

Restoring Your Passion for Christ Part 2

by Carter Conlon

The Judas factor in ministry refers to the tendency for people to betray Christ due to their own heart and motives, and it's crucial to examine one's heart and seek God's guidance to avoid this trap.

Duration: 58:32

Scripture: Psalm 139:23

Topics: "Servant Leadership", "Godly Humility"

Description

This sermon delves into the Judas factor in ministry, highlighting the danger of pursuing personal agendas over God's will, the importance of servanthood, and the need for self-examination to ensure alignment with God's heart. It emphasizes the significance of yielding to God's plans and finding peace in being His servant, rather than seeking personal gain or recognition.

Transcript

to be part of this three days of ministry here in New York City. We are really believing that there's going to be something very powerful that only Jesus Christ can do. That's going to happen in lives first, marriages second, families and ministry.

The Lord is going to do something. We have that assurance in our hearts. I have to deal with a very difficult topic this morning.

I'm going to need your prayer for it. Before there can be a shout of glory, there has to be sometimes a digging down deep. If we are going to press into God, and I'm assuming that's why everyone is here, because you have a desire to press into Christ.

You want to know Him. You want His fullness and His intimacy in your life, and you want His power in your ministry. You want His presence and glory in your home.

You want everything that Jesus Christ has for you. If that's the cry of your heart, then the Holy Spirit has to come down and examine our very motive as to why we are pursuing Christ. If the motive of pursuing Christ is not right, then it doesn't matter how hard we pray.

It doesn't matter how many conferences we attend. It doesn't matter how much zeal we work up. Even in the house of God, if our pursuit is wrong, if our course is not correct, then it is all in vain.

I'm going to speak about the Judas factor in ministry. I believe that this message may be life-changing for some. Some, you're just going to, I'm going to be speaking truths you're already well aware of, and I'm going to be doing no more than confirming the knowledge that God's already given you.

But for others, it may be a very necessary course correction or adjustment that the Holy Spirit is going to do. Because He loves you. He loves you.

Christ loves His church with an everlasting love. He loves His ministry. He remembers the day that you gave your life to Him.

He remembers the seasons when He first began to speak into your heart and call you. He called you into the ministry, and you responded. And you left, and you began to follow Him.

On that pathway, there are many, many diversions. And the enemy will use things to divert us from ultimately that which Christ alone has for us and can fulfill through us. In our pursuit of God, it is important to realize that there is something in every person that would betray Christ.

It's in me, and it's in you. Nobody escapes this. There's something in your heart.

We have a fallen nature. And by virtue of that nature itself, we need to be very careful that our fallen nature is not rising up and taking over, masquerading as the leading of the Holy Ghost or even as the very plan of God. Three years of the most, the purest ministry I think the world has ever known is obviously the ministry of Jesus Christ Himself when He walked on the earth with His disciples.

Three years of sitting under a word that's from heaven and inarguably absolute truth. 100% truth. 100% life-changing and challenging.

And after three years, Jesus, the Bible tells us in Matthew 26 and verse 22, or actually the preceding verses to that, said, one of you is going to betray me. Now, you would think after three years of ministry that every man around about that table would have said, Lord, no, not me. But I think being under the Word of God, the pure Word of God had taught the disciples not to trust their own hearts, not to trust their own instinct.

Every man in turn around about that table began to say, Lord, is it I? And I do believe that sitting in the presence of God reduces that in the heart. We're not talking about an instability that causes us to be afraid at every turn. But a hard attitude that says, God, don't let me presuppose that what I'm doing is right.

Don't let me presuppose that what I'm thinking is correct. Help me to understand. If you say someone in this room is going to betray you, I want to know if it's me.

And beloved, I hope and pray that that cry is in your heart this morning. And if you've traveled, and some have traveled from, you've come from Africa, there's some from Asia, different parts of the world, from India, and you've come here, the Lord has brought you here only because He loves you. And I'm hoping that cry is in your heart and say, God, if it's me, if I'm taking a wrong turn somewhere, especially as a leader, if I am moving in a direction that is leading your people away from the pureness that Christ has for them, God, show me, help me.

If the Judas factor has gotten into my heart, reveal it to me. I want to ask you to pray with me right now. I need God's grace as much as everyone in this room needs God's grace to daily live for Him.

I want to ask you to pray for me and pray with me. Everyone in this room, just utter that prayer. If it's in you to pray it, to say, Lord, is it me? I'm about to hear something, and God, I'm going to ask you.

You see, folks, we can be 35 years in ministry and have missed something and become so unteachable. But I believe that if the truth of Christ is in us, that there will never be a time when we will ever sit into the preaching of the Word of God and say, God, that's not for me. That's for somebody else.

