

# Learning From Judas

by Sandeep Poonen

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*The sermon explores the contrasting paths of Judas and Peter, emphasizing the importance of viewing Jesus as Lord and the necessity of wholehearted surrender to avoid spiritual downfall.*

**Duration:** 17:24

**Scripture:** Matthew 26:21, Matthew 27:3

**Topics:** "Discipleship", "Betrayal And Redemption"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the contrasting paths of Peter and Judas, two disciples who started well but ended up differently. It explores how Judas, despite initially following Jesus wholeheartedly, gradually reduced Jesus to a mere rabbi, lacking full surrender. The sermon emphasizes the importance of freely giving all to Jesus, being willing to obey wholeheartedly, and avoiding the pitfalls of pride and partial surrender that lead to a Judas-like betrayal. It highlights the significance of responding to rebuke with humility and returning to God's people after failure, drawing parallels between the choices of Peter and Judas after their respective denials and betrayals.

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## Transcript

In light of what we've heard, I want to share just a few things that separate two people who start out really good, but ended up, one ended up like the devil himself. One was Peter, the other is Judas. She turned with me to Matthew chapter 26, Matthew chapter 26, verse 21.

This is three years after Jesus selected the 12 disciples. When Jesus selected the 12 disciples, all of them were wholehearted. Some people think that Judas was always evil.

I don't believe that. I'm saying it's definitely not evidence of scripture, and I can't imagine Jesus choosing a disciple who was evil. Judas was wholehearted.

Judas left everything to follow Jesus, just like Peter did. Something happened in the three and a half years that he was with Jesus that you see as the culmination of what Judas ended up doing. The spirit of Judas is to betray Jesus and to push that sword into Jesus, to cause Jesus to be killed.

Judas is sitting there with the disciples, and Jesus is eating, and they're eating, and Jesus said in verse 21, one of you is going to betray me. And all of them started to say, one after the other, surely not I, Lord. But see Judas' response in verse 25, Judas, who was betraying him, said, surely it is not I, Rabbi.

Here's the difference. Did Judas respect Jesus? Yes. But Judas had reduced Jesus to a rabbi.

Who do you say that I am? Jesus asked the disciples. Peter said, you're not a rabbi, you're not a great prophet, you're a messiah, a son of God, a Lord. But Judas saw Jesus just as a rabbi, a very good teacher, but not somebody he could wholeheartedly and fully and freely surrender.

All to Jesus I surrender, all to him I freely give. Beware dear brothers and sisters, when you lose the heart of freely giving, God has been speaking to you. God has been speaking to all of us.

What's been our response? Have we agreed with it? It's a good word. Yes, I've got to obey it sometime. Yes, I'll obey it tomorrow.

And tomorrow has come. And next week has come. And one month now in 2017 has gone.

But he's just a good teacher. He's not a Lord to whom we freely surrender. Let us beware.

Let us beware of it. Sitting in the presence of Jesus, eating food with Jesus, being a disciple of Jesus, Jesus has not exposed you as yet, but not fully surrendered. Calling Jesus a very good title, rabbi, good teacher, but he's lost that supreme place in your life as being the only thing.

He's just a great person now. He's just a great teacher. Let us beware of that because that's the room in which the devil can work with.

Let's remember about this too. All the disciples were about to desert Jesus. They were going to flee from Jesus.

All of them. All of them who called him Lord too were going to run away from Jesus, but not all of them were going to betray Jesus. All of them had an instinctive response with which they responded to Jesus, which was, Lord Jesus, you're my Lord.

I surrender freely to you. I'll do it as you want me to do it. That had gone from Judas.

Judas had just seen him as a rabbi. So let us be very afraid. We're going to have communion in a few minutes.

Let us be very afraid of having communion with Jesus, claiming to eat the bread and drink the cup, but not living with Jesus as your Lord. He cannot be interacted with in anybody else. Otherwise, you're on the pathway to becoming a Judas.

The other thing in Matthew chapter, one thing you notice about Judas Iscariot, if you read the gospels, you never see him asking a question. You see Peter asking questions, you see Philip asking questions, you never see Judas Iscariot asking questions. Judas, that says Judas asked a question, but the authors of scripture go on to say it's not that Judas, it's the other Judas, not the Judas who betrayed him.

