Christ chose him. God was at work moving him to the crowd on the edge, moving in. In John 6 when Jesus said, "You have to eat My flesh and drink My blood, you have to take everything in about Me," Judas wasn't willing to do that. But he didn't leave. Some of the disciples, it says, "Walked no more with Him." Not Judas, he hung around. He was going to cash in on this deal. He was in there for the duration. And it was his own volition and his own choice and his own will that he was there. He was driven by ambition, greed, avarice. But at the same time, in that inexplicable and marvelous way in which human volition and divine purpose and sovereignty work, God was putting him in the position to do what the plan required.

I suppose on the spiritual pathology side we could say that Judas was a wicked, wretched, selfish, proud man. He was probably a self-righteous person, probably thought he was good enough the way he was and things were right with God...if he thought about that at all. And he was going to ride the Messiah into the Kingdom and become rich. And it was all working in his heart that direction, but what he didn't know was that God was orchestrating all of his wretchedness to fit perfectly into His eternal plan. From the start, our Lord knew that Judas was the betrayer and chose him because He knew that...because He knew that.

It was in John 6 verse 70 that Jesus said, "One of you is a diabolos, one of you is a devil...a devil." And it never registered with the apostles, right on by. They knew it wasn't them and they couldn't identify anybody else. And I doubt that Judas even accepted that description...one of you is a devil. Jesus knew it from the very beginning cause that was the plan.

Let me show you how clearly that is laid out. Turn to Psalm 41. In Psalm 41 verse 9 the psalmist gives us really what is prophecy of Judas. "Even My close friend in whom I trusted who ate My bread has lifted up his heel against Me." You know, in the ancient Middle East, ancient near-eastern culture, when somebody ate your bread, that was a signal of friendship. That's...that's the intimate affirmation of friendship. And for someone who was your close friend whom you trusted, who ate your bread, sat at the table with you, to lift up his heel against you was the treachery of all treacheries...unthinkable treachery. And yet, that's precisely a description of Judas.

In Matthew chapter 26 and verse 23 Jesus was saying, "One of you is going to betray Me," verse 21, "and they all said, 'Surely not I, Lord...surely not I.' He answered and said, 'He who dips his hand with Me in the bowl is the one who will betray Me.'" He who dipped his hand with Me in the bowl is the one who will betray Me, it's the one sitting at My table, the one who put his hand with Me in the bowl. And we know at that last supper Judas was sitting next to Jesus and Jesus shared the sop with him.

Verse 24, "The Son of Man is to go just as it is written of Him...just as it is written, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed." Just because it's prophesied, just because it fits into the purpose of God, just because God is determined that that man will be the traitor who would betray Christ and bring about His execution, does not exonerate the man who was the traitor. And Jesus then says that compelling statement in verse 24, "It would have been good for that man if he had not been born." Reason? Cause once he was born, he could never die and that spells eternal punishment.

In Luke 22 and verse 21 Jesus says, "Behold, the hand of the one betraying Me is with Me on the table." There's that table thing from Psalm 41 again. It's right here with Me on the table. He's here, My own companion, My intimate friend. His hand is on the table with Me. And then He repeats, "For indeed the Son of Man is going as it has been determined but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed." And I say it again, the fact that God used that betrayal in the plan, the fact that God controlled Judas so that he was useful to God in a horrifying way, is not determinism and does not take Judas off the hook, woe to that man by whom He is betrayed.

Then John 13:18 is key. John 13:18 explicitly refers back to Psalm 41:9, "I do not speak of all of you, I know the ones I have chosen," Jesus says, I know who I chose, not to be an apostle, but to be saved, this is the choice to salvation, I know whom I have chosen, interesting that concept of election

comes back in. "But it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled." And then He quotes Psalm 41:9, "He who eats My bread has lifted up his heel against Me." Judas did what he did in the way it was designed in the Old Testament so that there would be a fulfillment of prophecy that would show that God knew exactly what was happening, that God was orchestrating everything.

You see, you have these people who write things like Schonfield's Passover Plot and other books and they're continually being pumped out of book publishing houses that say that Jesus was this poor misguided patriot and he had a good idea in mind, he was trying to do the right thing and he got going along and things kind of start to go awry, everything got fouled up, things went wrong at the end, one of his friends betrayed him, he ended up dead. And that is just so ridiculous. Jesus knew every single thing that was going on all the way down the line, He knew Judas, He knew Judas would betray Him, He knew the one who sat at the table and ate with Him that night at the last supper would be the one who would betray Him, and that is exactly the way it happened as God had ordained long before, and indicated in the prophecy of Psalm 41.