No, I believe if we have an honest heart, we remain a green tree until the day of our death. We are always bendable, always open to the voice of God. Now, Father, I stand before you, and I need you.

Holy Spirit, this is your time. This is your venue. These are your ministers.

These are your families. These are your people. This is your book.

I'm only your vessel. My God, I need you. I need your power.

I need your anointing. I need the touch of your hand. I ask you to take me beyond my natural ability.

Give me intelligence. Oh, God, that I may speak this word clearly so that every person may understand it. I ask, oh, God, that you search my heart.

Search my heart. My God, I don't want to run this course and find out at the end that I was on the wrong path. Jesus, help me.

Help me. If there's anything in my heart that would betray you, show it to me. Holy Spirit, you're the only one that can search the inward part of every man and woman in this place, and we invite you to do that.

We invite you to search us. We do cry out and say, Lord, is it me? Is there something in me that would betray you, Jesus? God, I want to know this. I want it clearly revealed.

I want it laid out so that I can understand it. Oh, God, I'm asking you to give me your heart. I'm asking you to animate me, Holy Spirit.

I'm asking you to give me your voice. Don't let my own personality get mixed in with this message. Keep me out of it, Holy Ghost.

Help me to hide behind the cross that, Jesus, you may be seen and you may be heard. Come and touch your church. Lord, you love your church.

You love your ministry. My God, you love your people. Come and touch your house and touch your ministry.

Tear down that which is not good and build up that which is right. May there be a genuine joy in this house. May there be a pure praise and worship, oh God.

Oh, Jesus, we ask, Lord, that you guide us, lead us, teach us. We ask it in your precious name. Amen.

Now, Luke chapter 6, if you have a Bible, you may want to follow along with me today. Luke chapter 6, verse 12, tells us that Jesus prayed all night before selecting his disciples. It wasn't haphazard.

You know, some people are of the opinion that Judas was just a good choice gone bad. That's really not the case at all. He prayed before selecting Judas.

You see, there was a plan in the heart of God before the foundation of the world. Almighty God was not taken by surprise in the Garden of Eden when mankind fell. He knew, he knows everything.

He knew humanity would fall. He wasn't reaching back into the resources of heaven trying to find an answer to Satan who had just deceived Adam and Eve and caused them to be open to the knowledge of evil as well as good. No, he had a plan, and the plan included God's son becoming a man, walking this earth for three years and being betrayed into the hands of sinners, going to a cross and shedding his blood that all of humankind may have now access back into the relation to the very heart of God, the very life of God, not only in eternity but also here on this side of eternity.

It's always been God's heart to have his people back, and his plan began to unfold, and as it began to unfold, Jesus went and spent all night in prayer and came out of that time of prayer selecting disciples, those that would be the most intimately acquainted with him, those that would be responsible, as it is for receiving his word and passing that word on to subsequent generations. Of course, we know that to be the very foundation of the church, of Jesus Christ. It came to pass in those days, verse 12, chapter 6, he went into a mountain to pray and continued all night in prayer to God.

When it was day, he called to him his disciples and all of them, and of them he chose 12, whom he also named apostles. Then he goes on, verse 14 and 15, to name them all, and then verse 16, he says, and Judas, the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, who was the traitor. John chapter 6 and verse 64 tells us that he knew from the beginning who it was that was going to betray him.

It was no surprise to him. He said, there are some of you that believe not, for Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not and who should betray him. In other words, when Christ went all night into prayer, he had to select a particular kind of man to betray him.

Something had to be in this man's heart. This man had to have a certain thing in his heart, and it was this issue of his heart that would cause him to betray Christ, to sell him out. Now, there is a common theme that Judas was a thief, and it's true, he was.

The scripture bears witness to that, but I believe I can prove to you through the scriptures there was something else in his heart. The thievery was just a fruit of something else. There was an access point in this man's life that caused him to be a thief.

I don't believe he was selected to betray him because he was a thief. That was only a fruit of something else. We will get to it eventually.

John chapter 13, if you go there with me very quickly, I'm going to have to move quickly through the scriptures. John chapter 13, verse 18. He said, I speak not of you all, for I know whom I have chosen, but that the scripture may be fulfilled, that he that eats bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.

Now, that's Old Testament from the Psalms that was written by David, and it was concerning Ahithophel, his counselor, when David had to flee from Jerusalem because of a rebellion. And Ahithophel, who was a beloved trusted friend, stayed behind and joined into the rebellion. Now, I tell you before it come, that when it comes to pass, you may believe that I am he.

Verily I say unto you, that he that receives whatsoever I send, receives me, and he that receives me receives him that sent me. And when Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. John chapter 17.

Jesus again calls Judas the son of perdition, or the actual translation of that word perdition means destruction in the Greek text. In John 17, 11, he says, I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep to thine own name those that thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we.