Judas Iscariot's never asking questions to Jesus. Why? You think he knew everything? Maybe he did think he knew everything. But I also think he saw Jesus as a hard taskmaster.

He was afraid to be wrong when asked. I don't know, but afraid to get it wrong. So I'm not going to ask.

This reminded me of the man who was one talent, just didn't have 10 talents, didn't have 5 talents, just had one talent, but was so afraid to get it wrong. He didn't want to take any chances with asking the wrong

questions to God, saying, really? You're that bad? And so he's afraid to open himself up to other people, lives very private lives. Did I do it? Did I say anything wrong? No, I didn't say anything.

So you can't catch me for saying something wrong, but afraid, so afraid to live with Jesus, so afraid to ask questions of Jesus. And I find that when I am living with my life, where God's kingdom is genuinely number one in my life, I can be very free with God. I can make mistakes.

I can say things that are wrong. I can do things that are wrong. It's never okay, but it's quick for me to bounce back because my heart wants God's kingdom most of all.

That's what it was true about the 11 disciples. But the reason why Judas wasn't that way, it says, because when, in the time, the one time he did ask a question was in John chapter 12. The only time we see Judas asking a question was when he asked, why was this money not given to the poor? What's wrong with that question? What's wrong with saying, isn't money better spent than just buying it on perfume to pour on Jesus' feet? Isn't it better, 300 denarii, to feed a lot of homeless people? Absolutely right question.

Absolutely right potential use of the money. Technically right. Theologically right.

But the heart was completely wrong. There's no heart of love in there. It was spoken out of a heart of theological correctness, not a heart overflowing with love.

We can be so wrong in the things we say and the things we do, but it doesn't come out of a heart of love. And Judas didn't have a heart of love because he was a thief, it says there. He had a secret love for money, not a heart full of seeking the kingdom of God.

All the other 11 disciples made plenty of mistakes. All the 11 disciples deserted Jesus, but their heart was fully for the kingdom of God. And out of their heart came mistakes and it was okay.

And they had that freedom to ask stupid questions and be rebuked by Jesus. But the one person who was afraid to ask questions, so afraid to do something wrong, the reason they were so afraid was because they were a thief inside. They loved money.

He loved money inside. And I have found that there's a freedom with which I can live my life. A freedom to live with joy before God, not afraid of the mistakes I can make when I genuinely die to myself.

When I want nothing out of this world but just God's name to be glorified, there's a freedom. It doesn't mean that I won't make mistakes. It won't mean that I'll always say the right thing even though I want to.

But there's a freedom with which I live my life. And I think there are two groups of people, two sets of disciples in Jesus' time, in this church, in every church. Among the disciples, people like Judas, for whom Jesus is not Lord because there's some areas in their lives that they're unwilling to surrender.

And there's some love of comfort or their own agenda or their own personal agenda or their own family agenda or their own corporate agenda or whatever it is, there's some corner of the heart that has not been freely, fully surrendered. And so that makes us tentative. That makes us afraid to ask questions and afraid to be rebuked.

Are you afraid to be rebuked by a godly man? Or do you say, let the righteous smite me? That's what the Bible says. Let the righteous smite me. Do not despise the discipline of godly people.

I've asked a lot of stupid questions. I've said a lot of stupid things. So thankful I had righteous people over me who rebuked me.

It's been for my good. But every time I've been rebuked, I'll tell you what I've had to ask myself. Are you going to shut up now? Are you going to go crawl under a shell and be, put your light under a bushel? Or are you going to embrace it? And are you going to continue to say, the only one who's going to lose is going to be the devil.

But I'm not going to be the one losing by hiding under a shell when I get rebuked. That attitude to keep, it's never easy to be rebuked. It never is.

I know. I have been rebuked. I know when we have to rebuke others, it's never easy.

The question is, what do you do when you are rebuked? Are you going to hide under a shell? I've done that too many times. Or are you going to say, God, the only thing that matters is my kingdom. I have to die anyways.

