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The Master's Men Part 5: Judas Iscariot
Scripture: Matthew 10:4
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Matthew 10:4

Let me invite you to turn with me in your Bible to the tenth chapter of Matthew this morning for our study of the Word of God. Matthew chapter 10. In our progressing through this marvelous, marvelous gospel that opens the New Testament we have been seeing how Jesus trained His twelve to be sent out as the representatives of the Kingdom. And as we come to chapter 10 He is ready to send them on their first mission, to give them some on-the-job, in-the-field experience. The chapter includes the instruction that He gives them as they are sent out and it's instruction vital to any of us who are sent to represent Jesus Christ.

But before we go specifically into the instruction, we have been noting the names of the twelve and we've stopped to take the time to get to know them as much as is possible in the Word of God. We're looking this morning at the last name in the list in verse 4, the name Judas Iscariot. We've already studied the other eleven and this morning we'll complete our series on the Master's Men by examining this man Judas Iscariot.

Let me read from verse 1 through the first part of verse 5:

"And when He had called unto Him His twelve disciples, He gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. These twelve Jesus sent forth."

Now we have met already the first eleven disciples. We had set about to learn everything that we could learn about them. Some of them have a lot of information, some of them little or none. But we've tried to look at their personalities and their character and how they fit into the scheme of things and the plan of our Lord and why they were selected for such an incredibly marvelous task. The one thing, I think, that we have concluded in general is that they were

basically unqualified. They were basically common men just like we are. Men whom God had to transform in order to make them into what He wanted them to be. And we saw how our Lord overcame their commonness and enabled them to preach and to teach and to heal and to cast out demons as the official representatives of the Kingdom. And I might add that they were successful, oh, they were highly successful.

These first eleven men were really the key to all of the rest of human history. For had they failed there never would have been another generation and we would not be here today. We are living testimony to the success of the eleven. They did it. Under the energy of the Spirit of God they pulled it off. They brought about that which Christ had asked them to do, they built His church. They were a remarkable group.

But one of them stands out against the background of the others. He is isolated. He is lonely. He is alone. His name is Judas Iscariot. He is a horrifying, colossal, misfit. He is the epitome of disaster. He is the vilest, wickedest man the Bible knows anything about and he is our subject this morning. He is listed last, you'll notice, in verse 4. And he is always listed last and with a comment about his betrayal, because that was his brand and will be for all time. The dark story of Judas is a blight on the page of human history. Although there is much we know, there is much mystery and darkness surrounding Judas that perhaps we'll never know.

His name became a byword for betrayal. His name is so despised that it is not used in human society although its meaning is full of loveliness.

There are forty verses in the New Testament in which there is a reference to the betrayal of our Lord and in each of them there is the implication of the incredible sin of this man Judas. In fact, in Dante's passage through hell, Judas is depicted as occupying the lowest level of hell, fit only for Lucifer himself and Judas is not even allowed to rise to the caverns of the rest of the damned. He is so deep in the pit. After the mention of his death in the first chapter of Acts, he disappears from holy Scripture, never to be mentioned again.

Now I believe this man can teach us some profound and awakening lessons, so let's examine what the Bible says about him. First of all, his name.. .his name, Judas, a common name. Lebbaeus Thaddaeus in verse 3 is also called Judas. It is simply a form of Judah, the land of God's people. Some say the root of it means Jehovah leads and others think the root of it might refer to one who is the object of praise. But what a paradox either way. If it means Jehovah leads there never was one who was more obviously led by Satan than was Judas. If it means one worth of praise there is never.. .there has never lived one more unworthy of praise than Judas. So, he is a very, very enigmatical man even in terms of his name.

It says his name is not only Judas but Iscariot. What does that mean? Basically it comes from two terms *ish*meaning man and *Kerioth*meaning town. He was a man of the town of Kerioth. That is simply a geographical identification. Why is it that Judas is identified geographically and the other eleven are not? It's important because he is the only non-Galilean. He is the only Jew from the southern section. He is the only Judean Jew. All of the rest came from Galilee. And this may indicate to us that from the very beginning Judas was never really one of the boys. Also, the southern Jews felt themselves greatly superior to the rural Jews of the north and would have looked down on them and consequently there may have been a certain amount of pride involved which deepened as time went on.