Now, Christ is praying a prayer for his church. He says, I want them to be one with me, as I am with you. And God, I want them to be one with one another.

There's a unanimity of heart and spirit in those that are the church of Jesus Christ. Verse 12, he says, While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name. And those that thou gavest me, I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled.

Now, Christ knew that Judas was going to be lost. The word perdition means destruction. And it's easier said this way, he's a child of that which by virtue of what it is, is destined to suffer total ruin.

There is a death in this man. There's something at work in him. He will never reconcile it.

He has an obstinate heart. He will never look at it. There's something I've found in this man that caused me to select him, because he is a child of that which is destined to suffer eternal ruin.

Now, Matthew chapter 10, if you go back there in the gospel with me. Now, Matthew chapter 10 tells us that Judas was among those who personally knew the reality of God's power. Matthew 10 verse 1 says, When he had called unto him his 12 disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits.

His 12 disciples, he gave the whole 12 power. He cast them out to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. Now, the names of these apostles are, and then it goes through all the names again.

In verse 4, it says, Simon the Canaanite and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. Hard to think of betraying God, having known his power. Having been touched by him.

Having had the very hand of God, the infusion of God's life in us, and having it flow through us, and then to turn and betray his very cause. We think of it for a moment that Judas was there when he saw the incredible power that was in Christ when the loaves and the fishes were multiplied, and 5,000 men plus women and children in one instance were fed, and there was another instance when others were fed as well. He was there in the boat when he saw Christ walking on the water, and he saw Peter, a normal man, getting out of that boat, and under the influence and guidance of the word of God, beginning to walk on impossible places.

He saw it. He was in the boat when Christ stepped in and stood up and commanded the waves to stop, commanded the wind to cease, and the scripture says immediately there was a great calm. He was a partaker of the power of God.

He saw it. He was touched with it, and I think in my heart of the tragedy of a man or woman who knew God's power and then betrays that power. There's no greater tragedy, I think, in all the kingdom of God than a man or woman who had the anointing of God, who really was flowing in divine power, and then

because of an issue of heart, some access point, the enemy gets a hold of them, and they begin to still move with the knowledge of that power, but so ushering in confusion into the body of Jesus Christ because the sheep themselves are looking in their trouble.

They're saying, this can't be right, but yet there seems to be a knowledge of the power of God. So difficult for them to begin to reconcile the two, but I'm not going to show you exactly what I feel was the access point. If you go with me to John chapter 12, where was the access point in Judas' life? John chapter 12, I think, clearly shows it.

Now, this is in the house of Mary and Martha and Lazarus. This is an incredible time. Lazarus has been raised from the dead.

They're sitting in the house, and Jesus, it was six days before the Passover, he came to Bethany where Lazarus, which had been dead, was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. And there they made him supper, and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. You know, many here today, honestly, you were raised from the dead, whether you know it or not.

First of all, you were dead in trespasses and sins. You would be dead were it not for the intervention of Christ. There are some powerful testimonies.

I'm sure when you have 3,000 people gathered together, you have very, very powerful testimonies of the resurrection life of Jesus Christ. There are some of you, perhaps like I feel that I honestly can, you look back at pictures of what you were before I was saved at 24, and you look back at pictures, and you say, that man doesn't live anymore. That man is dead.

There is now a new man. Somebody else has taken his place. I've been infused with the life of God.

You look at your face. You look at the scowl. You look at the attitude.

You look at the hardness, and you begin to realize, God, that man is dead, and a new man has come out of the grave. Thanks be to God by the power of God, by the power of God's grace. We're all sitting next to Lazarus as if we're sitting next to genuine believers in Jesus Christ.

We are sitting next to people that have been raised from the dead, and Lazarus was sitting at the table, and into this scene comes Mary, the sister of Lazarus, and she took a pound of ointment, of spikenard, and says, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair, and the house was filled with the order of the ointment. Now, this is pure worship. This is pure worship.

The scripture tells us in more than one place that this was very costly, perhaps the equivalent of a year's wages. I don't know what it represented to her. Maybe it was an heirloom, something that was passed on to her from her father.

Perhaps it was the hope that she had to sell this one day for her children's education or her own future retirement. I don't know what it was, but I do know that she took it because there was something greater than that which had been handed to her in this world. And she took that which she had or perhaps formerly trusted in, and she willingly, because she had found something greater.

Sitting in the house was her brother who had been raised from the dead, and sitting at the table was the Son of God. And she began to realize who this was. She began to realize that there's no fear in yielding

oneself, yielding one's future plans, everything.

Yielding one's trust to this Messiah. She wasn't afraid, and she took that which was the most costly to her, and she took it, and she broke it on his feet. And the scripture says the odor of it filled the house.

