

Anatomy of Betrayal

by William Shishko

William Shishko's sermon explores the anatomy of betrayal through the lens of Judas Iscariot, urging self-examination and reflection on grace and faith within the church community.

Duration: 57:04

Scripture: 1 Kings 18:21, Psalm 41:1-3, John 13:27, 2 Corinthians 6:1, Hebrews 6:4-8, Revelation 22:17

Topics: "Betrayal"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Shishko discusses the theme of outward appearances and how they can be deceiving. He uses examples from the Bible, such as Jesus' interaction with Judas during the Last Supper, to illustrate this point. The sermon emphasizes the importance of discerning the true intentions and character of individuals, even when their outward actions may seem righteous. The sermon also highlights the significance of the Holy Spirit's work in guiding believers to see beyond outward appearances and discern the truth.

Transcript

Notice that following the message there will be a closing prayer and the benediction, but for various reasons I think that is most under edification, not against a hymn, but I think you'll see that we'll need that time of reflection. So just remember there will be still a coffee hour after morning worship. I hope you will avail yourself of that.

And I want to make a special plea to all of you to be present for the evening worship services. Try to get home in time that you can get some rest. But as I told my fellow elders today, after lots of thought and lots of prayer, I've decided to begin on the evenings that I have addressing the topic of salt and light, Christians in the public arena.

And I hope that you'll be here, bring some writing implements, although I actually have a handout for tonight. But I hope that these times will be helpful for you as we wrestle with what it is to be what our Lord tells us to be in the culture that we are in. And the other bulletin announcements, please note them.

Psalm 41, and this is actually page 595 in your pew Bibles. Psalm 41, Job's Psalms, Proverbs, middle of your Bibles. This is actually right before the second book of the 150 Psalms.

And it is a Psalm of David who is primarily in view here, though you'll note that our Lord is actually cited in verse 9 in the text that precedes our passage in John. So this does very much point us forward to our Lord who was betrayed in an even more amazing way than was David. Blessed is the one who considers the poor.

In the day of trouble, the Lord delivers him. The Lord protects him and keeps him alive. He's called blessed in the land.

You do not give him up to the will of his enemies. The Lord sustains him on his deathbed. In his illness, you restore him to full health.

As for me, I said, O Lord, be gracious to me. Heal me, for I have sinned against you. My enemies say of me in malice, when will he die and his name perish? And when one comes to see me, he utters empty words while his heart gathers iniquity.

When he goes out, he tells it abroad. All who hate me whisper together against me. They imagine the worst for me.

They say a deadly thing is poured out on him. He'll not rise again from where he lies. Even my close friend, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.

But you, O Lord, be gracious to me and raise me up that I may repay them. By this I know that you delight in me. My enemy will not shout in triumph over me.

But you've upheld me because of my integrity and set me in your presence forever. Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Amen and amen.

And David himself would be the first to say that it was not of him, but of his greater son, Jesus, of which it is true that he was upheld because of his integrity, and he does indeed sit in the Father's presence forever. John chapter 13, verses 21 to 30, please. We finally go back to the book of John after a couple of months of a break from the series of consecutive expository messages.

John chapter 13, and we resume where we left off last time, having gone through John 13 and verse 20. We're at verse 21, page 1145 in your pew Bibles. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and then Acts.

After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit and testified, Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me. The disciples looked at one another uncertain of whom he spoke. Literally, they were at a loss as to what to say.

One of his disciples whom Jesus loved was reclining at table close to Jesus, so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it. And so when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.

Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, What you're going to do, do quickly. Now no one at the table knew why he had said this to him.

Some thought that because Judas had the money bag, Jesus was telling him, Buy what we need for the feast, or that he should give something to the poor. So after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

The grass withers, the flowers fade, but the word of our God will stand forever and ever. If ever, brothers and sisters, we've needed the work of the Spirit, it is now hymn number 339, which we're using to a tune. I'll have Gene play one stanza of that tune in a moment.

You're familiar with it. Note there's five stanzas. It continues to the next page.

Probably the most pregnant hymn of the work of the Holy Spirit. And it is indeed our prayer before the word is preached. Hymn 339.