Twenty-three miles south of Jerusalem, seven miles from Hebron was a little group of tiny villages. They were built near farms where the people cultivated the soil. As the little villages congregated together and grew they became one little town and that little town became known as Kerioth. And in Joshua chapter 15 and verse 25 it is mentioned. And it was that little village that gave birth to this man. Seven miles from Hebron a little child was born that was one day to be the most hated human being whoever lived.

From his name we look at his call secondly.. .his call. And I hasten to add that the call of Judas is not recorded in the Bible. We meet him the first time right here in this list and we don't know how he got in the group. I mean, we know the Lord called him in but we don't know any of the circumstances. We know he wanted to be involved but we don't know how it was that he attached himself to Jesus. Apparently he was attracted to Jesus, that's obvious. He followed Him. He stayed with Him. And he stayed with Him longer than a lot of the other false disciples who bailed out much earlier than this.

In fact, in John 6, you remember last week I said that there were many disciples who followed Jesus but when He demanded total commitment out of them it says, "And many of His disciples walked no more with Him." But the twelve, it says, remained. So, even when Jesus called for all-out commitment, even when He said you must eat My flesh and drink My blood, even when He made total demand on them and many of them left, Judas stuck it out. He stayed. And so he was definitely attracted to Jesus. I don't think he was particularly attracted by the spiritual, I think he was attracted on the selfish level. I don't think it was really Jesus alone that drew him, I think it was what Jesus could do for him that drew him. He saw the power of Jesus. And he believed that this man would bring the Kingdom. And he was not interested in the Kingdom for the Kingdom's sake or for Christ's sake, he was interested in the Kingdom for what he might gain from it if he were on the inner circle. So he's totally motivated by selfishness. But nonetheless he followed, in a half-hearted way. So, in one sense from his side he chose to follow Jesus. But on the other side, from Christ's perspective, he was chosen to follow. And there you have the same paradox of human choice and divine sovereignty that you have in salvation. We come to Christ, we choose to believe in Christ and yet we are

chosen before the foundation of the world by Him. That's a paradox. That is a theological problem ultimately solved in the mind of God. Christ chose Judas, Judas chose Christ.

Now one thing is certain, Jesus knew Judas would betray Him, and that is why He chose him. Jesus knew the plan, you see. You say - How did He know the plan? Well, He knew the plan for one thing because He was omniscient, He knew everything. And the very beginning, John 6 verse 70, when it says, "Many went away and the twelve remained," Jesus at that early time said: "One of you is a... what?.. .devil." So, from the beginning He knew. And He knew because of what the Old Testament said. The Old Testament predicted that one of His own would betray Him.

For example, in Psalm 41 verse 9, we read this and it has a Messianic significance, it says, Psalm 41:9"Yea, Mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who did eat of My bread hath lifted up his heel against Me." The Psalmist saw in the future, the Messiah being betrayed by His own familiar friend.

Psalm 55 also carries a Messianic perspective in verse 12 and following. Verse 12 says: "For it was not an enemy that reproached Me, then I could have borne it, neither was it he that hated Me that did magnify himself against Me, then I would have hidden Myself from him. But it was thou, a man Mine equal, My guide and My familiar friend. We took sweet counsel together and walked unto the house of God in company." And then drop down into verse 21, the end of verse 20: "He's broken a covenant. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter but war was in .his heart. His words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords." Treachery, hypocrisy and betrayal, again with a Messianic perspective.

And then if you look into the prophecy of Zechariah chapter 11 as he speaks of the same event, it even gets more specific. Zechariah 11:12 says: "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price, and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me," now listen carefully, "Cast it unto the potter; a lordly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord." Negotiations, someone is sold for thirty pieces of silver. The thirty pieces of silver are thrown to the potter in the house of the Lord. What an intricate prophecy, and strange because what is a potter doing in the house of the Lord? We shall see.

Betrayed by His own familiar friend for thirty pieces of silver. The New Testament simply records the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophesied. So when Jesus chose Judas He knew he was the betrayer and He knew the prophecies about His betrayal so He understood the entire plan. And He chose him because of that plan.

Now look with me at John 17:12 and let's continue our thinking on this point. John 17:12, Jesus is praying to the Father and He is praying about the disciples. He's praying about the twelve. And He says: "While I was with them in the world I kept them in Thine name. Those that Thou gayest Me I have kept and none of them is lost." Father, I kept them, He says, and none is lost. "But the son of perdition, or the child of lostness." Luther translated it the lost child, the one whose nature it is to be lost, the one who was always lost, the one who was damned always, who never altered his lostness. It isn't one who lost his salvation, but one whose nature was lost. He lost none of them but the lost one , ``In order that the Scripture might be fulfilled."

