

Life Lessons from Judas
Stewarding the Presence Series, Part 13

A few months ago, I shared with the church my experience as an extra for the show *The Chosen*. For the most part it was an amazing experience but very difficult physically. It was so crazy to be on set because you felt like you were in Jerusalem in the first century. The technology and design were out of this world. But my biggest takeaway was more of a shock. I was shocked to see how many foul-mouthed actors there were. I guess I just expected everyone to be a devoted Christian to serve as an actor on a Christian program. That wasn't the case. The scene I was in was right after Judas had betrayed Jesus. I was a pharisee standing directly behind Judas so I not only could hear all the lines, but I got to hear all of the conversation in between takes. Let me tell you they were not very holy. The actor playing Judas actually said the Lord's name in vain with a cuss word. I thought to myself, "Man you really are Judas."

I had a lot of downtime during the all-night shoots and one thing I couldn't stop thinking about was how icky the scene felt with Judas. It just felt wrong that someone not walking the Christian life would shoot for a Christian movie. And it dawned on me...so many Christians do the exact same thing. They go to church, they read the Bible, but Jesus is not really known to them. Jesus is not truly Lord of their lives and many live with double mindedness. My question for us today is, are we like Judas in any way? The message the Lord put on my heart this morning is titled, "Life Lessons from Judas." Judas shows us the opposite of what it is like to live in an abiding relationship with the Father as Jesus did. Part of learning how to be like Jesus and live with a constant awareness of the Father is to also learn what not to do. So, today as we continue in our series through the Gospel of John, we are going to learn what not to do in the presence of God. If you have your Bibles, go with me to the book of John chapter 13, and we are going to begin in verse 1. I am only going to read certain select portions of Scripture and I will not be talking about Jesus washing His disciple's feet. I have preached on this topic and humility previously and I want to focus on Judas for today's sermon. Hopefully you are at John 13 and if you want to follow along in the NASB please follow the Scripture on the screen.

Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. 2 During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him, 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, 4 got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. 5 Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

Some scholars believe Judas was from the town of Kerioth in Judea due to the name *Iscariot*. This would mean that Judas was an outsider compared to the other disciples who were from the area north in Galilee. What is interesting is that Judas is the Greek version of Judah which means "Praise" or "Let God be praised." It's ironic that Judas did not live a life of praise. He lived a life where he was open to the influence of the devil. Here in this moment, we see that the devil "put into the heart" of Judas to betray Jesus. The Greek word here for put means to "throw." Other places in Scripture this word is used to describe being thrown in jail, or to throw a net to catch

fish. Notice that the devil threw a thought into Judas' heart. Why did the devil aim for the heart and not the mind where thoughts are? Well, the Hebrew word for heart is "seat of thoughts and emotions." The devil put thoughts in Judas that were deeply accepted.

20 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me." 21 When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me." 22 The disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking. 23 There was reclining on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. 24 So Simon Peter gestured to him, and said to him, "Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking." 25 He, leaning back thus on Jesus' bosom, said to Him, "Lord, who is it?" 26 Jesus then answered, "That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him." So when He had dipped the morsel, He took and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. 27 After the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Therefore Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly."

This fulfills a prophecy in **Psalm 41:9** which says, "Even My close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared bread, has turned against Me." We all know the saying "breaking bread together." Sharing a meal signifies friendship, care, and honor. As horrible as this scene is, there is a lot of beauty in it. Jesus knows that Judas will betray Him. Jesus knows Judas' intentions and heart. Most people would guard themselves from such people, not Jesus. Jesus loved him, served him, and even gave him one more opportunity to repent.

33 Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' 34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." 36 Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered, "Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later." 37 Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You." 38 Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times. -John 13:1-5; 20-27; 33-38 NASB1995

I had verse 34-35 made into a custom metal sign that hung in my office for years. People should know that we are followers and disciples of Jesus by the love we have. A Jesus kind of love. A love that speaks truth, a love that serves, and a love that puts the presence of God above everything else. Unfortunately, Judas did not walk in this kind of love. Today we are going to learn from his mistakes so that we are better equipped to walk in this love and presence of God. If you are taking notes, please fill in Lesson #1:

LESSON #1 – Judas left his Heart Open to the devil.

Jesus said in **John 6:70**, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?" Judas started off a devil and ended a devil. Money must have had a stronghold on his life. We know that as the treasurer he would often steal from the money box. The thing that enticed him to betray Jesus was not power or position, it was money...thirty pieces of silver. Last week I

mentioned that 30 pieces of silver in today's currency is only about \$300-400! Can you imagine betraying your Savior of a mere \$300?

In verse 27 it says the devil *entered* into Judas. There are so many questions. Was Judas possessed by the devil even though he was a disciple? How could that happen? Some scholars believe Judas ended up in hell and was never born-again. It is a sad thought, and it leaves us with the question, "what about Christians? What influence does the devil have on us?"

A powerless devil is one of my top lessons to teach. So many believers have an incorrect belief about the enemy. When Jesus died and was raised from the dead, He defeated everything. He defeated death, He defeated sin, He defeated sickness. The only "power" the devil has over you is the power to speak. In Ephesians we see the visual of the armor of God. In **Ephesians 6:16** it says, "in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one." Those "flaming arrows" are lies from the enemy. I love how it says that we protect ourselves against those arrows with the shield of faith. In the Greek, the word for faith is *pistis* which means a conviction of truth. When you are convinced of the truth you won't believe the lie. I heard many times that some believed that shields in those days were actually covered in leather and dipped in water so that when a flaming arrow hit the shield, it would extinguish the arrow. We don't just want to ignore the lies of the enemy; we want to extinguish the influence completely. Michelle posted an awesome quote the other day on Facebook. It said, "If you don't fear God, you won't hear God. We have to learn how to live in a continual devotion to the voice of the Lord and give zero attention to the voice of the enemy. Judas was possessed and so controlled by the devil because he constantly left his heart open to the enemy's influence."