Listen to the tune, though, that we're going to use for it. Stand together and let's sing all the five stanzas, continuing to the next page. O your hymns of God the Spirit are to make our lives anew.

Pledge of life and hope of glory, Savior, we would worship you. Crowning gift of resurrection, sent from your ascended throne. Bonus of the very Godhead, come to make your life our own.

He who in creation dawning, rooted on the lifeless seed. Still across our nature's darkness, moves to wake our souls from sleep. Moves to stir to draw to within, rocks us through with sense of sin.

Brings to earth and seals and fills us, saving advocate within. He himself a living author, wakes to light the sacred word. Reads with us his holy pages and reveals our risen Lord.

He is who works within us, teaching rebel hearts to pray. He whose holy intercessions rise for us both night and day. He the mighty God impels us, is who strengthens health and power.

Is who overcomes the tempter, hearts to call in danger's hour. It is strength we dare to battle, all the raging wolves of sin. And by him alone we conquer, foes without end, foes within.

Father grant your Holy Spirit, in our hearts may rule today. Bring not wretched, not unhindered, work in us his sovereign way. Fill us with your holy fullness, from the Father, Spirit, Son.

In us, through us, then forever, shall your perfect will be done. Amen. Our Father, please do what we have just sung, and do it beyond anything we could ever sing or ask or imagine.

For the sake of your saving power in Jesus Christ, Amen. Please be seated. Turn your Bibles again to John chapter 13, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, chapter 13, page 1145.

There are few more haunting words than the words betray. A betrayer. Betrayal.

To be betrayed. To betray. To deliver into the hands of an enemy by treachery or fraud, in violation of trust.

To help the enemy of a person, the enemy of a country, or the enemy of a cause. To be a traitor to someone or to something. To violate by fraud or unfaithfulness.

Few more haunting words than the word betray. And there's few more haunting names than the name Judas. And the two, betray and Judas, come together in this text, John chapter 13 and verses 21 through 30.

It is one of these passages that is in all four of the Gospels, and you rarely just read the name of Judas. It is Judas who betrayed Jesus. Today we return, of course, to the series on John.

We're in John chapter 13, which you may remember begins the second half of the book of John. And really it has as its theme amazing love. Amazing love that begins with this still absolutely phenomenal section in which Jesus washes the God-man, the Messiah, the King.

Gets down on his knees and washes the feet of his disciples. And tells them that the mark of being his followers is to do the same thing to others. This amazing love.

That's not at all what was expected of the Messiah or of his disciples. And perhaps that's part of the problem for Judas. It dawns on the betrayer that this Jesus is not at all what he expected him to be.

And so we come to the dark side of this passage. In verse 17, Jesus says, you know these things of serving others. You're blessed if you do them.

But he says, I'm not speaking to all of you. You're not all going to do this. I know whom I've chosen.

But the scripture is going to be fulfilled. He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me from Psalm 41. I'm telling you this now before it takes place, that when it does take place, you may believe that I am he.

One of those who'd experienced this love so specially, even at his feet washed by Jesus moments before, is going to betray him. And in John chapter 6 and John chapter 12, as well as in the early part of chapter 13, Judas is given. Brothers and sisters, Judas is a God-given object lesson in being a betrayer of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so today, under the theme of anatomy of betrayal, we're going to take quite literally this meaning of anatomy. And this will be a very sobering probe, the sermon outline, which has a number of points to it. It's going to be this dissecting, this anatomy of a betrayal and an examination of it.

Because the main purpose of this text is self-examination, as it is in all of the other Gospels that deal with this. And brothers and sisters, there's no way in any church structure you can avoid the danger of formalism. It doesn't make any difference whether it's Presbyterian church, Methodist church, Lutheran church, Baptist church, or whatever.

In all cases, there's the danger of formalism. And John, as the last of the Gospel writers, is well aware of this creeping into the early church. And this is given here as a call to self-examination.

And that is probably the purpose of all of the Gospel writers, especially John, so it will be our purpose too. Anatomy of betrayal. Note number one, as we begin dissecting this betrayal.