In other words, Jesus says to the Father - Judas is lost because it is the fulfilling of the Scripture. I say, that Jesus therefore chose him because He knew the Scripture, He chose him to be the fulfillment of that Scripture. That was the plan.. .that was the plan.

In fact, as I said at the very beginning, Jesus said to him, "One of you is a devil." He didn't pick which one, but He knew the plan.

Now listen to me, you have here the paradox. You say - If it's in the plan then is Judas responsible? Yes. You say - Well, how can God predetermine this, set up the plan, make all the prophecies, pull it of f, fit Judas in and then hold Judas responsible? That's exactly what God does. How He can do that, I don't understand because the infinite mind of God is beyond my own. But I do understand very clearly what the Bible says and for your own interest to resolve the problem, you listen to this verse, Luke 22:21 and 22. It says this: Jesus speaking in this the Last Supper; "Behold, the hand of him that betrays Me is with Me on the table." He's here. He's right here. Then Luke 22:22 says this: "And truly the Son of man goeth," listen to this, "as it was determined." In other words, I am going into betrayal, I am going into arrest, I am going into death as it was determined. The betrayal and the man was determined. But, and here it comes, "Woe unto that man by whom He is betrayed." You see? On the one hand it is determined, on the other hand Judas is responsible.

So it is in salvation. If you're saved it's because it was determined before the foundation of the world and if you're lost you're responsible. And if you can't resolve those two don't feel bad, no one else whoever lived can either.

Look at Acts chapter 2 for another illustration, verse 22. You don't need to resolve them just let them be what they are. When Peter indicted the populous of Jerusalem for killing the Messiah, listen to how he said it.. .in Acts 2 he says, talking of Jesus of Nazareth verse 22, then verse 23: "Him," that is Jesus of Nazareth, "being delivered," that is delivered over to death, "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." In other words, he says - God delivered Him over, God had determined it before, all of the foreknowledge and planning of

God brought it to pass, yet "You have taken Him and with your wicked hands you have crucified and slain Him."

So you see, the overruling power, the overruling providence of God can allow such a man as Judas to wish to follow Christ, to choose to follow Christ and yet be in utter fulfillment of the divine plan and still have his own choice. And that is the power of God.

Now outwardly Judas didn't appear to have defective character. I'm sure of that. In fact, he must have had qualities and capacities which commended him. Three years he was with the disciples and Jesus said in the upper room in... in John 13, He said: "One of you will betray Me." And all the Apostles responded. Do you remember how they responded? Did they say - Is it Judas? No. Everyone of them said - Is it I? Why? They had no more reason to suspect Judas then they had reason to suspect themselves. They knew better about themselves and they assumed better about Judas, he was a fantastic hypocrite. He was so good at it they elected him treasurer of the group. That's right. They gave him the money. That's how much they trusted him.

You say - Well, didn't they know.. .he must have had a rotten, sinful background if he was such a rotten wretched vile man that he would do this to Christ, he must have had a track record that was horrifying? Yeah, but it wasn't at the worst any worse than any other ones. It's hard to be much worse than Matthew who was an extortioner and a thief and took bribes. It would be hard to be much worse than Simon the Zealot who was an assassin. So you know, they were all kind of a crummy bunch if you look at it that way. And Judas must have put on an act to end all acts. It's interesting to me that he never has a word to say until he complains about the waste of money in Bethany, the whole biblical record, the whole three years he'd ever open his mouth, I'm sure he really guarded his mouth well to keep the ruse up.

He had the same potential as any of the others. He could have been a John or a Peter or whatever. I mean, Christ could have transformed him if his heart had been willing. He was the same raw material, he was no more unqualified than anybody else. But the same sun that melts the wax, hardens the clay and while the other men were being melted and molded he was being hardened. He was probably young, a somewhat devout Jew, a zealous Jew, a patriotic Jew who didn't want the Romans to rule and he saw an opportunity to follow this man, he believed this man was the Messiah and that He would set up a Kingdom and the Kingdom would be earthly and He would overthrow Rome. And He would push the conquerors out and He would reestablish the Kingdom of Israel. And days of prosperity and glory would come again. And for him it was all earthly and it was all crass and it was all materialistic and it was all something you could hold in your hand. And he saw the possibility of getting in on the gravy train. He was never really drawn by the person of Jesus to believe and to love Jesus, he only saw Jesus as a means to an end... .to gain for himself.