LESSON #2 – Judas didn't value Worship.

In **Matthew 26** we see the account of Mary anointing Jesus with the expensive perfume. In John, we know it was Judas who had the issue with the perfume. But in Matthew it says the disciples called the gift Mary gave to Jesus as "a waste." When Judas saw Mary give it *all* to Jesus and the sheer amount of money he could have had from that perfume, he called the worship a waste.

You and I are divinely designed to be worshippers. The problem is we were also designed with free will. In our free will we have the power to choose what we will worship. You can worship the Lord, or you can worship your worry. You can worship the Lord, or you can worship your career. Most Christians would defend themselves saying they only worship God. Fundamentally that is true, but where is the majority of your time spent? Every Sunday my Macbook gives me a report of time spent on my computer. It not only tells how many hours I was on my computer, but it tells me how much time I spent on each individual program or app. I wish I could get a report on my heart and thoughts each Sunday. I wonder how many hours were spent in worship compared to worry or amusement.

Judas was fine with some level of worship but not with extravagant worship in which everything was given. **Psalm 86:12** says, "I will give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and will glorify Your name forever." Jesus was specific on giving genuine worship. In **Matthew 15** religious leaders were judging Jesus because His disciples weren't ceremonially washing their

hands. Jesus then quotes Isaiah saying in **Matthew 15:8-9**, “This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me, but in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.” To Judas worship was just lip service. Our worship must be extravagant and fully sacrificial. What does that look like in your life? If someone were to ask you how you worship with all your heart, what would you say?

LESSON #3 – Judas was Double-Minded.

We were with some pastor friends the other day and we were talking about how we all came to the Lord and got married. The wife reminded us that when she entered college, she found out her dad had lived a double life. He claimed he was working overtime but was having an ongoing affair for years. **James 1:8** says, “a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. In the Greek the word for double-minded is *dipsuchos* meaning a person with *two minds* or *two souls*. Judas was living for sin and money while at the same time trying to live for Jesus. Let’s just say, it didn’t end well for him. The bottom line is what Jesus declared in **Matthew 6:24**, you cannot serve two masters *because* you will be devoted to one and despise the other. If you flirt with habitual and intentional sin, there is no way you will have full devotion to the Lord. Walking in the presence of God means you are fully devoted to Jesus as Lord and Master over your life. If God is number one there is no number two.

LESSON #4 – Judas failed to Repent.

There is a video online of a little girl who got into the chocolate cookie jar and ate all the cookies. The mom comes into the kitchen and sees that all the cookies are gone and asks the little girl if she ate the cookies. The little girl with chocolate all over her face said, “No, not me.” The mom says, “Are you sure it wasn’t you?” I think every parent has caught a child in a lie and gave them an opportunity to fess up. Jesus knew Judas’ heart and that he was a devil from the beginning and ended as a devil. Jesus so mercifully gave Judas another opportunity to turn from his wicked ways. The last thing Jesus did before saying, “what you do, do quickly” was he shared bread with Judas. He still continued to love Judas despite his wicked heart.

One thing I hated as a kid was being forced to say sorry. I would get in a fight with a kid in the neighborhood and our parents would say, “Tell each other you’re sorry.” It meant nothing. I would look at that kid with a stare that communicated, “When are parents aren’t here, I’m gonna knock your block off man.” It meant nothing. True repentance is not just saying “God I’m sorry.” True repentance is coming up with a plan on how you will not enter the same situation again. It is a commitment to completely turn away from the sin you engaged with.

LESSON #5 – Judas walked in anointing without Lordship.

When Jesus said, “One of you will betray Me” did you notice that all the disciples said, “Is it I Lord?” All of them except Judas. Judas said, “Is it I *Rabbi*?” To Judas, Jesus was never Lord...He was only a good teacher to him. In so many churches we tell people that they will be saved if they raise their hand with no one looking around and repeat a prayer that’s not even in the Bible. In the 26 years I have been a Christian I have never heard a pastor give an altar call that sounded like this, “Today if the Lord is calling you to salvation and you are ready to confess

Him as Lord and Master over your life I want to pray with you as you commit to making your life solely about the Lord and dying to yourself. Life will not get easier after you surrender to the Lord, but you will have a supernatural power in the Holy Spirit.”

This whole series is all about learning how to walk in the presence of God and abide in the Father’s love. Genuinely making Jesus Lord over your life is an incredible way to walk in the presence of God and remain sensitive to His love. We can’t settle for just being good people who do good things. Judas was a disciple. The Scriptures say in multiple places that Jesus gave them *all* authority to go out and cast out demons and heal the sick. Judas probably healed the sick. If anything, he was ministering in the name of Jesus and risking his life as a disciple. He probably did good things but the whole Jesus was not Lord over his life and he himself was a devil.

Let me challenge you with an example. I have been a preacher for 25 years. If there is a new book on preaching that comes out this week, I will buy it and study it. If there is a new TED Talk on public communication, I will watch it. I am obsessed with growing the gift God has given me to better minister to His people. Awesome, but you know what? I don’t do that in some other areas of my faith. I don’t get excited to buy a new book on fasting. Has your walk with the Lord turned on autopilot? Are you using your good works and Christian service as justification that you don’t need to be stretched in your faith? Let me encourage you that for all eternity we will be worshipping the Lord in heaven. We will grow and go from glory to glory forever. Don’t wait until you’re dead to start. Start now. Seek the Lord in His presence and ask, “Father what area of my walk with You needs to grow? What areas have I grown lukewarm in and need a fresh fire?” In fact, that is what I am gonna pray over you right now. Let’s pray.