

(John - Part 45): A Biography of Judas Iscariot, Simons Son

by A.W. Tozer

The sermon explores the story of Judas Iscariot, highlighting the devil's influence and the importance of guarding one's heart.

Duration: 39:18

Scripture: Psalm 95:7-8, Matthew 7:24, Matthew 16:18, Matthew 26:24, John 1:1, John 10:11, Hebrews 3:15

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the seriousness and importance of Christianity. He warns against being deceived by the devil and urges the audience, particularly teenagers, to not let Satan influence their hearts. The preacher expresses his deep love for the audience and his desire to protect them from the clutches of hell. He references the story of Judas Iscariot, highlighting how even someone who witnessed Jesus' miracles and heard his divine words could still betray him. The sermon concludes with a plea to the audience to not harden their hearts and to heed the voice of God.

Transcript

In the book of John, John 13, Now, before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end, and suffer being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hand and that he was come from God and went to God, riseth from supper, and laid aside his garment and took a towel and girded himself. Now, this is all too full for any one treatment, but I want to pick out this phrase, it's here, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son. Judas Iscariot, Simon's son.

Now, you were brought up in the church and you know that the most dishonored name in history is probably the name of Judas Iscariot. There were many men whose names excite loathing in the human breast. Caligula and Nero were two emperors.

There was Attila the Hun, Genghis Khan, Bluebeard. In later times we have Hitler. These men earned for themselves odium and abhorrence to the point of nausea.

And even though we're all sinners by nature, yet the basest sinner in the world shrinks in horror from the name Judas. Judas Iscariot, Simon's son. Now, there's not too much known about it, and so I can't be too dogmatic here, but I suppose that Simon is in some way responsible for Judas.

The Lord was not willing to say, Judas Iscariot did it. He said, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son did it. And he links this dishonored name, this name of odium, he links it with Simon, who beget Judas.

And I say, I suppose that in some way Simon is responsible for Judas, because all down through history the two names were linked. And even in hell Judas is known as Simon's son. I will not be wise above what is written, and I don't know how far Simon is accountable for his boy Judas, who sunk the human race lower than it had ever been before and almost created another fall upon another fall.

And I don't know how far we're accountable for that which flows from us and which proceeds from our lives. I know that for our personal needs we are responsible. The Bible is very clear about that, and that's common Christian teaching.

But there was a sense in which Simon was not responsible for Judas quite in that way. And yet it was Judas, it was Simon who gave life to Judas. And so the Lord is not willing that Judas should stand alone, but says, Judas, Simon's son.

Now that leads me to wonder what kind of a man Simon was, and what kind of life little Judas had lived, and what kind of home he had grown up in, and what little Judas had seen in his home. The mother is not mentioned here, only Simon the father. There must have been a wife and a mother.

We do not know whether she lived to see her boy grow to manhood, or whether she died when he was only a little lad. We wonder what was present in Simon's home that gave to Judas this terrible twist in his nature. We wonder what was absent in Simon's home that gave this twist to the nature of Judas.

Now, I wonder also what Judas' mother was like. Now, he had a mother, and I don't know whether mother died when Judas was a little boy, or whether, I say, she lived to see him grow to manhood, and whether she ever believed all that other people knew about the boy Judas. All this I do not know.

But I wonder what kind of a home it was, and I wonder what kind of example Judas had. Now, I do not go along with this modern teaching that you find in This Week magazine and all the psychologists are yelling about. I do not go along with this that if a young teenager goes out and raises hell, you ought to put his father in jail.

You couldn't think of anything more completely asinine than that. You ought to put a donkey's hide on a psychologist who would talk like that and make him bray for his dinner, because he has no right to speak ordinary human language. But while that is not so, that if the child sins, the father is responsible and ought to be put in jail, it is true that a father's example has a great deal to do with which way the boy will go, finally.

And then I wonder what kind of teaching the boy Judas had. And all these are questions that can't quite be answered, and yet we have it here. Judas's chariot, Simon's son.