And you know, he could put it off a little because at the beginning he didn't join the group for money because they were poor. But he figured if he hung around long enough, after the revolution he would get in on it. He was willing to make the investment of a few years for a dividend that he thought would be tremendous.

So, Jesus chose him because it was the plan. But he chose Jesus of his own will because he saw the road to personal prosperity. And so we could summarize by saying this about his call - Jesus chose Judas because of the plan yet offered Judas every opportunity not to fulfill it. Jesus gave the lesson of the unjust steward, of a man wasting his opportunity to Judas. He gave the lesson of the wedding garment to Judas. He gave the lessons of money and greed to Judas. He gave lessons of pride to Judas. He said a lot of things. One of you is a devil, to warn Judas.. .but Judas never listened, and never applied anything. And he kept up his deceit.

The disciples relationship to him is kind of interesting. He was in group four, he's in the last group which indicates that he wasn't a real intimate disciple of Christ. And I imagine he kind of hung on the edges of group four too. He didn't fit in because he was a non-Galilean and he sort of hung on the outside and I think he never really had a meaningful relationship. They gave him the job of carrying in the money because you don't have to be spiritual to hold the bag. He probably had an aptitude for finances and a love for bargaining and a real sort of interest in money and that certainly what he was after and they picked up on his knowledge of that.

Jesus knew everything the disciples didn't know. Jesus knew exactly what he was. But Jesus loved him, tried to reach him. In John 13 at the last supper Jesus said: "One of you is going to betray Me." They all said - Is it I... Is it I. "He said the one to whom I give the sop, he it is who betrays Me." Sop was a piece of bread that you stuck in a bowl and in the bowl was a... a sort of a paste like jam made out of fruit and nuts. And you took the bread and just sort of soaked it in that and it was common in the Orient to honor a guest and the meal and the one who was the honored guest would be the one to whom the host gave the sop. The host would dip it and give it to the honored guest. And He said the one to whom I give the sop, he it is that betrays Me. And He dipped the sop and gave it to Judas. And at that very moment He was honoring him, He was respecting him, He was showing love to him, He was lifting him up. It was an act, I think, of affection. It was an act of love. Beside teaching him and teaching him and warning him He actually honored the man. He was ever-reaching to that man. But he never responded.

And that brings us to the third point. His progress into betrayal.. .his progress. John's gospel is the place we have to go to get the progress. And we can kind of see what's going on. Three years are going by and Judas keeps hoping that any minute Jesus is going to grab the Kingdom. I mean, it's going to come, he sees a miracle and another miracle and another

miracle and people are healed and the blind can see and the deaf can hear and the lame can walk and the dumb can speak and people are fed and he's.. .he's in awe of all these things and he knows the power is there to do it. And he anticipates that at any moment it's going to happen. And he is so greedy that he just keeps hanging in there and hanging in there and hanging in there with tenacity, waiting for that Kingdom to happen.

Now I would hasten to add to you that he is no different than the other twelve. They all believed that the Messiah had come. They all believed the Messiah would bring an earthly Kingdom. They all believed the Messiah would overthrow Rome, He would establish the Kingdom and they would enter into the glory of the Kingdom. They all believed that they had met the lion of the tribe of Judah. But the Lord began to tell them that before He was the lion of the tribe of Judah, He had to be the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. And He talked about dying. And He talked about giving His life. And He talked about being lifted up. And whenever He talked about that you could just hear Judas saying - What is this? And I believe that the final thing that just destroyed Judas finally, was the triumphal entry. When Jesus rode into the city and it was "Hosanna to the son of David," and palm branches at His feet and all the praises and everybody acknowledging Him as the Messiah and He rides in and Judas has got to be in the back saying - This is it. It's going to happen today. What a set up. Jesus gets off the donkey and gives a speech. This is His speech: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." I'll have to die. And I believe that literally devastated, that was the last straw that Judas could handle. It wasn't going to happen. And I think that made it finally clear to him.