Turn to Psalm 55 verse 12, and here again is another Davidic look at this whole idea of sort of inside treachery. "It is not an enemy who approaches Me," Psalm 55:12, "It's not an enemy who approaches Me, then I could bear it, nor is it one who hates Me who has exalted himself against Me, then I could hide Myself from him." In other words, it's one thing to have treachery against you done by an enemy. You can handle it, you can bear it. But verse 13, "It is you, a man literally my acquaintance, somebody I know, My companion," verse 13, "My familiar friend, we who had sweet fellowship together, walked in the house of God in the throng." That's the unthinkable part of it and I'm sure you know this if you've lived long enough, the worst pain you'll ever endure on a human level in terms of relationships is to be betrayed by the people who are the closest to you. No pain like that pain in human relationships. I could have beared it, He says, I could have dealt with it if it was somebody I didn't know, but it was My own familiar friend, My acquaintance, My companion, we had sweet fellowship together in a worshiping environment. So the Old Testament tells us that there's going to be a betrayer, he's going to be on the intimate circle.

Turn to Zechariah chapter 11, if you wonder where Zechariah is, it's the second to the last book of the Old Testament, two left of Matthew. Zechariah 11, here again is a prophecy, the middle of verse 12, "So they weighed out 30 shekels of silver as my price, or my wages. Then the Lord said to me, 'Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which I was valued by them, so I took the 30 shekels of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the Lord.'" There is a very explicit statement looking forward to Christ, the details aren't all here, of course, looking forward to Christ, being sold for 30 pieces of silver. Those pieces of silver being thrown on the floor of the house of the Lord, which is what Judas did with them because they were burning a hole in his hand because of his guilt. And they were used to purchase the potter's field for a cemetery. There's no way that the prophet Zechariah in this vision could understand all of that, but that again is power of inspired prophecy, that the Messiah would be sold for 30 pieces of silver, that they would be thrown down in the house of the



Lord, they would end up in a potter's field. And that's precisely what happened.

So, Judas came of his own volition, his own choice, of his own decision to accomplish the things that were in his own wretched, proud, greedy ambition. But at the same time he, as far as he was concerned, was functioning completely on his own mind's desire, God was at work effecting the fulfillment of prophecy through him. This is a great illustration. We cannot understand all of the supernatural way in which this works. But we can know that it does, that men do what they do, but it all works within the framework of God and His purpose. And in the end, the man is culpable for his own choices, he is guilty for his own sins, and he is damned for his own rejection. And yet, the purposes of God come to pass.

I think the sum of understanding this man is in one title that he is given in John 17. Turn to John 17. He's given one title that is very, very clear that sums up the man in a phrase. In verse 11 of John 17, Jesus, of course, is praying for His own, the apostles, and He says, "You know, I'm no more in the world," He's anticipating leaving, "they're in the world, I come to you, holy Father, keep them in Your name, a name which You have given Me that they may be one even as we are one, keep these men who are mine. While I was with them I was keeping them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me, I guarded them and not one of them perished." Jesus says I'm keeping them, I guarding them, I'm holding them, as it were, powerfully to bring them to eternal glory, they'll not perish. Then He says at the end of verse 12, "But not one of them perish, but the son of perdition that the Scripture might be fulfilled." There we go again, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Psalm 41, Psalm 55, Zechariah 11.

But notice here Judas is called "the son of perdition." Only one other person in the Bible is given that label. Second Thessalonians 2:3 and it's the Antichrist...the Antichrist. And what it means, Luther interpreted it...translated it as "the lost child." It's more than that. That's good. But a son of perdition means that his nature was lostness. His essential character was destruction. His very nature was to be lost to God. If you say that someone is a son of righteousness, you mean that they're basically by nature they're righteous. If you say that someone is a son of love, you mean that they're loving. If you say that someone is a son of darkness, or a son of Belial, you mean that their very nature manifests sinfulness, or Satan. If you say someone is a son of perdition, you are saying that that which is truest about them is their utter lostness. And this is the reason because only Judas and the Antichrist are called the son of perdition that some have through the years tried to say that the Antichrist who comes in the end of human history into the world will be a resurrected Judas. There's nothing in the Bible at all that indicates that. Nothing at all, that would be purely speculation. Just because they have the same name or are given the same label doesn't mean they are the same person. And there's certainly no warrant for God to raise from the dead one who has gone to his own place for eternal punishment, namely Judas. Judas has a nature that is headed to damnation. His very definition is lostness. And that's why early on Jesus could say he's a devil, he's a diabolos.