Now, Judas must answer to God for Judas, as John must answer to God for John, and Mary must answer to God for Mary. And you must answer to God for you, and I must answer to God for me. But I wonder how many contributed to Judas's delinquency.

How many failed Judas? How many there might have been that let Judas down? I wonder if Judas had a believing friend that he trusted in when he was a lad, and that friend blew up in his face, let him down tragically, terribly, and this sensitive boy lost his faith as a result. That could be. That happens sometimes.

Young people take a hero. A young boy will take an older man as a spiritual hero, and he will look to him and trust him and see him only when he is in his good moods and when he is in a church humor. And then he will come upon him sometime when he is not in a good mood, and the young fellow's faith will be blown sky-high because he found that his idol had feet of clay.

I wonder if something like that happened to Judas. I don't know. I'm only guessing, and I'm not making any positive statements.

But there's some reason that Judas became Judas's chariot and betrayed his Lord. Then it says the devil put it into the heart of Judas to betray Jesus. And you know something else that I hope I don't know about this.

Someday we may know. I don't know whether God will fill us in on all the history or not. But you know what I hope? I hope both Simon and his wife were asleep in the long, quiet sleep of the grave before their boy died that death of shame.

I mentioned over the radio to the few of you who may have been listening about what I saw in the newspaper, and you no doubt saw it too, a rather good-looking, attractive-looking woman, thirty-two years of age, the mother of two children who had taken part in a murder. And here she was in an automobile moving toward the death chamber, toward the prison where the death chamber was. It said it was her last Friday.

Friday she died. Died a gasping, twisting death in the gas chamber. I wonder where her parents were.

And wouldn't you join me in wishing quietly before God that her parents might not have lived to see this and to know about it, to look at that picture? Don't you sort of hope maybe that her father and mother may have been sleeping when this young lady, good-looking, attractive young lady went out to die the death of shame? I don't know much about Simon. It doesn't mention him, only it says that he was, Judas was Simon's son. But before Judas died that disgraceful death, I hope Simon was asleep and didn't know it.

And I hope Judas' mother, Simon's wife, also slept by his side in some quiet Jewish cemetery. And that God Almighty in his kindness spared this old couple the disgrace, the shock, the horror of knowing that their boy had died this way. I hope so.

Because the devil, it says, had put it into the heart of Judas to betray Jesus. He put it into the heart of Judas, the heart of Judas. Oh, what's that, Judas? The heart of Judas.

We thought Judas didn't have a heart. Oh, yes, he had a heart as big as yours and mine. He had a heart as big as the Fort Knox vault where they keep all the gold.

He had a human heart. God had given it to him. And he had a heart, too, Judas had, because there had to be a heart there to put this thing into.

This great treasure chest of the human heart, Judas had it. When you think what the human heart can contain, when you think how the human heart is a great vault that can contain all the gold of love, when

you think all the silver of joy, when you think all the peace and long-suffering that can come into the human heart and all the gentleness that can dwell there like doves perched on a tree, when you think of all the goodness that can be in the human heart, when you think of all the faith that can be there like diamonds and rubies and pearls, when you think of all the meekness and temperance and hope and mercy and kindness and virtue and charity, you think of all that can be in the human heart. And Judas had a heart, too.

Don't think he didn't. Judas has a heart as big as yours and mine, as big as Peter's and Paul's. We say his heart's little, but we're using language carelessly.

Potentially it was as big as any man's. Judas had a big heart, too. Think of the sweet memories that say were in the heart of Paul when he died.

You think Paul went skulking out into the death chamber to die? No, there was no death of shame there. Judas' death was a death of shame, and it left behind it a stench that filled the whole human history with an evil smell. But when Paul went out to die, he went out to die with his head up and his eyes on the glory, knowing that he was soon going to be with the Lord whom he loved and had not seen in the flesh.