You see, the other disciples started where he started. But the Lord lifted them to a spiritual plain, Judas never got there. The Lord elevated them to a spiritual Kingdom to see things in a divine dimension, but Judas never got off the crass materialistic earthly level, he was the epitome of a crass materialist.

The other disciples had worldliness - yes, and greed and selfishness, but it was overcome by the love of Christ. And they began to love Him and in their love for Him He lifted them to another level. Well, it never happened in Judas' life. Greed and selfishness and materialism and worldliness conquered love. And the others were lifted and he stayed. The others became uncorrupted and he became more corrupted, more greedy. He had at the root of his character a. Ãº .a terrible, terrible passion and he never was willing to relinquish it. And so like Goethe's* Faust, sold his soul to Mephistopheles, Judas sold his soul to hell itself. * John says Gertes but it was Goethe's tragedy

Let's follow the sequence, John chapter 12. We're coming to the final events, moving to the cross, Judas is utterly and totally disillusioned. The anticipation of anything good coming had totally removed itself from him. There was nothing good left and he no longer could contain

his hypocrisy, he no longer could mask the vile, filthy, wretched soul that was within him and so in Bethany there was an incident that unmasked him. I don't think the disciples really picked it up because they so little suspected him that they really didn't read properly what he was saying. But Mary, in verse 3, took a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly and anointed the feet of Jesus, wiped His feet with her hair and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. She was just pouring out love, just pouring out affection. She gave this very costly thing to Jesus and it's something that was once used and then forever gone and so in the sense that she wasted it, she wasted it.

"Then saith one of His disciples," and this is the first time the man ever opens his mouth in holy writ, "Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him." I wonder who Simon is? Poor fellow. "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" He hated Jesus so deeply now that he couldn't stand any homage paid to Him. The hate had taken over. What started as attraction and love and fascination had turned to hate. Because Jesus didn't do what he expected and he became more frustrated and more frustrated until he had this love/hate and finally it was hate.. .wasting that on this One, in whom I have invested three wasted years.

By the way, it may not have been worth quite three hundred, that may have been his exaggeration because of the greed of his heart and in over.. .in order to overstate his case for affect. If it was it was three hundred days work, so nearly a year's wages worth of ointment.

"This he said, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief." He didn't become one here, he always was one. He was stealing from the thing the whole time, all three years. He was a thief and he had the bag and watch this: And the Greek says: "He pilfered what was put in it."

Can you imagine that kind of a guy. Here's a poor band of people going around doing good and he was stealing out of their resources, all the while. He had absolutely no love for them, no affection for them. The fact that he didn't know any of them and was from the south, played into the hands of his secrecy very well, they knew nothing about him. And all the while he was stealing out of the bag, he was a materialist and he was in life for one thing - what he could get out of it and he got it any way he could. And if he wasn't going to get the whole Kingdom, he was going to get a few bucks getting out. That's the basic motive of Judas.

And some people have tried to ascribe to him a good motive, you cannot ascribe to Judas a good motive anytime in anyway for two reasons. One, Jesus said - One of you is a devil; two, before he betrayed Him Jesus said, "And Satan entered into him." There was nothing good about him. He was wretched.

That incident occurred and immediately that night Judas left Bethany and brought about the first fatal interview with the chief priests. And he began to negotiate with them, as in Zechariah chapter 11, for thirty pieces of silver. So, the Lord was anointed out of love, and betrayed out of hate, the same night. And may I hasten to add that it is so still and that it is so with every man. You either enthrone Him or you betray Him. There is no middle ground. You are either Mary or you are Judas. You either pour out your love to Him or you sell Him for whatever price you have deemed proper.

Look at John 13 then. After having initiated the betrayal, our Lord is meeting in the upper room with His disciples, they've gone from Bethany to this place. Judas has worked out his thing and now he comes back to join himself with the group and play the role of the hypocrite even further. He comes back in, he's welcome to the fellowship again. Jesus washes his feet, if you can imagine that, in the first part of the chapter. And then Jesus says in verse 10: "And ye are clean, but not all of you." And He is beginning to point out Judas. Not all of you, for He knew who should betray Him, therefore He said - You are not all clean.