So if somebody saw something in me that needs to be rebuked, that needed to be killed. Not just rebuked. The elder struck me.

I need to take that self and kill it. Put it on the cross. If I have that attitude that the ugliest thing in the universe is really myself.

It'll make rebuke a little bit easier. But Judas was so afraid of being rebuked. Judas was so afraid of saying that his game needed to be improved.

That his life needed to get better. And he got so sensitive. And he pouted.

Took it out on his family. Took it out on his children. Broken lives.

And then we're going down the line with Judas. If we're doing that. He got offended when he was corrected.

We see that Peter never got offended. He got hurt. He didn't get offended.

And the last thing is. What did he do after he failed? After Judas failed. It says in Matthew chapter 27.

I want us to read Matthew chapter 27 very carefully. And if you were to not read the word Judas. I wonder if you would say.

Man what a wonderful thing that he did. Matthew chapter 27 verse 3. Just don't ignore the word Judas if you can. Then when this disciple of Jesus.

Who had betrayed him. Saw that he had been condemned. Saw that Jesus had been condemned.

That Jesus had suffered as a result of his betraying. This disciple of Jesus felt remorse. Performed restitution.

Returned the 30 pieces of silver. And said I have sinned. I am a sinner.

By betraying innocent blood. And he threw the pieces into the sanctuary. And departed.

Sounds like all the right things a disciple should do. But then the last verse in verse 5. Tells me where he went wrong. He went away.

And hanged himself. Peter. Didn't betray Jesus.

But he denied Jesus. Judas betrayed Jesus once. Peter denied Jesus three times.

To a servant girl. He too wept bitterly. But the last part of verse 5. Was where Peter and Judas diverged.

Judas went home and hanged himself. Peter went back. To be with the disciple.

He didn't go back and sulk in the corner. He didn't go and say I need to go and become. I'm a nobody.

I'm going to go to Arabia. I'm going to go just be a fisherman again. He may have had all those thoughts.

But he did that with the disciple. From your own life. From my own life.

I can tell you. Where the devil has the most fertile soil. Is when I go and be by myself.

After I have failed God. When you see the areas. When you have failed God.

You're no different from Peter. You're no different from Judas. We all fail God.

The question is how do you act. After you fail God. Some of us like Judas.

Go and hang ourselves. Beat ourselves up. Have a pity party.

And I'm no good to God. Peter on the other hand. Went back.

Was among the disciples. He was among the people of God. But ready to hear a woman.

Come to him three days from now and say. Jesus. He was a hound.

He didn't have some great prophet. He didn't have some great angel. He was so bold.

That even hear the word of Jesus through. One of the women. Were not even counted as one of the 12 disciples.

But he was ready. Praying for Jesus to reach back into him. Dear brothers and sisters.

Let's not be like Judas. Let's not stop calling Jesus our Lord. And I'm not talking about words.

I'm talking about a lifestyle. If you call Jesus your Lord. Freely surrender.

Freely obey. Leave everything on the altar. We're not playing games here.

We're talking about the life of Peter. We're talking about the life of Judas. None of us want to have the life of Judas.

Let us beware. When Jesus doesn't become some filthy person. But Jesus has even become a rabbi.

A good teacher. Great words. Yeah.

I love coming to church. I love listening to it. When are you going to obey? When are you going to wholeheartedly obey? And drop the pride.

And not just think of these as words of wisdom. But fully and freely surrender all. And let us have our hearts purely for God.

And let us be free. Let us be tentative. Afraid to ask questions.

Afraid of getting beat up. Jesus is a good God. That's unchangeable.

Let him rebuke us if he needs to. Let us root out all the pride. Let us let the fire of God.

Let the fire of trials. Let the fire of whatever it is purify me. That's the only purpose God's allowing of fire.

Let me not pout. And when I'm even in my greatest failures. Lord I want to be among your people.

I don't know where you are Lord. I'm lost. I've betrayed you.

But I'll be among your people. And you'll come and speak to me. And he surely will.

He'll draw you back. He'll make you one of the greatest apostles. It can happen to Peter.

It can happen to us too.

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