But when he went out, don't you think that that walk to the sword was sweetened by memories, all the memories there that Paul had, the sweet, long memories from the time he was stricken blind on Damascus Road through all the long, tortuous, twisted way, and yet a way that for him was as straight as a highway as he walked on his way to God, blessing men and women by the side of the road all the way along? Don't you think that those sweet memories came flooding around the man Paul, and he never saw the sword and never felt it at all when his head rolled away because his heart was so big that his poor little head, when it fell off, he didn't miss it because he had that great, big human heart of his all filled with all sweet memories. The human heart, I say, is a treasure chest, and when you think that it could contain, and in some cases does contain God himself, Christ in you, the hope of glory, let's never underestimate the human heart. Judas had a human heart.

The devil put it into the heart of Judas, and Judas did have a heart after all. And when you think of that human heart and what it can contain, how much of jealousy, how the flatworms of pride and the filthy buzzards of bad thoughts and the dirty, evil birds of hatred and resentment and malice can fill the heart, and the toads and serpents of strife and low desires and lust and covetousness, all these can fill the human heart. And when you think of all the foul-smelling beasts of dishonesty and lying and anger and all the roosting place for unclean birds, and then when you think the devil himself can get in there, ah, what a treasure is the human heart and what a treasure chest and how it should be guarded.

Keep thy heart with all diligence, said the Holy Ghost, for out of it are the issues of life. If you gave as much care to your heart as you do to your body, you'd be a wiser and a better man. You're careful to have insurance on your body.

You go every so often and get a checkup if you feel something a bit abnormal going on inside of you. We're always careful of our body, but God said, not take care of thy body, though he supposed we would have sense enough to do that too. But he said, keep thy heart with all diligence, because it's not the body that can contain love and peace and longsuffering and gentleness and goodness and faith and meekness and temperance and mercy and kindness and virtue and charity and God himself.

It is the soul that contains these things, the heart of the man. And it's not the body that can be filled with jealousy nor pride nor filthy thoughts nor resentment nor malice or dishonesty or lying or anger. That's not the body.

And yet we take such good care of the body, and we ought to really. We ought to look after our bodies. There, the temple, it's the old Francis of Assisi always referred to it as the donkey upon which he rode, his human body.

And he took good care of it because he said, I've got to ride it around. You walk down the street, you're riding that horse, that donkey, God gave you to ride around on. It's all right, take care of it, but it's not that body that is the treasure house of all these things, or the snake pit where it is contained all the horrors of sin.

It's the heart. Now, the devil put it into the heart of Judas. He was big enough for the devil to get into this heart of Judas.

How did the devil get into the heart of Judas? Well, Judas was a Jew and Judas was brought up with the scriptures. He heard the Old Testament scriptures read every Sabbath day in the synagogue. And he knew the law and was forced to memorize them when he was a boy, or memorize the different items of the law when he was a boy.

And he knew the prophets and no doubt could have quoted from Isaiah. And he did sing many times from David, as you have sung sweet songs here tonight. And Judas was, he was not a pagan.

He was not a boy delinquent on the street. He came from a Jewish home. Jesus picked him out as one of his disciples and picked him from a Jewish home that no doubt had some connection with the temple and the synagogue.

So he was a Jew and he'd heard the Psalms of David. And he may have been moved by the Psalms of David when he heard them sung in the synagogue or the temple or chanted. There is a service or rather a program on Sunday afternoons and if I can get to hear it, I always turn it on, lie down, rest, and listen to it.

It's called the Jewish Hour. It starts out with that rousing march, Hebrew march, and then there's always something in it about the Jew. There's usually a chant or two from a famous cantor from the old Hebrew worship temple service.

I like to hear it. Judas must have heard that kind of thing or something very like it lots of times. In addition to all that, Judas had been three years with Jesus.

And he had seen the wonderful miracles of Jesus, and yet the devil put it into his heart to betray Jesus. He had heard the heavenly word, such words as never had been spoken before, never had been spoken since except in repetition. And more than that, he had been with God, for Jesus was God.