Verse 18: "I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen," I know the eleven who are saved, "but that the Scripture may be fulfilled." And He quotes Psalm 41:9: "He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me. Now I'm telling you before it comes," verse 19, "so that when it comes to pass you may believe that I am He." He wanted them to know that He knew this so when it happened they'd say - My, only God could have known that before it happened. And they didn't know it when He said - One of you shall betray Me, they said - Is it I?.. Is it I?.. Is it I?.. Is it I?.. it wasn't manifestly obvious who it was and if Jesus knew He had to be supernatural. And I... I am always drawn to verse 21: "When Jesus had thus said, He was troubled in spirit." He was troubled in spirit. He was burdened, He was anxious. He was upset. The ingratitude, the rejection of love, the hate for hypocrisy, the repulsiveness of the enemy, the heinousness of sin, the horrors of knowing that hell was waiting Judas and the anticipation of the sin-bearing on the cross. Do you know that He actually would be dying on that cross with all the sins of all the world in addition to suffering this, it was so much that it tore Him up on the inside?

"He testified and said, Truly, truly I say unto you, one of you will betray Me." They couldn't believe it. They looked on each other doubting of whom He spoke. They had no reason to believe it was anybody.

"There was leaning on Jesus bosom one of His disciples whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore -eckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom He spoke." He says - John, ask Him, ask Him, who is He talking about? Now I think Peter asked because Peter and Judas were a lot alike in many ways. They acted hypocritically. Peter knew he was a sinner of

the first magnitude and I think he was just checking in to find out if it was going to be him, since he had so many other failures.

"Jesus answered and said, The one I give the sop to, it's him." And I think that's what He told John. And I don't think the others heard it because if the others would have heard it there would have been an attack. John in his quietness accepted it as the plan because Jesus had said - "I say this now so you'll know when it happens that I am He." John went along with the plan. He gave the sop.

And then verse 27, that horrifying verse: "And after the sop Satan entered into him and said Jesus unto him, What thou doest, do quickly. And now no man at the table knew for what intent He spoke this unto him." Nobody knew why He sent him away. They maybe thought He sent him to get some more food - Out, He said. It was over now. The door was shut. Satan entered Judas. Can't imagine anything more horrifying. It's one thing to be demon possessed, it's something to have the Devil himself get in there. I mean, what is it that the Devil himself gets into an individual to accomplish. It must be the big ones, right?

And before you get too shocked you might be interested to know that the Devil also entered Ananias and Sapphira, two Christians in the early church in Jerusalem because they didn't give money to God they promised to give Him. And they lied to the Holy Spirit. It doesn't sound quite as serious as betraying Jesus Christ. Does it? But Satan entered Judas and Judas went away. Jesus remained with His own. Judas went out to consummate the betrayal.

Matthew 26:16 says he sought an opportunity to betray Him. Mark 14:11 says he sought how he might conveniently betray Him. And in Luke 22:6 it says he sought how to betray Him in the absence of the multitude. He was afraid of the crowd, he wanted to do it sneaky and he wanted to do it right, and he wanted to do it the easiest way. He feared the populous because he was there at the triumphal entry, he saw the crowd. He was afraid of that. And he wanted to do it in a way that Jesus wouldn't suspect either. He wanted to do it in a sneaky way, so he met again with the chief priests and they made a negotiation.

And He was sold for thirty pieces of silver. Today that would be worth somewhere between ten and twenty dollars. That tells me three things. Number one, that greedy people will settle for any price. Number two, that those chief priests had absolute distain for Judas, they wouldn't give him anymore than that. And number three, that they hated Jesus because that's all they thought He was worth. And so he negotiated that he would point Jesus out to them in a secret place, in a quiet place and in the pit. .pitch dark of the night they had to have a sign so he said the sign will be the One I kiss. Otherwise they wouldn't have known which One He was in the darkness.

And that brings us to John 18, the next time we see Judas. A few nights later Jesus is in the garden, verse 2: "Judas also, who betrayed Him, knew the place for Jesus often resorted there with His disciples." Judas not only profaned the Passover with blood money, he profaned the secret, private place of devotion for our dear Lord. He profaned friendship. He knew the place. "He gathered together a band of men and officers and chief priests and Pharisees and they came with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth and said to them, Whom seek ye?"

You see, Jesus knew that Judas was going to come in and he was going to come up to Jesus and he was going to kiss Him. And then the soldiers would attack and Judas would say - Oh!!!! you know, in shock as if he knew nothing. Judas would kiss Him to put Him at ease so He wouldn't think anything was up. Jesus knew all that. So you know what He did? He removed the necessity for the kiss. He walked out and said - "Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. And He said, I am He." Thus eliminating the need for a kiss.