Filled the house, so there's no more wonderful worship than a yielded people. I don't know if you've ever been in a place where there's only maybe two or three or four gathered, but the people in that house are yielded to God. The worship is wonderful.

It's awesome. There's a presence of the Lord. There's a savor of Christ that defies understanding.

When there are yielded brothers and sisters, not people gathering to try to infuse some personal agenda and get God to stamp it with his approval, but saying, no Lord, that which is most important to me, I willingly let it go. I willingly yield my future. I yield my career.

I yield my family. I yield my plans. I yield my objectives.

You are the God that can raise the dead. I yield. I yield it all.

I give it all to you. Take it to the last drop. And the scripture tells us the house was filled.

The house was filled not with songs, not with just noise, not with just people clapping their hands, but there was a perfume. I tell you, beloved, when we are yielded to the purposes of God, when God knows he has a people whose trust has been placed in his hands, when there are people who are willing to lay everything down at his feet, their songs are no longer songs. They're an absolute perfume.

They don't just fill the house, but they come right before the throne of Christ in heaven. Absolute worship, absolute praise. Oh, beloved, when we are abandoned to God, when we are satisfied where we live, when we are thankful for what he's given us, when we trust him for all of our tomorrows and we lift our hands to him, that is a perfume.

There's nothing in the world like it. Verse 4 says, Then said one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for 300 pence and given to the poor? And this he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief and had the bag and bare what was therein. And this is where most people get the theory that Judas was a thief and that's why he betrayed Christ.

No, I believe he's a thief for another reason. This is the reason. Here we see it.

This is the betrayer's heart. Beloved, you've got to have grace to hear this. The betrayer is a man or woman who sees absolutely no value whatsoever in any act of worship which does not personally profit him.

That's the betrayer. He couldn't care less that Lazarus is alive from the dead. Soul winning is not his burden.

He's not moved by true worship. He's not moved by any act of worship that does not personally profit him. He sees only value to God when it increases his sense of worth, wealth, and power.

Deeply in his heart, he hates yielded and sacrificial worship. All that's laying hold of Christ and all that's truly worthy of our devotion. Deeply he hates it.

He would never say so. He may find some other reason, some other accusation. But he hates anything that doesn't personally profit him.

John chapter 13 verse 2, we come now to the Passover supper before Calvary. The scripture tells us, in verse 1 it says, Now the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, and having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end. And supper being ended, now the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him.

Now it's important to understand something here. At this point, the word having put, in the original context means the impulse. He hadn't fully formed the intent at this point to betray Christ, but the impulse was in his heart to betray Christ.

He was being moved upon. Satan was now whispering into this man's heart, betray him, sell him out for 30 pieces of silver. I want to talk to you about why Satan has access to infuse this betrayal into his heart at this particular time.

All we have to do is go back a few verses of scripture and go ahead a few. In chapter 12 and verse 24, Jesus is saying, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone. But if it die, it brings forth much fruit.

And he that loves his life shall lose it, and he that hates his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am, there shall also my servant be. You see, just before Satan is speaking this into his heart, Jesus is talking about giving everything up, yielding all, and he's inviting those in the room to join him.

And Judas is not interested in joining him. Judas is the type of man that says, I'm not interested in dying, I'm interested in living. I'm not interested in losing, I'm interested in gaining.

I'm not interested in being a servant, I'm interested in being a king. I'm not interested in the invitation you're giving me. There's no personal profit in any of this.

And Satan is beginning to infuse into his heart, he's betrayed you, betray him. See, from the beginning, when Judas was selected, when he saw the power, when he saw Christ, it had to be because of his heart that he saw that this, this is my, this is my access point to being somebody. This is my access point to power.

This is my access point to wealth. Christ is my access point to every unfulfilled desire in my heart, but it was the desire of his heart, not the desire of God's heart. And now chapter 13, verse 4, it said, he rose from supper, that's Jesus, and laid aside his garments and took a towel and girded himself.

And after that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Verse 13, he said, you call me master and lord and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your lord and master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

I have given you an example that you should do as I have done unto you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord and neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If you know these things, happy are ye if you do them.

I speak not, he said, in verse 18, of you all whom I have chosen. I know whom I have chosen, but that the scripture may be fulfilled, he that eats bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. Christ is saying, you see, in this particular chapter, he's talking first about dying in chapter 12.

The devil comes and begins to tempt him because he doesn't really want to go that way. And now, after supper's ended, Jesus finally seals it as it is the heart of the betrayer. And he gets up and takes a towel and begins to wash people's feet.

And he's revealing himself as a servant to all and he says, you're happy if you do these things. And I believe it's at this point that Judas says, this is enough of this for me. I'm not interested in washing people's feet.