So this man by his own will and his own pride and his own unbelief and his own ambition and his own greed follows Jesus, chooses to get into the circle, is probably shocked when he's chosen to be one of the 12 because he knows he's not the same as they are and he feels he's probably in the background rubbing his hands together, "I can't believe this happened. I'm in." And then he manipulates in order to become the treasurer, get his hands on the money. And he's successful at it. And none of the eleven ever knew that he was the hypocrite because when Jesus said "One of you is going to betray Me," what did they say? "Is it Judas?" No. What did they say, "Is it I?" If he was the worst of men who ever lived, then he was the best of hypocrites who ever lived...really a good hypocrite...good in the sense of effective. To be that wretched and to be chosen to take the responsibility for the treasury, the small treasury that sustained the life of the apostles, to have that kind of trust when you're that kind of greedy, you have to be a very adept hypocrite. And the worst of men then is the best of hypocrites.

Just like everything else in the death of Christ, you remember when Peter stood up in Acts 1 and preached on Pentecost, verses 22 and 23, he said, "By the determinant counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have by the hands of ungodly men killed Christ." You did it by the hands of ungodly men, you're responsible, it was by the predetermined plan of God. That's how all of history goes, folks. That's how it is. The sinner chooses and God sovereignly orchestrates and controls. So it was with Judas.

And he didn't appear to have a defective character on the outside so that when Jesus added him to the group, nobody said, "What...we've gotten to know this guy, You don't want him in the group," none of that...none of that. In fact, at the start he might not have been any worse than Matthew who was a wretched, despised, hated tax collector. And he might not have been any worse than Simon the Zealot who was a terrorist. They became better and he became worse.

Everybody around him saw the material, the same raw material out of which an apostle could be made. Everybody saw the same clay out of which a vessel unto honor could be shaped. They never even asked any questions. He was probably young, nationalistic, zealous, devout religiously, honorable in his efforts, labor and in his expectations for the kingdom of Messiah, showing the same hope of a kingdom but without the spiritual dimension, he was void of that from the beginning. He got in it because he thought he could get exalted, but so did James and John, didn't they? The only difference was they also had the spiritual dimension. They believed in Jesus Christ as their Messiah, Savior.

Well, Jesus chose Judas because of the plan and because of the prophecy. And yet Judas chose Jesus out of his own driven ambition. Judas thought he could hook up to Jesus and get where he wanted to go. And God knew that he would hook up to Jesus and go exactly where God wanted him to go.

And as I said, being a southern Jew he was a little bit of an outsider. That worked in his favor. They didn't have any background. They trusted him enough to make him the group treasurer, they gave him all the money which he systematically stole. I mean, if he was wicked enough to betray the Son of God, it certainly didn't bother that consciousness man to steal from his acquaintances. The stupid eleven played right into his greedy hands, they gave him the money.

He deceived them and they just were clueless. Day after day after day through the ministry of Jesus his heart got more hard and more hard and more hard and more hard. The same sun that melts the wax, hardens the clay. And while the disciples were melting under the Son of righteousness, he was hardening harder and harder and harder and harder.

You ought to be warned, my friend. Don't stay around Jesus Christ if it's hardening you, get away, lest you become like Judas. See his view of the kingdom was earthly. How could he gain for himself here and now. And for the disciples it was increasingly heavenly and he concealed the fact that he was a tare, he concealed the fact that he was a fruitless branch described in John 15 by the Lord Himself. When Judas was sitting in that upper room and Jesus taught in John 15, I don't think the disciples knew...I don't think they'd all came together even when Judas left, that he was that fruitless branch attached to Christ with nothing growing that was going to be cut down, thrown into the fire. And Jesus never exposed him. All of those years He never told the others. But Jesus did extend to him love and affection, even at the last supper in John 13, He took the sop which was some kind of bread and you dipped it in a keroseth(?), it's...we'll talk a little more about it, but it's kind of a paste that...like a jam that you put on the bread and He gave it to Judas is what you did to the honored guest, always reaching out with affection, always reaching out with love to Judas, always.

