

All That Jesus Taught Bible Study - Part 73

by Zac Poonen

Jesus teaches us about the importance of loyalty and true walk, and the seriousness of betraying him, as we examine the example of Judas and the meaning of the broken bread.

Duration: 24:15

Scripture: Matthew 26:26

Topics: "Last Supper", "Betrayal Of Christ"

Description

This sermon delves into the events leading up to Jesus' betrayal, focusing on the significance of the Last Supper and the breaking of bread. It emphasizes the importance of obedience to God's commands, even in seemingly small matters, and the seriousness of betraying Jesus for personal gain. The sermon highlights the need for self-examination, commitment to following Christ, and the profound meaning behind the symbols of the bread and the cup in the context of the new covenant and the second coming of Christ.

Transcript

So, continuing our study in all that Jesus taught, which we base on Jesus' command in Matthew 28, where he said, Go and make disciples of all nations, Matthew 28, 19, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you, teaching them to do all that I commanded you. This has been the subject of our study in all these studies so far. So, we come so far to Matthew 26 and verse 13, where we saw how this woman had poured out the ointment and Judas Iscariot was among the disciples who said, Why was this perfume wasted on Jesus? And Jesus said, Why do you want to trouble this woman? And that's what we see from John chapter 12.

But when we see it here, we connect it with this, we find immediately after that, Judas went to the chief priest. We considered that last time. He was offended and he said, What are you willing to give me to deliver him up to you? And from then on, verse 16, Matthew 26, 16, he began looking for a good opportunity to betray him.

We saw last time how Judas was offended with just a small correction. We move on to verse 17, where we read, On the first day of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus and said, Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover? The Passover was a feast that God had ordained for the Israelites from the day they left Egypt. It was to be a constant memorial remembrance of how God had delivered them.

It was a simple feast, but it was to remind them of their deliverance from Egypt. And God said, When your children ask you, What does this mean? They were to explain how God with a mighty hand brought them out of Egypt. And that was repeated year after year after year for 1500 years from that time right up to the time of Jesus.

And Jesus, he was leading people out of the old covenant into the new covenant. But as long as the new covenant was not established, he continued to obey the laws of the old covenant that were given for the Jews. Whenever people came to him for anything, he would teach them to obey the law.

For example, the lepers who were cleansed, he said, Go and show yourself to the priests. He told the Pharisees, You must pay your tithes. And in everything, he obeyed the law.

And even here we see his keeping the Passover. So we see how even though the Passover was just a little ritualistic feast, Jesus kept it. And there's something we can learn from that, from what Jesus taught by his example.

And that is even something small, which doesn't really have any moral value. If it is commanded by God, we do it. That's what we learn from Jesus.

For example, the breaking of bread or baptism. These are two things that Jesus instituted. There's no moral value in them.

But because Jesus commanded it, we do it. That's what we learn from the example of Jesus keeping the Passover. Verse 18, he said, Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, And the teacher says, My time is at hand.

I'm to keep the Passover at your house with my disciples. It's wonderful that in a land where almost everybody rejected Christ, there were very few people who accepted him, there were still a few who were willing to open their homes for Christ. Where Jesus could even say, I want a room in your house.

Imagine the freedom that this man had given to Jesus, that anytime you want a room in my house, you can come and take it. It's wonderful. There are people like that today as well, who say to the Lord, anything Lord, in my home, my life, it's always available for you.

Otherwise Jesus wouldn't have taken the liberty to tell his disciples to go to that person and say, I want to keep the Passover at your house. Because this is Jerusalem, Jesus was living in Capernaum, and so his house was not in Jerusalem. But he could tell someone, I want a room in your house.

And it's wonderful that we can be available to the Lord like that, that the Lord can tell us, I want this from you. And immediately we'll do that. And the disciples, verse 19, did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover.

When evening had come, he was reclining at the table with the twelve disciples. And as they were eating, he said, Truly I say to you, one of you will betray me. See, this is the first time that he made it clear to his disciples that somebody among them, among the twelve, was going to betray him.

And it's very interesting to see the reaction. They didn't each look at each other and say, I wonder who that is, who's going to betray him, of course it won't be me. But that was not their reaction.

With all the faults that these disciples had, there's one good thing we can see about them. And that is, they did not judge the other, but judged themselves. Each one began to say, surely not I, Lord, is it I, Lord? And not only that, it says they were deeply grieved.

They were shocked to hear, because it's the first time they're hearing it, that one of them is going to betray him. And they were grieved by that and said, Lord, it can't be me, can it? That's a wonderful attitude to have. You see, this is where the Lord instituted the Lord's table.

And when we come to the Lord's table, the Bible says, let every man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread. And we see an example of that in the disciples themselves, at the first breaking of bread. That each one of them examines himself and says, Lord, is it I? This is the spirit with which the church is built.

Peter says in 1 Peter 4, 17, the household of God is one where we judge ourselves first. So this spirit of self-judgment, we see a wonderful example of here in these disciples. And then he goes on to say, he who dipped his hand with me in the bowl is the one who will betray me.