But just to show you the pit of blackness in the heart of Judas, he kissed Him anyway. The diabolical heart forced him into that unnecessary kiss even though it was no longer a kiss to point Him out, it was a kiss to fake his innocence.. .a supreme act of hypocrisy.

And by the way, in Matthew 26 it says in the Greek, - He kissed Him repeatedly. Boy, you've got to be a vile character to pull that off. I can't imagine the heart of our Lord. I just can't imagine it. I mean, I.. .I can understand how He could endure the hatred of the priests, the raucous noise of the multitude. I can understand how He could endure the cowardice of Pilate, the brutality of the soldiers. I can understand how He could sort of go through the denial of Peter but how in the world you can handle this. And then you know what Jesus' reply was? In Matthew 26 it says that Judas kept on kissing Him and Jesus said to him, "Friend, what are you doing? Betraying the Son of man with a kiss." Friend, He said. Always the lover, always the forgiver, and so He was betrayed by a man who lived for greed. And he knew the game was up. And if he could only get ten bucks it was better than nothing else.

Let me ask you a question. Is the act of Judas unique? Is it the only act of its kind? Not so. For you will read in the Old Testament in the book of Ezekiel how that God was polluted among the people for handfuls of barley and bread. And if you read the prophet Amos you will read of those who sold the righteous for money. And may I suggest to you today that men have and always will sell Christ for whatever they think is worth more.

Listen to this, "It may not be for silver, it may not be for gold. But yet by tens of thousands, the Prince of life is sold. Sold for a godless friendship. Sold for a selfish aim. Sold for a fleeting trifle. Sold for an empty name. Sold in the mart of science. Sold in the seat of power. Sold at

the shrine of fortunes. Sold in pleasure's hour. Sold for your awful bargain, none but God's eye can see. Ponder my soul the question, - how shall He be sold by thee? Sold, 0 God, what a moment stilled his conscience voice. Sold unto weeping angel records the fatal choice. Sold but the price accepted to a living coal shall turn, with the pangs of a late repentance deep in a soul to burn."

Judas sold Jesus for greed. People are still doing it for their ill- gotten gain, their lifestyle and everything else. Why did he do it? Why? Sure there was malice, sure there was worldly ambition, revenge, hatred of what was good, rejection of what was pure, pride, ingratitude, anger, but most of all - just greed... .crass, worldly materialism. I submit to you that no man is more like a devil than a perverted apostle. I guess that's why I hate false teachers so much.

May I talk for a moment about his death? James says that lust when it is conceived brings forth sin, James 1, and when sin conceives it bringeth forth.. .what?. . .death. And Proverbs 10:7 says: "The name of the wicked shall rot." Poor Judas.. .he sold Christ, he sold his fellow apostles, he sold his soul and he bought hell. And the price was too high.

You know what he did? He knew it.. .because his heart was filled with such pain and remorse that it says in Matthew 27 verse 3 this: "Judas who had betrayed Him when he saw that he was condemned." And how was he condemned? By his conscience. Conviction must have been on him so that it pounded in his head, "He repented," it says. Now that might sound good to you, but that's not the Greek word for repentance, that's the word for wanting to change your feelings. He felt bad. He regretted it. Now a spiritually minded man deals with his conscience in a spiritual way. He goes to God for forgiveness. But a materialist, a crass earthly man deals with his problems on an earthly basis and so instead of going to God with his need on a spiritual plain, he went back to the chief priests on a physical level and he threw the money back thinking by the physical act of returning the money he could relieve the spiritual conviction. But he couldn't. His unforgiven heart screamed out for vengeance on himself and so he took the vengeance on himself and the Bible says, "He hanged himself, after having thrown the money on the temple floor."

In Acts 1 it says he died having his bowels burst asunder. Some people think those conflict.. .they don't. He couldn't hang himself any better than he could do anything else. And either the knot was insufficient or the branch broke and having hanged himself over a precipice he plummeted to have his bowels burst on the rocks beneath. And by the way, what did they do with the money that he threw in the house of the Lord? They said, "It is not lawful to put it in the treasury." So now all of a sudden, they're getting lawful? "Because it is the price of blood, we can't use blood money in the treasury. They took counsel and they bought with it potter's field to bury strangers in." That is exactly what the Old Testament said that the thirty pieces would be given to the potter in the house of the Lord. And the plan was fulfilled.