Judas was one of the twelve. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, that phrase, along with Jesus who betrayed him, is used over and over again. Judas, who was one of the twelve.

And you see it here in a less obvious way, but still a real way. Verse 21 in the last part. Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you, one of you, one of the twelve, will betray me.

Judas, brothers and sisters, like you, had heard public preaching. However, he had heard it from the physical lips of the Lord Jesus. Judas had seen the miracles that you read, recorded in Holy Scripture, and have had declared to you.

Judas had been ministered to personally by the Lord Jesus Christ. Those many things not recorded in the Scriptures in which Judas dealt or Jesus dealt with the twelve in very personal ways, speaking to them.

Judas, like you, served Jesus.

He was responsible for the money. Jesus had washed Judas' feet. And now, as we'll learn a little bit later, as the twelve recline at the table, in a U-fashion around the table, reclining on their left arms, Judas is apparently right next to Christ in the same position that the one that Jesus loved is.

It is amazing that the one who is reprobate is as close to Jesus physically as is the one disciple, John, whom Jesus loved preeminently. Judas was one of the twelve. And that's true of the church in all ages, both Old Testament and in the New Testament.

The Bible says not all are Israel who are of Israel. What does that mean? In the Old Testament, there were people who were marked out by circumcision together with their families, and they were truly a part of Israel. They were part of the people of God.

But Israel as a holy people was not in their hearts. They were not new creatures in Christ. They were not all Israel who were of Israel.

Judas, interestingly, too, was a minister. Jesus, at the very end of the Sermon on the Mount, says that there will be many at the last day who say, Lord, have we not done many wonderful things in your name? Have we not prophesied in your name? There will be many. And he'll say, depart from me, I never knew you.

You who practice lawlessness. Among them will be Judas, who was a minister. Peter would even speak of those who denied the Master who bought them.

And brothers and sisters, with all great love to our Baptist brothers and sisters, you cannot sustain their view of the church from the Bible. There is no such thing in the Bible as an all-regenerate church, or an all-born-again church, or an all-saved church. This is not there.

The church is a mixed multitude of those who profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and their children. But to profess faith is not to possess faith. And that's a fearful thing.

That there are people sitting in these pews. And who have sat in these pews, and who will sit in these pews. Who will not be with the Lord forever.

Judas was one of the twelve, and he was a minister. Covenant children are numbered among God's people, as Judas was. Church members numbered among God's people, numbered as saints.

They are with Christ. Christ is really with us in worship. God himself is with us.

The heart of the covenant promise is not in Old and New Testament that everyone in covenant with God is going to be saved. But God is with them. Unlike pagans.

And here you see this quite literally, that God was with Judas. But, there's nothing unfeeling in all of this. These aren't theological abstractions, especially for Jesus.

Because over against hyper-Calvinism, which basically makes God kind of a cosmic computer. Who chooses some, and reprobates others, an unfeeling and cold thing. The God-man's expression in this text is a powerful rebuke to what is really the liberalism of hyper-Calvinism.

Liberalism takes away the truths of God's doctrines. Hyper-Calvinism takes away the truths of God's emotions. And here you see in this text, in verse 21 again, after Jesus speaks of one who is going to betray him.

He is troubled in his spirit. And the same language is used when he is at the grave of Lazarus, or when he contemplates the cross himself. And it's a very, very powerful word, to be troubled in his spirit.

It means to be stirred up inside. To be disturbed, to be unsettled, to be shocked, to be deeply troubled. To be thrown into confusion, to be disquieted, to be perplexed.

To be inwardly moved in the deepest and most emotionally painful way. God chooses people according to the good pleasure of his will. He delights to do that.

And while he passes by the reprobate, he takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. How do you put that together? You don't put them together. They're both true.

God is 100% sovereign. He does what he wills in heaven and on earth. And if you presume to think that God's will is bound by your free will, then you fly in the face of the God of whom we're told of him and through him and to him are all things.

To him be the glory forever. God is 100% sovereign, but man is also 100% responsible. And Jesus is the perfect man.