What is betrayal? Why is it so serious in this particular case? In John's Gospel, chapter 13, in connection with the Lord's table, here, the Old Testament verse from Psalm 41 is quoted, that the one who eats bread with me will betray me. To betray Jesus Christ in any way itself is a serious thing. But to eat bread with him and then betray him is very much more serious.

And some of us may not realize the seriousness of this as much as the people in that culture in the Middle East at that time. There is a story that comes from about a hundred years ago, from Arabia, of a man who was wanted and on whose head there was a very high price. So he was very careful not to be caught and he would cover his face and travel through the desert there.

But he knew one thing, that the Bedouin Arabs who lived there had a principle that if someone ate bread with us, we will never betray him. And so this man, when he was hungry, he covered his face so that people wouldn't recognize him easily. And the Bedouin Arabs who lived in the tents there are very hospitable even to strangers.

He walked into a tent and they sat down and they didn't know who he was and he ate with them. And once he had eaten with them, he could take off his shawl from his face and let them see who he was. He was absolutely convinced, now these people will never betray me because I have broken bread with them.

No matter what the price is on my head, no matter how much money they can get if they betray me, they will not do it. And that is the meaning of that. He who has eaten bread with me has betrayed me.

It's a very serious crime. So in the breaking of bread, we are speaking of a commitment to Jesus and not only to Jesus but to the others around us. And here we read of Judas betraying Jesus for money.

You remember Jesus said that there are only two masters in the world, God and money. And we see the beginning of that right here. That there were those who wanted to follow Jesus and here was one person who was willing to betray him for money.

What does it mean to betray Jesus for money? That means to deny Christ by my life, by my action in today's terms, just because I'm going to gain some money. In Judas' case, it was 30 pieces of silver. But you know, it could be even less than that in our case.

For example, in your office or in some business, if you can make a little profit or some gain for yourself by cheating, by signing a false statement, you make that money. But if you call yourself a Christian, you have betrayed Jesus there. And that's what Jesus is teaching here.

Here for the sake of money, Judas betrays me. And in the history of Christianity in these 2,000 years, there are so many believers who don't realize it, but they have betrayed Jesus for just a little bit of earthly gain. It's really true.

There are only two masters, God and money, and it's impossible to serve both. Judas tried to serve both, but he discovered finally that he was actually serving money. And all those who try to serve God and money today will discover that in the final day, that they're actually only serving money.

And so Jesus says in verse 24, The son of man will be go just as written of him, but woe to that man by whom the son of man is betrayed. It would have been good for that man if he had not even been born. What a word to say, that it was better that this person was never born.

Do you see how serious it is to betray Jesus Christ? To deny him by your action for some earthly gain or profit, whatever it is, to deny your faith in Christ and to stop following him just for a little gain. Now nobody may know it, but you got to take these words seriously, that if you betray Jesus Christ, it doesn't matter whether it's Judas then or anyone else today, the principle is the same. It is better for that person if he was not even born.

That's what Jesus taught. It's a very serious word that Jesus taught. So we got to be very watchful that by no word or action of ours, we betray Jesus Christ.

I don't want to be categorized by the Lord as one about whom it's better that I was not even born. And Judas, you see the hypocrisy of Judas here in verse 25. He was betraying him.

He said, surely it's not I, Rabbi. And Jesus said, you said it yourself. So it's possible for people who can be so clever that they can be betraying Jesus in secret, having already collected the 30 pieces of silver, and they can sit in the midst of God's people breaking bread, acting in every way like a believer and such good hypocrites that they can ask just the same language as the others, Lord, it's not I, is it? Hypocrisy is there.

You find the sins that have plagued the Christian church through 2,000 years, betraying Jesus for the love of money and hypocrisy beginning right there with Judas Iscariot. And it's better that such people were never born. While they were eating, verse 26, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, he broke it and said, take, eat, this is my body.

The broken bread symbolized the broken body. This is my body broken for you. Now, the body of Jesus was not broken at that time, physical body.

And even on the cross, his body was not broken. It was just pierced at five points, but not broken. What did he mean by saying, this is my body broken for you? There was something inside Jesus' body that was broken for 33 1/2 years, and that was his own will.

See, with our body, we do so many things, but basically we can say we either do our will with our body or God's will. In everything we do, we're doing our will or God's will. The Bible says, present your bodies, Romans 12, 1, as a living sacrifice to God and be renewed in your mind so that you may prove the perfect will of God, Romans 12, 1 and 2. So there's a connection between the body there and doing the perfect

will of God.

It begins with yielding our body to finally do the perfect will of God. So Jesus yielded his body. We read in Hebrews 10, 5, A body thou hast prepared for me, lo, I come to do your will, O God.

In other words, he was saying right from birth, this body I'm going to do, only do your will. So in order to do God's will in this body, there's something inside that has to be broken constantly, and that is our will. That's the meaning of taking up the cross every day.

And when Jesus said, this is my body broken for you, they didn't understand it fully then. Jesus told them at the last table, we read that in John 16, there are many things I want to say to you, but you can't bear them now. That means you can't understand it now, but you will understand it later on.

And we understand it now after the Holy Spirit has come that that brokenness is within. This is my body broken for you. And this is how, when we take part in that broken bread, we're saying, Lord, in my body also, I want my will to be broken.