And then there were all those times when Judas was right there, you know, arm's length from the face of Jesus and Jesus was warning people about money and saying you can't love God and money, you can't serve two masters. Who do you think he was talking to? Sometimes you come to church, you sit in here with thousands of people and you think I'm preaching to you...I am, but the point is, I don't know you, God does, and sometimes it feels like I'm going right into you with a direct shot. Well here's Judas standing in the front and Jesus is saying...don't be concerned about earthly riches, don't lay up your treasure here, put it in heaven, you can't serve God and money, don't worry about what you give up in this life, I'll give you everything in My Kingdom. And it never penetrated, it...it just made him hard.

And then Jesus in Luke 16 gave the parable of the unjust steward and warned about having tremendous opportunity, tremendous privilege and wasting it and getting pitched out into outer darkness. And then He told a parable in Matthew 22 about the great wedding feast, and everybody was invited. All the guests were to come and somebody came to the wedding feast and didn't have a wedding garment, he's a party crasher, a kingdom crasher. And they picked him up and threw him

out into outer darkness where there's weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Who do you think He's talking to?

I think that the message of repentance was offered repeatedly right in Judas' face. And while it was melting the wax in the other's lives, it was hardening the clay in his because he was so evil, so wicked, so ambitious, so proud, so money hungry.

Matthew 6 when He was saying, you know, "Don't worry about what you eat or what you drink or what you wear, seek first the Kingdom of God and everything will be added," that had to ring in Judas' ear. Matthew 23 when Jesus blisters hypocrisy, that whole chapter is all about hypocrites, hypocrites this and hypocrites that, and the biggest hypocrite in the crowd was Judas. He was a far bigger hypocrite than the chief priests, the scribes, the Sadducees, the Pharisees. He was the hypocrite of hypocrites. It didn't register.

So this is a tragic man and I think Jesus reached out to him in tenderness, love and affection. Never exposed him. Showed him affection when He gave him the sop at the last supper. I think Jesus preached to him, preached to him, preached to him, preached to him right in his face and his heart just got harder and harder and harder. No wonder...no wonder Jesus said he is a son of perdition. What describes him most is his utter lostness.

And I would warn you, if you come and you hear the preaching continually, continually of the truth and you reject embracing that truth, you are in a Judas path. And if you don't melt, you will harden. Better that you get out of here and don't come back, than to harden under the truth. Even as Christians that principle is operative. You know, your parents are Christians, your grandparents were Christians, everybody around you is a Christian, and it's come se, come sa, you drop in here whenever you feel like it, a Sunday here, a Sunday there, you listen a little, listen a little there and you don't have passion, that hunger, that tremendous appetite for the truth...what is happening in you is that you're basically becoming hardened to the truth even as a believer. And while some brand new Christian coming out of a world of sin and a life of sin can't get enough of the Word, you as a Christian generationally having been handed all this stuff can't get enough of the world. Serious issue.

Judas is so tragic. And I want you to understand his culpability. And I also want you to understand that Jesus reached out and spoke to him and preached to him and directed His words at him, as well as His love and His affection at him. And that to me is like the universal gospel offer, that increases his culpability and defines his unbelief as obstinate. And he is guilty and yet God in His amazing, incredible providence and power fit that man's obstinate unbelief into the plan to fulfill the Scripture so that no one could ever say that things went wrong in Jesus' life and oops, this happened. This was planned from the start.

So his name and his call. Next time his development, sad, sad story.

Father, we thank You this morning for the Word, as we always do. What would we know about anything without the Scripture? Even this, so dark and so tragic is so important. Lessons of this man's life are a profound and many that already our souls are gripped by the unimaginable reality that a man could spend three years walking, talking, eating, sleeping, sharing life with the eternal God, creator of the universe in human form and not only not be affected positively, but be affected negatively so that admiration turned to indifference and indifference turned to hate and hate turned to betrayal and betrayal resulted in suicide which resulted in damnation. What a horrible story. But what an instructive one. Help us all to examine our own hearts. We want to stand with the eleven, with all their commonness and all their simplicity, we want to stand with those who love You, who embrace You, who believe and who serve You. This is our privilege. Amen.

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