And as he ponders this real betrayal of himself, he is troubled in his inmost being. This, brothers and sisters, is, I think, tremendously pastorally comforting. All of us in here, in one way or the other, are troubled.

Wayward children, wayward spouse, wayward friends, unconverted relatives, unconverted neighbors. It's inhuman if you're not troubled. And when you begin to think that you're being troubled is a doubt of God, remember the perfect God-man, Jesus.

With no sin at all that ever tarnished his character or his emotions at any point, you read the language of being most deeply troubled over this conundrum, this riddle, of he being the God-man and yet he is the one who is to be betrayed. It is inhuman not to be deeply troubled as we must deal with a fallen world. That's part of fellowship with Christ in his sufferings, folks.

Why aren't all those around us that we know and love saved? Part of the answer is, if they all were, we would never be able to enter into the heart of love of a God who has a people in the world. And he must say of them always, Oh, how I would draw you unto myself as a hen gathers her chicks. But you would not.

We enter into the fellowship with Christ's sufferings here. There's nothing unfeeling in this, but even in the midst of all of this, notice number three, Jesus continued to show the deepest love to Judas. If you skip down to verse 26, you have this interesting text in which Jesus says that the one to whom he will give this morsel of bread when I dipped it, this is the Passover feast, some believe this was a piece of meat, probably it was a piece of bread that was either dipped in bitter herbs or it could have been dipped in a puree of fruit, but it was a token of love for the host at the table to dip a morsel of bread in whatever that was and give it to someone.

It was a token of special love and special affection though Judas was the betrayer, though Jesus knew he was the betrayer, he continued to show the deepest love to Judas. Now, brothers and sisters, there's grace and there's saving grace. And not all grace is saving grace.

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 6 and verse 1, as a fellow worker with God, I beseech you, I implore you, I encourage you, I beg you, don't receive the grace of God in vain. This is not this thing called common grace. This is grace that comes under what we call the means of grace, and they are.

The preaching of the word, prayer, baptism in the Lord's Supper, the fellowship of the saints, these are the main means in which God, through those conduits, shows His love, His kindness, the overtures of the gospel, His patience, and so forth. Look with me, please, at Hebrews chapter 6 and verses 4 through 8. On some other extended time, I would want to deal with this. This is Hebrews chapter 6 and verses 4 through 8, page 1,278, with what this means in its larger context of apostasy from the gospel.

But notice how grace and love in specific ways are showed to those who will never see God in glory. Yes, it says it's impossible in the case of those who've been once enlightened. Folks, you are enlightened whenever you even hear the gospel.

The fact that you don't become deaf when the gospel is preached, or that you drop dead when the gospel is preached, gives you a certain amount of enlightenment. Who have tasted of the heavenly gift, that is, there has been something of the beauty, the love, the goodness, the kindness of God in Christ that has at least stirred a little bit in your soul. Have shared in the Holy Spirit, as Saul shared in the Holy Spirit, so you do, under the means of grace, the Spirit working to subdue some iniquity, the Spirit working, even on the surface way, to make you look like a Christian.

Have tasted the goodness of the word of God. You can actually say, oh, how wonderful this word is. And the powers of the age to come.

I've had some impact of heaven in me. I felt something of the pangs of hell under the preaching of the word. I've gotten a picture of what it will be when Christ comes in judgment.

And you can still be unsaved. The Holy Spirit does that. God in his own love, no less than when Jesus gives that morsel to Judas.

The Lord Jesus personally, in the Lord's Supper, will give that morsel to those who will never partake of the Lamb's banquet in glory. Because, see, grace is meant to soften your heart at every point. Romans 2 and verse 4, Paul says to the Jews, Do you despise the goodness and the patience and the longsuffering of God, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? But he says, rather than the treasures of God's goodness that soften your heart, he says, you're treasuring up for yourself wrath.

Because of your impenitent heart. What does that mean? The gospel that is meant to soften your heart, so that there's at least some little baby steps ahead in holiness and faith and repentance, instead hardens you. And instead of being enriched by God's grace to make you more like Christ, you are putting in the reserve bank of heaven more judgment for yourself.