He had felt the warmth of his breath. He had heard the words from his lips so strong that they had created the heaven and the earth centuries before. He had been close to him, and Jesus had breathed on him.

And the breath that had given life to Adam in the garden, when God breathed the breath of life into him and he became a living soul, Judas had many times felt that breath on his cheek as he talked close with Jesus sometime under a tree or in a synagogue or beside the highway. What had Judas done? What had

he done to open his heart to the devil? What had Judas done? What had got him in that state? What had weakened his resistance to temptation? Was it when he was in his teens that something happened and broke in there and he never got back on his feet again? What was his weakness? Love of money, you suppose? He did love money. We learned that.

But do you think that was enough? He loved money. Judas Simon's son did. But was it love of money? I don't know for sure.

Was it irreverence? He certainly stood in the presence of God and didn't know it. And the ability to be in God's presence and be dead to it, that's basic irreverence. That was Saul's great sin.

That was the great sin of the apostate Saul. David was so reverent that he would not lay his hand on a man. Even though that man were his military enemy, he would not lay his hand on that man if that man ever had God's hand laid on him.

Oh, said the reverent David, I couldn't touch him. He's God's anointed. I wouldn't touch him.

I'd let him kill me first. There was reverence. David, with all his faults, had one thing, basic reverence, the sense of trembling fear in the presence of the overarching mystery we call God.

Judas may not have had that, probably didn't. For he could stand in the presence of Jesus and argue with him. He was a hypocrite, Judas was, because he claimed that he didn't want them to use that spikenard.

He said it was such a very valuable thing that it might have been sold and the proceeds given to the poor and the Holy Ghost wrote underneath it in small print. This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but being a thief, he took what was put in the bag. He was one of the first church traders who became a thief.

And this was Judas. So there must have been a basic irreverence there and basic hypocrisy, but how did he get there? He wasn't always that way. He was as innocent as any 15-year-old wants or any 14 or 13 or 10-year-old.

He was as innocent as any strapping young chap just turning 20. How did he get this way? Did money, love of money, self-love maybe. Maybe he loved himself until the Holy Ghost deserted his heart.

Self-love maybe he did. It could be there was self-love. You're listening to me and you wonder why I'm talking about a man long dead.

Because in one sense Judas isn't dead at all. He committed suicide and hanged himself and the rope broke and he fell and lived on a jagged rock and tore his abdomen open and all his bowels gushed out. And you say that should have killed him.

He should have been dead and he did die. But he isn't quite dead. He still is around.

He's in Chicago and he's in the churches and he's around and you'll find him or those descendants of his, the moral descendants of Judas, not the lineal descendants from his body, but the moral descendants of Judas are found here and there. People that were brought up in Christian homes and have Bibles lying at home and red-backed testaments and blue-backed testaments with the Sunday School superintendent's name in them, pastor's name below it, and a scripture text appended. They haven't opened it for nobody knows when.

They haven't prayed for nobody knows when. Brought up in church but they are not going with God. Something has happened.

I don't know what always it is. What is it that weakens the resistance to temptation and brings down people to the depths? I wonder if Judas knew that he was being played for a sucker by the devil. The devil having put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot.

Judas was doing blindly as though he were hypnotized. He was doing what the devil had suggested that he do. And if you had gone up to him and said, Judas, do you know that you are being played for a sucker by the devil? He would have given you fourteen reasons why he was an independent fellow and believed in having his own way and not surrendering to the narrow religionists.

And you hear it. You hear these young fellows who have a will of their own. Oh, indeed, they're the brazen boys.

They're the cocky fellows. They know the answer all the way around. They're not going to follow in their father's footsteps nor meekly and weakly follow in imitation of their mothers.

They're too smart that they don't know they're being played for suckers and that their arguments were fed into their minds by the devil who put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, and who is now busy putting it into the heart of other people, not Judas Iscariot, but people living here in Chicago, putting it into their hearts. Did he know it? You see, the devil is a smooth destroyer, and right under the shadow of the cross he brainwashes people. And there are people that are being brainwashed, and you want me to know what's busy brainwashing people? I'll tell you what's brainwashing them.

