

54. Jesus Explained that One Would Betray Him

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that those who are open to listen to the message about the death and resurrection of Jesus will often come to a true faith in Christ. We also saw that Jesus warned that one of the disciples would betray Him. In our topic today, we are going to see why that disciple would betray Him.

Jesus had told the disciples that one of them would lift up his hand against Jesus. We see that Jesus now explained that statement more fully. John 13:21-22 says, “When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.’ Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke.” Jesus was troubled in spirit as He told the disciples that one of them would betray Him. The word translated “troubled” means *to take away calmness of mind or to cause a person to become restless*. Jesus used this same word when He said in John 12:27, “‘Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour.’” In John 12, Jesus was troubled because He was going to be separated from the Father as He was on the cross. Here, we see that Jesus was troubled because Judas would betray Him.

Jesus loved Judas. Just after Judas gave the kiss of betrayal Jesus said in Matthew 26:50, “But Jesus said to him, ‘Friend, why have you come?’ Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him.” Jesus called Judas a friend even at the very moment that Judas was betraying Him. Jesus could not experience calmness of spirit when He knew that one who had heard the truth so many times was still continuing to reject that truth and choose instead to betray Jesus. That is why Jesus went on to explain that one of the disciples would betray Him.

The disciples all looked at each other and were very perplexed as they thought about what Jesus had just said. They wondered who could do such a thing. Mark 14:18-19 gives greater detail when those verses say, “Now as they sat and ate, Jesus said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, one of you who eats with Me will betray Me.’ And they began to be sorrowful, and to say to Him one by one, ‘Is it I?’ And another *said*, ‘Is it I?’” Here, we see that none of the disciples even suspected Judas. Instead, they all wondered if they could be the one who would do such a thing. This shows us that Jesus had treated Judas with the same love and respect that He had shown to each of the other disciples, even though Jesus knew the entire time that Judas followed Him that he would betray Him.

Then, Jesus was asked by the disciples who would betray Him. John 13:23-26 says, “Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke. Then, leaning back on Jesus’ breast, he said to Him, ‘Lord, who is it?’ Jesus answered, ‘It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped *it*.’ And having dipped the bread, He gave *it* to Judas Iscariot, *the son of Simon*.” John, the brother of James and the writer of the book of John, was next to Jesus. We see that John described himself as the disciple that Jesus loved. John mentioned two other times that he was the disciple Jesus loved.

John 19:26-27 says, “When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, ‘Woman, behold your son!’ Then He said to the disciple, ‘Behold your mother!’ And from that hour that disciple took her to his own *home*.” Then, John 21:20 says, “Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, ‘Lord, who is the one who betrays You?’” However, John 13:34 says, “‘A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.’” From this statement by Jesus, we know that He loved all of the disciples. That might cause us to question why John called himself the disciple whom Jesus loved three times.

John knew his own sinfulness. When John first followed Jesus, he was a man with much prejudice that caused him to react with great anger. Those two characteristics both showed themselves in Luke 9:54 where we read, “And when His disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, ‘Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?’” Here, we see that John and his brother, James, were ready to call down fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritan village that did not allow Jesus and His disciples to stay in their village that night. We see that Jesus rebuked that attitude. Luke 9:55-56 says, “But He turned and rebuked them, and said, ‘You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save *them*.’ And they went to another village.”

However, by the end of his life, John had become known as the disciple of love. We want to help our children understand how that change happened. John explained how this change happened in 1 John 4:17-19 where we read, “Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us.” John saw the perfect love of Jesus for him in spite of his prejudice and great anger. John saw that perfect love of Jesus for him and responded to that love by learning to love others. As a result, He had no fear of future judgment. John had seen that love grow to maturity in the lives of the other disciples with the exception of Judas.

Peter had also responded to that love so it was probably hard for the disciples to imagine that any of the disciples could betray Jesus. As a result, Peter motioned to John to ask Jesus who would betray Jesus. John then asked the question, “Lord, who is it?” Jesus explained how the one who would betray him would be known. However, we will see that the disciples did not understand at that time and so did not understand until Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss later that evening. Jesus said that He would give a piece of bread after He had dipped it to the disciple who would betray Him. Then, Jesus took a piece of bread, dipped it and gave it to Judas Iscariot. The other disciples did not understand at that moment but Judas was forced to recognize that Jesus knew.

John 13:27-30 says, “Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, ‘What you do, do quickly.’ But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him. For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, ‘Buy *those things* we need for the feast,’ or that he should give something to the poor. Having received the piece of

bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night.” We saw that John knew that He and the other disciples were loved by Jesus and the other disciples had all responded to that love by learning to love. In contrast, Judas had not responded to that love because of the greed that controlled his heart.

Judas had shown this greed when Mary anointed the feet of Jesus with expensive perfume, although the other disciples did not recognize his love of money at that time. John 12:4-6 says, “But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s *son*, who would betray Him, said, ‘Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?’ This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.” The New Testament gives two negative roots and shows the results of each. In Hebrews 12:15-16, we read, “Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; lest there *be* any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.” A root of bitterness caused Esau to sell his spiritual leadership in the family for a bowl of stew.

In 1 Timothy 6:9-10 we read, “But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” Here, we see that Judas had a root of the love of money that destroyed him and caused him to choose eternal judgment. Jesus loved Judas with the same love that He loved the other disciples. However, Judas chose to reject that love and sold Jesus for thirty pieces of silver because of his love of money.

In the Gospels, Jesus healed many people who were demon-possessed. In contrast, Judas became possessed by Satan, the prince of demons. Once Judas took the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus knew exactly what happened and just told Judas, “What you do, do quickly.” The other disciples had no idea what Jesus was talking about when He spoke to Judas. They all thought that Jesus had complete trust in Judas because he carried the money box. We see that Jesus allowed Judas to know his own heart because for the entire time that he followed Jesus he was stealing money from the money box. That is why the disciples just thought that Judas was either going to buy some food for the feast or he was going to give something to the poor.

Judas then went out immediately. We see that a very important statement is made. The verse says that it was night when Judas went out. Judas went out into the physical darkness. However, there was a much greater darkness in his heart because his heart was filled with spiritual darkness. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that all those who reject Jesus are walking in that same spiritual darkness. They do not know where they are going because spiritual darkness has blinded their eyes. We want to show our children how to introduce people to Jesus who is the Light. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to lead people to that Light.