And yet it's God's love. His riches of his goodness and forbearance and kindness that send that. Especially covenant children.

Never forget that. Why do I have to go to church? Because of the love of God. Why did I have to be brought up in a Christian home? Because of the love of God.

Why did I have to memorize the Bible? Because of the love of God. Why was I encouraged to profess my faith in Christ? Because of the love of God. Why do I have to sit under preaching, especially when it's so long? Because of the love of God.

Why do I have to hear things I don't like? Because of the love of God. Never forget that. And when you're tempted to say or you say, I don't want it, I'm going to pitch it over, you are despising the love of God that comes to you in morsels, just as it came to Judas.

Jesus continued to show the deepest love to Judas. Brothers and sisters, how do you respond to the love of God in the means of grace? Do you just go on and do what you're going to do anyway? I'll let you draw your own conclusion. Because that's what Judas did.

Jesus continued to show the deepest love to Judas. But because Judas resisted that, there is in the fourth place a giving over to Satan. After he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him.

And the original text makes the connection clearer. Therefore, Jesus said to him, what you're going to do, do quickly. This is the only use of the words Satan and John.

It means an adversary. The adversary entered into him. The destroyer entered into him.

The murderer entered into him. Because Judas would be responsible in his betrayal for the murder of Jesus. And he would be responsible for his own self-murder.

All that is under the picture of that graphic word Satan entering him. And notice that it is connected with the definite act. In chapter 13 and verse 2, there is satanic influence.

The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him. But now he does it. He's given the morsel.

But now he's going to leave and betray Jesus. As there is a progressive sanctification, a progressive growing in holiness, one baby step of obedience after another, leading us to be more and more godly. Reprobation is the same way.

It is one little baby step or a giant step toward devilishness. Devilishness. And it leads eventually to what we technically know of as reprobation.

And while we don't have time to develop this in great length, you should ponder it. We've got to be very careful, brothers and sisters, to giving ourselves over to those acts that are specifically described as of the devil. People say, well, you use Ouija boards or fortune tellers or the occult.

That's blatantly dangerous. The devil is a liar. And liars in the Bible are called devils.

To give yourself over to lying is to give yourself over to the lie. Lying about yourself, lying about your state, lying about your conduct, lying about your ways. And that eventually leads to self-deception.

The devil is a deceiver. And then what usually happens is you begin to attack those who deal with you or seek to see your ways corrected. And you'll slander them and speak against them, giving yourself over to

the devil who is a slanderer.

And you'll even in your own heart begin to hate those Christians who've shown love to you. You even don't want them there. You take the part of the devil who's the murderer.

And you end up increasingly under his influence. There was a giving over to Satan connected with his definite acts. But see, there's more to it here.

Because the Bible teaches that parallel to our giving ourselves up, God gives us up. Pharaoh hardened his heart. God hardened his heart.

In Romans chapter 1, which I hope we'll have occasion to deal with in more detail, because it describes our culture. People give themselves up to idols. They worship and serve the creature more than the creator who's blessed forever.

They suppress the truth in unrighteousness. And God gives them up to vile passions. And then God gives them up to homosexuality and lesbianism.

And then God gives them up in all of their perversion to every other effect of a debased mind. As man is progressively giving himself up, God is giving himself up too. And there's no first or second.

They're both together. It's very interesting, a picture of the New Jersey and New York legislatures at the very end of Romans 1. People not only do those things, but they heartily condone those who practice them. You don't think the Bible's relevant to today? Here we say giving up to Satan, either for not becoming more godly, and we are becoming more devilish.

And that's why Jesus teaches us to pray literally every day. Lead us not into temptation, but probably more correctly, deliver us from the evil one. Do you pray that way? If you do, do you willingly put yourself in those things that are the marks of the devil rather than of God? To think nothing of lying.

To think nothing of slander. To think nothing of hate. In the name of God, you live like that and you think you can get away with it if God gives you up.

There's no turning back. There's a giving over to Satan. Number five, notice very penetratingly that outward appearances don't necessarily show what is happening.

In verse 27, in the last part, Jesus says, what you're going to do, do quickly. But the disciples, the other 11 at the table, they knew why he said this. They didn't understand why he said this to Judas.