They're being brainwashed through various media. That media is the daily newspaper, the fiction that is being printed now, political speeches, television, radio, magazines like Life and Time and the other common, popular magazines of the day. Now, don't go out and say, Tozer says that's all bad.

I don't say anything of the sort. If it was all bad, nobody would like it. Nobody would give it a show.

If it was all bad, it would have to be sold under the counter along with a pornography down here in the dark room somewhere. But it's because it's only partly bad. Because there's so much good in it, it's brainwashing so many people.

You people listening to me, your whole philosophy of life I think is partly taken. I'd say 50% taken from the Bible and the rest you've gathered from these other sources. And so a young fellow or a young girl is tempted to deceive.

She says or he says, Well, I'll deceive the old folks after all they're too strict with me and I think I should not be held down. All right, honey, but you're being played for a sucker by a cynical murderer whose name is Apollyon and who lives to kill and destroy and rob. And you think you're being independent when all that's happened to you, you're breaking away from God and listening to the devil.

It's not independence. It is simply a shift of bosses. When you were little and you spanked and made to do what you were to do, you did it and said nothing.

Old Eve and Uncle Adam standing up in you and believing you and me you're going to have your way. All right, honey, have your way, but you're being brainwashed by the one who put it into the heart of Judas

Iscairiot. You say, Oh, but Judas Iscairiot, he was the son of perdition.

He wasn't always the son of perdition. He was the son of Simon once. And in a way, he still is the son of Simon.

And don't forget, the son of Simon became the son of perdition. And don't forget, the son of the synagogue became the son of hell. And don't forget, the son of the law who was circumcised the eighth day and made to memorize the Psalms of David in the Decalogue and chant the Hebrew hymns.

Don't forget, he became the son of perdition and went to his own place of suicide. That first time, you're tempted to deceive your parents. That first time, you think it's not much and you giggle about it to your schoolmates.

I wonder if that's where Judas started. He and a couple of other boys went to learn how to read the Hebrew characters at the feet of the rabbi. And one day, they decided not to go, go out fishing.

The next day, the rabbi asked in a stern tone, Where were you yesterday? And they said, We were ill. Then they giggled on their way home and said, Didn't we take him? Maybe that was how Judas got his start. I don't know.

He lied. Then he went home and lied to his parents about it. Maybe that first dishonesty with money.

That time his parents said, Go down and buy some this or that. And he went and brought back the wrong change. I don't know.

But somewhere it had to start. Maybe this is where it started. An act of disobedience, an act of dishonesty, an act of deceit, an act of lying.

For Satan, I say, is a smooth destroyer. He brainwashes people. In their overweening pride, they think they are independent.

When they are not independent, they are the slaves of him who put it into the heart of Judas, Simon's son, to betray Jesus. Now we don't know the inner temptations and struggles that changed Judas into the son of perdition. I don't think he went unhindered like water flowing over a bridge or over a dam, I mean, under a bridge and over a dam.

I don't think so. I think Judas' conscience gave him many a night of misery. I know it, in fact.

I know it because even after he had committed the irrevocable lack, his conscience lashed him. He came back with the money. He spent horrible hours, horrible hours, lashing his own heart and calling himself cursed names.

And in one last awful desire to try, effort to try to undo what he had done, he brought back the money and threw it at the feet of the priests and said, take it, take it, it's cursed. He got it out of his hands, but he couldn't get it out of his heart. And he never got it out of his heart.

He'd been played for a fool. Now the devil disappeared and let him run alone. But he had to struggle of it.

Nobody ever goes to hell easy and laughing on their way. I know a man who has sinned against his God and is living a backslidden sinful life. And I met a man recently who had met him recently and I said, how

so-and-so? And he said, oh, he's happy.