I'm interested in glory. I'm interested in kingship, lordship. I'm not interested in walking the pathway of humility and death and yielding.

I think of the Old Testament where I preached for years that it was Solomon that split the kingdom of Israel. David passed on to Solomon a whole kingdom as it was in Solomon or laid the foundation for the splitting of Israel into the northern and southern kingdoms. I was only reminded by the Lord as I was reading the scripture just recently that I'm wrong about that.

It's not Solomon who split the kingdom although he laid the foundation. It was his son, Rehoboam. Rehoboam was also handed an entire kingdom.

And the older man who had lived with his father came to him when the people came and said, make our yoke easier. We will be your servants. And the older man said to him, if you will be a servant to them this day and speak to them and serve them and answer and speak good words to them, they will be your servants forever.

But the scripture says he forsook the counsel of the old men and so all Israel departed to their tents and of course the kingdom then subsequently split into the northern and southern tribes. It was Rehoboam that split the kingdom, not Solomon. It was the man who refused to be a servant who split the kingdom.

Well folks, that's got to get in our hearts. We have to ask ourselves the question, do people see servanthood in my life and ministry? Am I a servant to the body of Jesus Christ or am I trying to use people to promote some personal agenda? Which is it? When Christ looks at me, what does he see? Have I truly, you remember the issue in the Old Testament that God had with his shepherds. He says, you don't go to the people, you don't bind up their wounds, you don't visit, you don't go to the sick and put healing ointment on them, you don't go to those that are in prison.

I have to ask my own heart that question. Are Christ's ways my ways? Is it I? Am I leading others to follow Jesus? And if not, is it possible that my ways are betraying him? If ever there's a fear of the Lord that would get in my heart, it would be over these issues. Folks, I fear success a whole lot more than failure because it can cause a man, a woman to go in a direction that betrays Christ and we're not even aware of it.

Losing the servant's heart. If I stand and preach in this public today and I'm not truly a servant to you, then I have to answer to God for it. Then I have betrayed Christ even preaching this message.

If in my heart I'm not your servant, it's not good enough just to have it on paper. It has to be in the heart. It has to have become part of my life.

It has to have raised me from the dead because no natural man wants to be a servant. Every natural man wants to reign. No natural man wants to give up, and I'm talking about that man without Christ, wants to give up that which is most precious.

He wants to hold on to it and build it and use Jesus Christ as a framework of reference to cause it to increase. At the Last Supper, I've read different commentators on this. There are variants of opinions, obviously.

One commentator said, when Jesus dipped in the dish and handed it to Judas because they were saying, who is it? And he said, it's he that dips with me when I have dipped the sop as it is and handed it to him, that's who it is. One commentator said that this was Christ making one final appeal to a man who wouldn't change. He was holding out his hand as it is to him and saying, Judas, everything you need comes from my hand.

It's not in your ambition. It's not in the bag of money on your side. It's not in furthering your agenda.

It's from my hand that you're going to get life. Another gospel account, Matthew chapter 26, says that as they went around the table saying, is it I? Is it I? Is it I? Is it I? And finally it came to Judas and he said, is it I? And Christ looked right at him and said, yes. King James says, thou hast said.

Is it me? Yes. I mean, that's fairly direct. It is you.

You will betray me. You see, folks, this man was confronted with the issues of his heart and now he had a choice to make. Just as you and I always do when God confronts us in the scriptures.

But instead of finding fault with himself, he found fault with God. You see in John 6, verse 70, he said, have I not chosen you 12 and one of you is the devil? Now this is right in the beginning. This is right at the time when Christ is saying, if you don't eat my flesh, if you don't drink my blood, you have no life in you.

In other words, your life comes from a total immersion, as it is, in my presence. You have to be in this book. You have to trust me for your cleansing.

If it's not my life, it's not life. That's what he was saying. And from that time, many said, no, this is too hard.

And they walked away. Then he turns to the disciples and says, well, will you go too? And that's where Simon Peter made his famous statement. Well, Lord, where will we go? You alone have the words of everlasting life.

And then Jesus turns and says, have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? Now the word devil in the Greek is diabolos, and it means accuser. It's a different word than the word that is used for Satan elsewhere. Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is an accuser? And that's what I really feel is the key to the understanding of what this Judas concept is.

It's when a man is confronted with his sin. He is confronted with the issues of his heart, and instead of accusing himself, he turns it and accuses God. And he says, God, your ways are not right.

Your truth is wrong. I have a better idea of how this kingdom can work. And so in his lust for gain and power, he leads a revolt against God.

It's an incredible thing when you begin to see this thing. Chapter 18, verse 1. He said, When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Sidron, where there was a garden, into the which he entered and his disciples, and Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place. For Jesus oft times resorted thither with his disciples.

Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns, torches, and weapons. Now he leads a revolt. It's a revolt, beloved.

And he leads the people into the intimate place. You see, it's in the intimate place. He's familiar with the intimate place.

He knew Jesus went there because he went there most every evening when he was in that vicinity and he knew it was a place of prayer. It was in that place that Christ was laying his life down to fulfill the will of the Father that you and I could be here and have hope today. We could be redeemed.

It's in that place that the purposes and plans of God are being revealed to the heart of Christ. There's a great struggle going on there. It's while he's praying and saying, God, my Father, in my natural, I don't want to do this.

And if it's possible, take the cup from me. But nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done. He's showing the way, the pathway as it is to the life and the power of God.

Judas is not interested in this. And so he gets a troop and leads that troop into the intimate place. Not to become part of God's plan, but to capture it.

Scriptures tells us that he's leading. Jesus identified the men that he's leading. They're men who love titles.

They love to be called rabbi, master, teacher. They love the chief seats at banquets. Love to be elevated as it is above the people.

Not interested in servanthood, but to be seen, to be known as some great one. They love recognition. They love to be greeted in the marketplace.

They love to lay burdens on people, yet don't lift any of them with even one of their fingers. They love money. They have an outward appearance of righteousness, Christ said, but inside they're full of uncleanness and death.

They don't deal honestly with God. How could they possibly deal honestly with men? Paul the Apostle said they have a zeal, but not according to righteousness. They have a zeal.

I think it really shows the most in Matthew 26, 49 when Judas comes into the garden and he comes up to Jesus and kisses him and says, Hail, Master. Now, the word in the Greek is charo, and you know what it means? It means grace, rejoice, and be glad. That's incredible.

I mean, that's the epitome of misguided religion. He is leading a revolt into the intimate place to take away that place which really is the place of life in Christ. It's a place where a person dies to their will and takes up the will of God.

And he's leading a virtual revolt into that place and walks up to Jesus and says, Rejoice. This is a good day. Be glad.

Hail. Folks, is all zeal righteous? Because somebody says they're seeking God. Is it possible they're not really seeking God? Is every movement that says we're pressing into God really pressing into God? Is it possible some of them are an absolute revolt against God? You see, that's a question only the Holy Spirit can answer to your heart.

I'm not going to attempt to answer it. God has to answer it to you. I see personally two streams of Christianity from the very garden of Gethsemane to our day and to the day that Christ returns.

Two streams, both pouring in, converging in Gethsemane. Both know this to be the intimate place of Christ. One stream of Christianity is sometimes, in that time for sure, they were confused, they were weak, but nevertheless they were embracing the cross of Jesus Christ.

They didn't fully understand it, but they knew somehow his death, somehow his death was going to accomplish a purpose they couldn't understand. Now today we can understand it. Today we understand that embracing not only his physical death on Calvary gives us life and eternal life, but embracing the will of God and the dying to our own ambitions and plans and everything else the natural man wants gives us access to the divine life of Christ and the will of God, the plan of God for our lives.

And the other stream is invading the place of intimacy to capture Christ and to force God to conform to its perception of what the Christian life should be. It's a revolt, folks. It's the Judas factor in ministry.

It's always been with us and always will be. We all make mistakes. I have attempted to substitute my own ways for God's many times.

King David did this, but King David had within himself a cry for truth. We all make mistakes. I thank God for grace.

There may be some here today who say, Pastor, my God, I am absolutely cut to the core. I'm seeing something that I've never seen. I'm understanding something I've never understood.

Is there hope for me? Especially, perhaps, if you're a pastor and you're leading your people in a way that isn't good. You see, David had a cry and the cry was, Search me, O God. Know my heart.

Try me and see if there be any wicked way in me. And we know that David sinned. We know that he failed numerous times.

But God was so pleased with that kind of a man, He called him, He said, He's a man after my own heart. It didn't mean that David always did what was right. It meant that David ultimately wants my heart.

He wants what I want. And we see long after David's death that even in times when he should have brought judgment to situations, he said, God was so moved by a man who just simply wanted his heart. A man who was king.

A man who had it all. He had an army. He had a kingdom.

He had riches. And he had it all. But when he would come in the temple and sit before God, he'd say, Who am I? And he had that inner knowledge that God, I'm nothing without you.

I'm nothing without you. If I ever start to lean on these things, I'm going to lose it all. A man who never lost touch with his roots.

He never lost touch with the fact that he one day used to be in a sheepfold. That God's power came upon him. God had done exploits, but it was all because of God.

He wanted God's agenda, not his own. Chronicles tells us in 1 Chronicles 21 that David made a terrible mistake one time. He was winning great victories and he sent Joab out to number the army.