Some thought it was because Judas had the money bag. Or some thought that he should give something to the poor. No one said.

I always thought it all along. This Judas is a hypocrite. See, outward appearances don't necessarily show what's happening.

You see, this is the night of the Passover. The night of the first Lord's Supper. It's a Thursday night.

And on those Thursday nights, you could go out to purchase what was necessary for the high feast of the next day or the feast that would occupy the next seven days. This was a feast. The stores were open late that night.

And so the disciples thought, well, Judas is to go out and buy food for the feast. Or, some thought, because it was on that night, that Thursday night, it was customary to give alms to the poor. And the poor, beginning at midnight, would gather at the temple and it was part of your holiness to go out and give assistance to the poor.

It's a very interesting window on Christ's ministry and the ministry of the church in all ages. There was concern for the poor here. But the point is, the disciples didn't understand what was going on with Judas.

You see, Judas was a man of wisdom. He was a man of good economy. He was a man of prudence.

I mean, this was the treasurer of the disciples. He was a trustee of the Lord's goods. He was a deacon.

He was going to help the poor. And he was a minister. That's the way it looked.

We're terrible judges of the externals. See, what you see is not a necessary indicator of what's really going on in others. And this is scary.

Have you ever heard of a double life? You know how frequent it is among professed Christians? I heard just the other day, part of my sermon preparation, from a church in another state, which the minister said, Bill, I don't know what to do. A man in the church, an elder. He's been an elder here for decades.

And I found out, for over 30 years, he's lived a double life. What do I do? An elder? This is a minister. And a deacon.

And a trustee. And a treasurer. And you couldn't tell Judas was the betrayer.

You'd sit with him in church. You'd sit with him next to Jesus. You trusted him.

He was an honorable man. And the language is used throughout this, the disciples are at a loss. They don't get this at all.

The outward appearances can be so deceiving. Pleasant. Kind.

Cultivated holiness. The artful ability to dodge questions. To be nice.

Even to be put into office. But it eventually becomes definite, obvious conduct is the next point. While outward appearances don't necessarily show what's happening, those outward appearances eventually become definite, obvious conduct.

That little penetrating phrase at the end of verse 27, what you are going to do, do quickly, is absolutely scary. Because Jesus, Judas heeds this. Because after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out.

What you do, do quickly. This, to me, is one of the most, if not the most, mysterious aspects of pastoral work. Our Lord Jesus, our God, says to Israel, thus says the Lord, in Ezekiel 20, and this is Pastor Shishko's paraphrase, thus says the Lord your God, if you won't listen to me, then go serve your idols.

Elijah, in the contest with the prophets of Baal, says to the Israelites, why do you stand halting between two opinions? If God's God, follow him. But if Baal's God, follow him. And as if to put the imprimatur on that painful aspect of pastoral work, in the very last book of the Bible, in the last chapter, the Holy Spirit says to John, let him who is unrighteous, let him be unrighteous still.

Let him who is filthy, let him be filthy still. I would that you be cold or hot, but not lukewarm. It eventually brought definite, obvious conduct.

Think, brothers and sisters, of what Judas was not doing. The devil has put it in his mind to betray the God-man. And Jesus washes his feet.

He should have prostrated himself before Jesus and begged for mercy. He did not. Jesus speaks of that one who will betray him, and Judas hears it and knows it is him.

And he does nothing. Jesus, in that beautiful token of love, gives him the morsel of bread, and he takes it. Jesus says to him, what you're going to do, do quickly.

And rather than repent, he immediately goes out. That, folks, is scary. It is a resistance, systematically, diabolically, to all of the loving overtures of grace that come through the God-man.

And it is scary as a pastor. I've had to do it. I hate doing it.

And don't ask me how I know when to do it, but it comes. After the grace of God comes, calling people to repentance, calling people to new obedience, calling them to Christ, begging them to repent. There's an obstinacy after which you must say, if this is the way you're going to live, then go do it.