No, no, I said, not happy. He's not happy, he knows too much. You know, you can know enough that you can never quite be happy in sin and yet be so tricked by the devil that you can never quite be happy doing right.

And so caught in between the nether and the upper millstone, caught on the horns of the broad dilemma, we slowly grow wrong and evil and Simon's son becomes son of perdition. I say, we don't know all these temptations and inner struggles. We are aware that if Judas had been living now and this history had been written now, he could have gone to fourteen psychiatrists and a thousand men and women studying up on child psychology.

But this was happening to Judas right there. It was happening. They'd have read a book and they'd have given his terrible degeneration some learned names, but Judas was still going, it was still happening.

And it's written here for you and me. Why was it written here? That I can't answer. I've raised a good many questions I couldn't answer, only speculate about, but I can answer this one.

These things were written for our admonition. And this was written here for our admonition. And if Judas could talk to us now, Judas might even want to help us.

You say, how do you get such a grotesque notion as that? Not so grotesque, not so far-fetched. There was a certain rich man who fed sumptuously every day. And one day he died.

And in hell he lifted up his eyes and he said, Father Abraham, go tell my brethren, lest they come here. He cared even in hell. He had a heart even in hell.

Judas had a heart enough that he committed suicide in self-accusation and hatred of his own sinful self. Yet he's a son of perdition in hell. So Judas, I think if he could talk, would have something to say to us.

I don't know whether he'd give us his history or not or add anything to what's written, but I think I do know what he would say. He would say, The day if you would hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the day of the provocation. Behold, now is the day of salvation.

Behold, this is the accepted time. And today if you would hear his voice, harden not. If you say, Now you can't scare me, Mr. Tozer.

I wasn't born yesterday. The history of churches, the history of this church over the last 30 years, shows that even our young people reared in our fellowship who list their first little words in our kindergarten, the beginner's department, who grew up through our church. They were not all brought to God.

Like Judas who sang the Psalms of David as a boy and walked with holy men as a young man, opened his heart one sad moment to the devil, wide open, and the devil put it in his heart. Scattered all over the world there are godly people who found their Savior in this church, but scattered all over the world also there are hard, heavy-browed, sulky, grim men and women who would not obey God. They would not.

They were stubborn, self-loving. Sure they were right. And they're just waiting now for Satan to call in the men.

Just waiting for the day when Satan will put the fence down and call them all into his hell. I'm horrified when I think that the sound of my voice has fallen on the ears of men now in hell. The sound of my voice in prayer, the sound of your singing is echoing now through the ears of some who are in hell.

Christianity isn't a soft, smooth bouquet of religious flowers. It's a glorious but solemn, terrible and wonderful thing. Today if you will hear his voice, harden not your heart.

In Christ's name tonight I appeal to you. Don't be a sucker. Don't be fooled by the devil, you teenagers.

And I love every one of you. Every one of you to the point where I could take you if I had a house big enough and keep you around and love you. Even though I am old and battered, I love all of you.

But I love you so much that I don't want to see hell get its hand on you. I don't want to see you play into the hand of Satan and open the door enough that he can stick his dirty, foul head in and begin to breathe his hypnotizing suggestions into your young heart. Judas, Simon's son.

No wonder Jesus said better that he'd never been born. Better never been born. Better if he should have been born dead.

The neighbor said, did you hear about Simon's wife? She had a baby stillborn. They never even named him, but carried him in his cold lifelessness to his baby grave and put him away. Better, said Jesus, he'd never been born.

If you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. But the shepherd of Israel, the shepherd of willing hearts, the shepherd of the book of John, from which I preach, that shepherd calls you to himself. He calls you to come and believe on him and trust him and follow him and love him and be his and put away deception and pride and stubbornness and nastiness and disobedience and put it all away and follow him.

He calls you this very night. And if you hear his voice, harden not your hearts. A hard heart is a heart all right for Satan's filthy brain.

Do you hear his voice this evening? God bless you.

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