

Fasting: Thursday

BETRAYAL: WHEN ALL IS STRIPPED AWAY, JESUS IS THE ONLY ONE YOU'LL SEE

Scripture: Matthew 26:14-16; 45-56

Matthew 27:1-10

“Then one of the Twelve—the one called Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests 15 and asked, “**What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?**” So they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver. 16 From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over. “...

Then he [Jesus] returned to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. 46 Rise! Let us go! **Here comes my betrayer!**” 47 While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. 48 Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: “**The one I kiss is the man; arrest him.**” 49 Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed him. 50 Jesus replied, “**Do what you came for, friend.**” Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. 51 With that, one of Jesus’ companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. 52 “Put your sword back in its place,” Jesus said to him, “**for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.** 53 **Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? 54 But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?**” 55 In that hour Jesus said to the crowd, “Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. 56 But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.” **Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.**

Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people made their plans how to have Jesus executed. 2 So they bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate the governor. 3 **When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders.** 4 “**I have sinned,**” he said, “for **I have betrayed innocent blood.**” “What is that to us?” they replied. “That’s your responsibility.” 5 So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself. 6 The chief priests picked up the coins and said, “It is against the law to put this into the treasury, **since it is blood money.**” 7 So they decided to use the money to buy the potter’s field as a burial place for foreigners. 8 That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to this day. 9 Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: “They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price set on him by the people of Israel, 10 and they used them to buy the potter’s field, as the Lord commanded me.”

Judas gets a bad wrap. Now before you go thinking I’m a heretic, hear me out. Judas was caught in worldly treasures. He liked the finer things in life and that cost money. Maybe he was tired of being broke and when Jesus entered the scene Judas saw a way to make some good money since people

were literally following Him and giving what they had to him. Judas became the keeper of the money and took some for himself once in a while. Heck, why not!? It's a dog eat dog world and you got to protect yourself. Plus who knows how long people would give things up for/to Jesus. He just wanted to get his cut before the money dried up. Then things started to get a little scary. The persecution for being with Jesus was getting intense and Judas wanted out before it was too late. In perfect worldly fashion, why not get out and get a little something for yourself while your at it.

Does this scenario sound familiar? I mean every book or movie has a plot just like this. Why? Because we can relate to it. Judas isn't some villain made up to betray Jesus. Judas is you and me. Every time we put our own selfish needs in front of Gods purpose for us, we become Judas. The only time we realize it, is when it becomes too late. Its that moment when you're standing in the garden and the deed (the kiss) has taken place and you see the chaos that it caused. Every one that was good and protected you has scattered and you are left there standing face to face with the one who would not run, but will endure the punishment that should be yours. As you lock eyes with the Lord your blood pressure rises and you can physically feel the guilt and shame wash over your body and the feeling of depression takes over. I believe we have all felt this moment before.

This is the moment of truth. When you know you're guilty and you have the opportunity to make it right, even if it cost you a great sacrifice, will you be righteous or run in shame? Judas doesn't run! Judas goes back and tries to make it right. He explains to the priests trying Jesus that He is innocent, but they wont listen. So he gives back what was given to make amends for what he had done. Yet they would not take the "blood money" back, because they knew they used it for evil. Judas over come with shame does the only thing he knew to get rid of the guilt...death.

Lets walk through this ending together. Judas recognized his sin. Called it out and repented, sharing what he did to the priests and telling the truth of innocents about Jesus and then got rid of what caused the evil in his heart (money). That sound a lot like how Churches preach salvation. If Judas could have held on for 3 days he would have seen that death wasn't the way out and that forgiveness was literally right in front of him. Too many of us have been swept up by the world. When we are, we begin to tell ourselves lies to make what we're doing seem ok. In the end, all we're doing is prolonging the garden moment, when we are face to face with the one we've betrayed. In that moment will you seek death or forgiveness? One will lead to freedom, the other to pain. My hope is that you choose freedom today. Lay all the wrongs you have done in front of Jesus' feet. Repent (change your mind and it will change your ways) and when you're done, follow what the Lord has asked of you. Love the Lord God with all that you are and love your neighbor as yourself.

DAILY PRAYER:

Yahweh, You are everlasting. You are always near. You never change and you never will. Your Word is the same today, yesterday, and tomorrow. Help me to fall in love with your Word as I grow in relationship with you. Remind me that you alone are who I am living for. Remind me of the plans and the purposes you have for me. Fill me with joy and peace today to be able to withstand the trials of this life. Help me to walk with others through their pain and their trials. Let me be a light of hope in dark times. Thank you for being my constant light. Shine your light on _____ right now, in the midst of their pain. In Your holy name, Amen.