With biblical sanction. Again, Ezekiel 20 and verse 39, thus says the Lord your God, if you don't listen to me, go and serve your idols. Imagine hearing Jesus say to Judas, go do it.

In the seventh place, it brings a person out of the way of light and truth and into darkness. The last part of verse 30, and this is where the Holy Spirit puts these words. In this book of books that speaks of light and darkness, Christ is the light that lightens every man that comes into the world.

And even though the darkness did not overcome it, men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. And has not Jesus said, walk while it's day, because night's going to come when no man can walk and you're going to stumble. Be careful of night, he says to the disciples.

And Jesus goes out, or Judas goes out, and it was night. This brings a person out of the way of light and truth and into darkness. And it is fearful to see.

D.A. Carson has caught the meaning of this so pithily and so richly. Judas, he says, was swallowed up by the most awful darkness, indeed, by outer darkness. Judas was heading to his own place.

Mark's comment is simply this. It would have been better for that man, he doesn't even use his name, it would have been better for that man if he'd never been born, to deal with the soul of a man or a woman or a boy or a girl. Seeking, albeit with so much imperfection, to call them to repentance and faith, showing the love of Christ.

And then have them walk out of the darkness, into the darkness that surrounds a church building or a house, knowing that they're going to go on in their own way. The darkness is an emblem of the outer darkness that will come. Notice in the last place, all of this should prompt serious self-examination.

This is the Passover. It's also the first Lord's Supper. In verse 22, after Jesus says, one of you will betray me, the disciples look at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke.

They're really at a loss about this. They don't know what to make of this. There were no appearances that this would happen, even though Jesus said it would.

One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, and this is John speaking very diminutively here, was reclining at a table close to Jesus. This is a U-shape of the table here. They're reclining.

Don't ask me why they do this. I find it very uncomfortable. But on their left arms, on a cushion, they would take the food with the right arm and eat.

And John would have been to Jesus' left, and Judas would have been to his right. And John leans over to the Lord Jesus. This is at the instigation of Peter.

Peter motions him to ask Jesus of whom he's speaking. So the disciple, leaning back against Jesus, looks over to that one who's on his right and says, Lord, who is it? Probably whispered it. Lord, who is it? All of this should prompt serious self-examination because in the other Gospels, it's simply, is it I? Judas was a minister.

And when I have to read painfully of ministers who've lived double lives, and then in God's sovereignty and grace those double lives are exposed, I say, oh God, is it I? What sin, at least in mine, that this man dealt in, have I not dealt with? Is it I? And that's the heart of a child of God. I realize, brothers and sisters, some people can be so very introspective they don't look to Christ enough. That's not normally our problem in this country.

We're not known to be a people very introspective. The heart of a real child of God, when you hear them say, God, is it I? Is it I? Is it I? When church discipline comes and we're aware of something of the background of what happened, and we see the seeds of those things in each of us, is it I, oh God? Is it I? Is it I? But notice the love for Christ, and God willing, next week we'll develop this more in the next section, after the disciples have been purged. Jesus goes into the holy of holies of his teaching here.

But the disciple whom Jesus loved is there and he loves Jesus. And the point that is made in here, you have John on one side who loved Jesus and is loved by him, and Judas the betrayer. Brothers and sisters, faith in Christ is not enough.

We are justified by faith alone. We are declared righteous by faith alone. But it's never a faith that's alone.

It's always accompanied by every gift and grace preeminently love. That's why Paul can say in Galatians, neither circumcision or uncircumcision avails anything but a new creation. Neither circumcision or uncircumcision avails anything but what new creation is, a faith that works by love.

It's not a faith that works by love that justifies you. You're justified by faith alone. But if it's alone, it's not biblical faith.

See, if you truly believe in Jesus, he'll become not only the lover of your soul, but he himself will be the one that you love as your beloved. Why did Judas do this? Maybe I've missed, and I probably have, things in the corpus that deals with why Judas did it, but I haven't read anything that's really satisfying. Judas loved money.

Well, 30 pieces of silver isn't a whole lot of money. But I don't buy that. Why did Judas betray Jesus? Let me suggest this.