And you know what it's telling us all through this? That God is overruling the stupidity and the evil of men to fulfill His own word. Listen, some people have said - Well, the people in the New Testament knew the Old Testament so they tried to fulfill it, to make Christ look good. Oh? Then how so that the Pharisees are always fulfilling it too when they hated Him? It just shows us whose in control. If by taking his own life, Judas thought he could end the misery of his conscience, he made a terrible mistake. For he has a miserable conscience now and forever and ever in hell.

Finally, we've gone through some important things.. .his name, his call, his progress, the betrayal and death. May I close, and I want you to listen very close, with some lessons learned from the life of Judas? Just very quickly listen.

Number one, Judas is the world's greatest example of lost opportunity. No man ever, ever, ever is a greater tragedy than that man. Twelve men in human history have the privilege of walking three years in the presence of the living God incarnate and he missed it. The other eleven got it. Incredible. And there are people who will sit in the presence of Christians and thus in the presence of Christ, there are fathers in families and mothers in families and people in.... in churches who come and go and live their life - around them are all these people in whom dwells the living Christ and they lose that opportunity and go into eternity without Him. But Judas is the worst. And those who continue to miss the opportunity are in the line of Judas. He stood in the fairest surroundings the world has ever known and he's damned forever. He was content to associate - nothing more.

Secondly, he is the world's greatest example of wasted privilege, the greatest example of wasted privilege. He wanted money, he wanted riches, he wanted possessions, he could have possessed the universe forever but he sold it for ten or twenty dollars. God offers you and every soul the riches of eternity. What kind of a stupid bargain are you making? By saying no to that to say yes to some pittance that will burn in the end of this earth.

Thirdly, Judas is the world's greatest illustration of the love of money as the root of evil. He loved money so much that he actually sold the living God. That's how far greed can take a man. He is a monument to the destructiveness and the damnation of greed.

Fourthly, and this is turning the corner, I believe Judas is the greatest lesson in the history of the world of the forbearing patient love of God. Only God could have known what He knew and tolerated that man's presence that long. That is the patient forbearance of God. And then to have reached out in affection to him and offer him the sop and even after the kiss said to him - Friend. Incredible insight into the patience of God.

And finally, I believe Judas provides an essential qualification in preparing Christ for His high priestly role. He served a purpose. The Bible tells us that Christ was perfected through suffering, that He became a sympathetic high priest. Many men are betrayed, many men are wounded in the house of their friends. People cut people up and all of us have known the hurt and the pain of that kind of thing. And when we go to the Lord Jesus and we say -You know, I've had this happen in my life, do You understand? Oh, does He understand. Part of the perfecting of His high priestly work came in having to endure this from this man.

Well, for whatever lessons should be applied to your life, I pray the Holy Spirit would do that work. This man is the consummate hypocrite of all time and he is an illustration to us of people who can hide in the presence of Christ and be filled with Satan. That may be true of someone even here. You've been in the church but you' re a hypocrite.

Jesus said, "Judas went to his own place." Right where he belonged. And that's the way it will be for people who reject Christ. I close with this. Someone has written and I think it sums it all up: "Still as of old, man by himself is priced. For thirty pieces Judas sold himself, not Christ." Let's bow in prayer.

While your heads are bowed in just this final seconds, if you don't know Christ you've sold Him for whatever it is that keeps you from coming to Him, you have valued more than Him. That's you price. Maybe it's greed, ill-gotten gain, maybe it's some sin, some act of pride, self-will, some fancied wisdom, some human philosophy, some immoral relationship, whatever it is - it's your price and you've sold your soul in the selling. I hope there are none in the line of Judas here. If there are, Jesus reaches out to you as He reached out to him. And I trust that today you'll open up your heart and receive Christ, ask His forgiveness right where you sit in the silence of this moment and invite Him to be your Lord and Savior, and enter into the blessedness of His eternal Kingdom.

Father, we have had a wonderful morning in worship and sobering in the Word. Bring us back again tonight as we consider the gospel, the wonderful message of the book of Romans. Help us to order our priorities right. Lord, perhaps You'll lead us to some unsaved person we can even bring tonight. God, help us to have the right priorities, the right focus. Make this a special day, a day of glory for Your name as we live it for Your own cause and Kingdom. Thank You, Lord, for our fellowship this morning in Christ's name. Amen.

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