Now he was beginning to move away from an absolute trust in God and Joab stood before him and said, David, don't do this. Joab's out fighting the battles and he knows, he said, God makes us so many more than we are. What's the point? It's going to change our focus.

Don't do this. The Bible tells us that David's order was such an abhorrence that he didn't bother to even number Benjamin. He didn't want to do it because he said, it's going to do something to us.

It's going to take away our trust in God. But David did it anyway. And then the wrath of the Lord came because God can't allow this.

When we begin to look away from trusting anything but him, he's got to come and deal with it because he loves his people and he knows how powerless we become when our focus is on anything but him. And he sent an angel to Jerusalem and to destroy, it says in Chronicles 21, 1 Chronicles, and the Lord beheld it. Then he repented of the evil and said to the angel that destroyed it, it's enough, stay thy hand.

And the angel of the Lord stood by the threshing floor in the Jebusite. And David lifted up his eyes and saw the angel of the Lord stand between earth and heaven having a sword drawn in his hand and stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders of Israel who were clothed in sackcloth fell on their faces and David said to God, is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? Even I it is that have sinned.

In other words, he wasn't saying, is it I? He said, God, it's me. There are people that are struggling and suffering and misled, but it's me that has done it. I have misled them, O God.

And he said, but as for the sheep, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, O Lord my God, be on me and on my father's house, but let not thy people that they should be plagued. Then the angel of the Lord, the moment, the moment, David said, God, forgive me. The word came.

The moment he said, forgive me. The moment he said, God, I have misled your people. I misled maybe my own house, my own heart.

And he said, God, forgive me. Then the scripture says, the angel of the Lord commanded Gad, that's a prophet of God, to say to David that he should go up to set up an altar to the Lord in the threshing floor of Orm in the Jebusite. Now this we know to be the site where Solomon eventually built the temple, where God's glory was manifested.

God said to David, now I'm gonna tell you, go back and build an altar and build it in the place that I tell you and build it the way I tell you to build it and do it the way I tell you to do it. And so David heads to the very place that God sends him to and there's a man on this particular mountain called Moriah. His name is Orn in the Jebusite.

He's just an average family man and he's got two sons. The scripture tells us he's threshing wheat. It's his family business.

He sees the king coming. But the scripture also tells us that Orn saw the destroying angel with his sword in his hand over Jerusalem. Although the sword at that time was staid, he saw the danger.

I believe that there are many, many people in our nation today who, our nations throughout the world who see the danger. They see it. They know that we're living in perilous times but they don't know what to do.

Orn and David had the word and here the two begin to meet and this is where the ministry and the church have got to come to. There are many, many people who see but they don't know what to do. And a self-seeking ministry can't lead them.

A self-seeking ministry knows nothing about the heart of God. Doesn't understand the things of God and can't lead the people. And so David comes and says to Orn and give me the place of this threshing floor that I may build an altar to the Lord and give it to me for the full price that the plague may be stayed from the people.

And Orn said to David take it and let the Lord, my Lord the King do that which is good in his eyes. I give you the auction for the burnt offerings and the threshing instruments for wood and the wheat for the meat offering. I give it all.

That's an incredible thing. This is this man's future. It's his college fund for his sons.

It's his livelihood. And Orn said I see the need and you are bringing me the word. I give you everything I have.

Folks when you get the word you don't have to push anybody to give to the work of God. You don't have to push people to go to the mission field. You don't even have to twist arms for them to get excited about what it is.

When it's God people see and will move with the agenda that the Holy Spirit is speaking into the heart. And the King said to Orn and no he said but I'll buy it for the full price. He said I'll not take that which is thine for the Lord nor offer burnt offerings without cost.

And David gave to Orn and for the place 600 shekels of gold by weight and he built an altar to the Lord and God answered him from heaven by fire coming upon the altar of the burnt offering. And the Lord commanded the angel and he put up his sword again into the sheath. And then David had an incredible revelation.

The next chapter the first verse. A revelation that would do us well to have again today. Then David said this is the house of the Lord God and this is the altar of the burnt offering of Israel.

David said this is the house of God. It's a place where no one offers to God that which is without cost. And some by God's grace give it all.

It's a place where every man and woman says I will not offer to God that which costs me personally nothing. I'm not in this relationship just for what God can do for me. But I'm in it for how God can use me that his name may be glorified in my generation.

Yes David made many mistakes but he had the ability to say search me. Is it me oh God? Search me. If we are truly pressing into Christ today we must know.

My God am I pressing in to further some personal agenda that I have? Am I pressing in to build my own kingdom? Am I pressing in because I want to make a name for myself? Am I pressing in because somebody somewhere spoke a word over my life that I was to be great? Why am I pressing in? Is it because I want the heart of Christ? Or is there another reason? My seeking of you Jesus is it for real? Or am I betraying you? Or are we pressing in to find God's plan and God's place for us through which alone Christ may be glorified. There is no other way. Ministry today would tell us that if it's God it has to be big.