I want to do your will. That's the meaning here. And when he had taken the cup and gave thanks, he gave it to them saying, drink from it, all of you.

You see, he took the bread, gave thanks, and broke it. He took the cup and gave thanks. There was a spirit of thankfulness in going to the cross.

And one who has seen the way that Jesus walked, every disciple will have a spirit of thankfulness in going to the cross, because we know certainly that if we die with him, we will live with him. Believers do not experience the resurrection life of Jesus because they're not willing to go this way, the way of the cross. They think this is a way of death and gloom and, you know, disgusting.

No, it's a way of life if we can see it. And that's what we testified to in the breaking of bread. And when he took the cup, he said, this is the blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

So here we see the meaning of that blood, where Jesus, that cup, is symbolizing the blood of Jesus going to be poured out on the cross. And he relates it to a covenant. In the old covenant, the blood of animals was sprinkled on the tabernacle, on the altar.

And here, again, Jesus was saying, I'm establishing a new covenant, and that is through laying down my life, through shedding my blood, the blood of the new covenant, which is shed for the forgiveness of sins. In the Old Testament, sin was only covered. Psalm 32 says, blessed is the man whose sin is covered.

But in the New Testament, sin is not covered. It is cleansed. There are people who sing songs like, I'm under the blood.

That is an Old Testament expression, where they put the blood on the door, so that the angel of death would not come into their home. They were under the blood. But today, I'm not under the blood.

The blood is not over me. The blood doesn't even cover me. It cleanses me.

So don't ever speak about being under the blood or being covered by the blood, but being cleansed by the blood. That is the new covenant. Cleansed by the blood.

So, this is the new covenant. And Jesus poured out his blood on the cross. Every drop of blood was poured out, and of course for the forgiveness, for total cleansing of all of our sins.

And which means a new attitude to sin. That is what the new covenant means. That means I think of, what was the price paid to deliver me from sin? It was not just the blood of bulls and goats.

The blood of Jesus Christ. And therefore I take sin very seriously. So the breaking of bread is very meaningful.

It's not something that we can just take very lightly. Many Christians come to the Lord's table without taking the whole issue very seriously. And once we come into the new covenant, we discover what it says in 1 Corinthians 10, that this bread not only symbolizes the body of Jesus that was broken, but also the body of Christ today.

The different members of the body of Christ and we are all breaking that one bread. Meaning that there is a commitment to this body with whom I am breaking bread. So there is a double meaning in the breaking of bread.

Which these disciples couldn't understand then because they didn't have the Holy Spirit. But which we understand now. So the body of Christ first of all relates to the body of Christ in which his will was broken for 33 and a half years.

And secondly to the body with which we meet today when we break the same bread we are committed. So this is the opposite of betrayal. Every believer is either committed to walk the way Jesus walked, committed to the body of Christ.

If not, the only other alternative is, like Judas, betrayal. Now a person who doesn't break bread, who is a non-Christian, who is out there in the world, he is not betraying. He doesn't even claim to be following Christ.

That's okay. But if a person pretends to be a Christian and does not walk this way, he is a betrayer. Then Jesus said, I will not drink the fruit of the wine from now on until the day when I drink it new with you in my father's kingdom.

So here we see a reference to the cross and a reference to the second coming of Christ as well. And that's what we read in 1 Corinthians 11 as well. In 1 Corinthians 11 we are told that we show forth the Lord's death until he comes.

1 Corinthians 11, 26. We proclaim the Lord's death, that's the past, until he comes, that's the future. So the breaking of bread points backward to the death of Christ, points forward to the coming of Christ as well.

Many don't think of that. Because once Christ comes, this will be over. So it's a testimony that I believe in the death of Christ for my sin and I also believe that Christ is coming back.

One day this will be over. And that's what Jesus said here. He mentions it here too.

There's a time going to come when my kingdom, my father's kingdom will be established and I will drink of the wine with you. We're going to be feasting and drinking when Christ comes again. And after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

It's very interesting to see that little expression that just before Jesus went to the cross, he wasn't glooming. He was singing a hymn. Imagine praising the Lord when you know that you're going to be betrayed, captured, killed next morning.

That is the spirit in which we go to the cross. We go to the cross singing a hymn, singing praise to God because we know that nothing can happen to us without God's perfect plan. As it says in Acts 2, according to the predetermined plan of God, Jesus was crucified.

And there's nothing that can happen to us which is not in God's predetermined plan. And we know that there'll be a resurrection. So there are many wonderful things that Jesus taught here which were not fully understood by the disciples then, but which we can understand now.

Then Jesus said, verse 31, you will all fall away, he tells the disciples, because of me tonight, for it is written, I will strike down the shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered. But after I've been raised, I'll go before you to Galilee. So that is a quotation from Zechariah.

And it's interesting, when a shepherd is smitten, the sheep are scattered. And that's what we see. The devil always seeks to hit the shepherds in a church.

So shepherds, be careful, be watchful, don't betray, but be loyal and true, walk the way of the cross. Otherwise your bad example can cause the sheep to be scattered. May God help us.

And we will continue this study in our next session.

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