Jesus didn't turn out to be what Judas expected. Judas was disappointed in Jesus. And while he followed him for a while, because he was disappointed, he turned on him.

Brothers and sisters, he was disappointed in Christ as a minister. Things in gospel ministry don't turn out the way you expect, and it's so easy to get angry with Jesus because he isn't the king you expected. Remember Judas.

Remember Judas, who was not happy that the Messiah said, my kingdom is a kingdom of washing feet. Now, God's going to turn this all to good, folks. Praise the Lord.

Our bounty comes from the betrayer. Little did Judas know he would be the instrument of the devil. Yes, the devil thought he had Jesus, and through that instrumentality, there would be the trouble of the cross, and there'd be real blood and real gore and real wrath.

That makes salvation possible for you. That's what makes this environment of grace even possible. Praise the Lord for that.

And nothing of what I've said today should hinder any of you from just coming to Christ for his help. Again, speaking very personally, when I feel the Judas in Bilshishko, I thank God that Jesus is a refuge. My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name. That's Christianity. And I beg of you to turn away from everything Judas-like and take this Jesus.

Because, see folks, this is a text about being careful about receiving God's grace, even when you're a minister. To realize that being in a faithful church, being under a faithful minister, you realize that every single pastoral dealing with your soul comes from a loving Jesus. And if you're not melted and changed by it, you're going the way of Judas.

And if you want to put it in this way, think about the last day. I mean, why is this object lesson given? Judas, son of Iscariot. God forbid for any of us, including your pastor.

But the last day, Jesus look and say, here's your name, the betrayer. And if you think it can't happen, let him who stands take heed lest he fall. Or as the psalmist put it, search me, oh God.

Try my heart. Know my thoughts. Purge from me any wicked way.

And lead me in the way everlasting. I suggest we don't just pray that psalm periodically. But every day.

If not every hour. If not every minute. Lest, God forbid, we be like Judas.

Whose exit forever is in the darkness. Let's stand and let's pray. Our Lord, we are so thankful for this blessed gospel.

Whose theme is, these things are written. That you might believe that Jesus is the Messiah. And that believing you might have life in his name.

But Lord, when the disciples, at least one. Learned what it meant to be the Messiah. They became enemies.

Of the one whom they professed to be friend. My own familiar friend. Has lifted up his heel against me.

Oh God, for the sake of Christ. Don't let us be like Judas. May we prize being numbered among your people.

So that each ministerial encouragement. Each ministerial exhortation. Each sermon.

Each administration of the Lord's Supper. Each time of prayer. Each time of fellowship.

Becomes a means to soften our heart. Lord, thank you. That you are not a reluctant savior.

And you delight in mercy. May we see in all that Christ through his church ministers to us. The personal administration.

Of these morsels of his love. And God make us careful. That we do not in our dealings in thought or word or deed.

Put ourselves in the path of the evil one. Oh God, what a mystery. We don't know what precedes and it doesn't make any difference to us.

But we do know. There's a giving of ourselves to the devil. There's a hardening of our own hearts.

And there's a your giving of us to them. And your hardening of our hearts. God, may we fear both.

May we never despise the riches of your goodness and patience and long suffering. Knowing that your goodness leads us to repentance. And dear God, may we never hear someone say to us.

Let alone a minister or an elder in your church. If you're going to live this way, just keep doing it. Oh God, even that's a gracious admonition.

But how horrible if we should hear it. And do what Judas did. And Lord, remind us.

As we see physical darkness around us. You've ordained that. And the stumbling that we can do in the darkness.

And the fear that we have in the darkness. You've ordained physical darkness. To remind us of outer darkness.

God in heaven. Make us flee from that. And run to the light.

And walk in the light. And live in the light. And feast in the light.

So that Christ himself will be. In the fullest sense of the word. Our savior.

And our Lord. And dear God, grant. That not one of us in here.

Not one who hears this message. Should at the last day. Have his or her name pronounced.

With a name or title. Betrayer in it. Oh God, rather.

May we each one be a people. Who can see the smile of our savior at the last day. And hear those words well done.

Good and faithful servant. Grant that for Jesus sake. Amen.

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all. Amen.

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