If it's God it has to be on the up and up. No, my Bible seems to tell me that if it's God it has to be servanthood at the heart of it. If it's God we have to be willing to go and do what he asks us to do and we do it with all our might.

Folks, I ran the roads in another country for years trying to produce what I thought would be revival only to find out that God wasn't interested in any of my plans or any of my ambition. He had given me a little flock in the country and he said when I finally was broken he said this is all you will answer for when you stand before me. There's a little roll of names of people that I died for that I love, that I give my blood for that are my church and I put them in your hand.

You're not going to answer for any of your travels and crusades and projects and all the rest of these things but you will answer for those names because that's what I gave you to do. Beloved, the freedom when the agenda dies is unbelievable. Unbelievable.

Unbelievable. Incredible. The freedom when you have the liberty just to find the will of God and say I'm happy.

I'm happy to do this because one day I'm going to stand before my savior and he's going to say to me you've done a few things well. Isn't that amazing? A lot of people leave the few out of there. You've done just a few things.

That's all I've asked you to do and you've done it well. You've done it as a servant. You've been an example of Christ to the people that I've given you.

I feel today for the number of ministers that have been swayed by the Judas company and feel that because they only have a flock of 50 or 100, 150 that somehow they've failed God. No, you fail God when you fail to find his agenda. You fail God when you fail to be a servant.

You fail God when you fail to visit your sheep. You fail God when you fail to bind up those that are broken. You fail God when you fail to seek him and bring a living word to his people that causes them to find Christ and live for him.

That's when we fail God. We fail God when we substitute our agenda for the will of God. We fail God when we see no personal value in any act of worship that doesn't prosper us.

That's when we fail God. That's when we allow the Judas concept of ministry to enter into us and join the crowd with their lanterns and torches and weapons coming into Gethsemane and saying, Hail! Rejoice! And all it is is a rebellion. My God, help us.

My God, my cry is, help the church of Jesus Christ. My cry has been to wash your feet. My cry has been to help you.

No, I don't have all the answers and no doubt in the future that you will be among those that would be able to come and help me. But for this day, the Lord has, by his choice, put me here to speak to you. My heart is to help you.

I've found peace. I've found rest. It doesn't matter to me anymore what God would have me to do as long as it's God.

The numbers don't have to get bigger for it to be God. If I'm his servant, he should be able to take me to a little place in the future. Never.

No, maybe there's 30 people somewhere seeking God and if I am his, he should be able to speak to me and say, Go there and pastor them. If I have an agenda, then I'll never be open to his voice. But if I am the servant of the living God, then he has the right to my life.

He has the right to my future, my family, has the right to everything I've entrusted into his hands. Hallelujah. Lord Jesus, you are the prince of peace.

Your word says that your pathways are the ways of peace. There's only life in you. I'm asking you for great grace today.

I'm asking you to deliver every man and woman in this house who's caught by an agenda or hearing other voices. You said you wanted to draw us to you. You said, Oh Jerusalem, I longed to draw you.

I wanted to bring you right to my heart. And today, unlike that day, Lord, we say we come. It is me.

It is me, God. You have pointed something out in my heart, my life, my ministry. It is me.

And today, oh God, I want to lay down my agenda and my discontentment I want to lay down my will and thoughts. I want you to capture me again. Capture me, Holy Spirit.

Capture me, living Christ. Capture my heart and renew my passion for you again. Renew my passion for your ways and your will.

Renew my heart. Renew my home. Renew my prayer life.

Renew my desire to honor you. My God, come and renew me. If that's honestly in your heart and the Holy Spirit is speaking to you, only if the Holy Spirit is speaking to you, please stand with me right now.

Just stand with me and we're going to pray together. Would you lead us in a song? Take a moment now. Just talk to him.

Talk to him. Don't stand because everybody else does. You might be walking righteously, but if the Holy Spirit is speaking to you, only.

Now pour your heart out. Now tell him you love him. Now bless him.

Now bless him just by taking that which is precious and breaking it on his feet. Oh, Jesus. Mighty God.

We break our agendas, Lord. We break self-image, plans, ambitions, wrong concepts of Christ. We break it all.

And we lift our hands and we lift our voices to you. Living Christ, be glorified in this place. Be glorified in our ministries.

Give us a living word again. Oh, God, give us a living word. Our generation needs you, Lord.

Give us the word, oh God. Help us to lay everything else down. Forgive us, God.

Forgive us. God, for leading so many in so many ways, they shouldn't be going. Forgive us, God.

Give us your word. My God, give us your word. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah, hallelujah.

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