

## Betrayal and Commitment 4-2-06

Matthew 26:14-30 (NIV)

<sup>14</sup> Then one of the Twelve--the one called Judas Iscariot--went to the chief priests <sup>15</sup> and asked, "What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" So they counted out for him thirty silver coins. <sup>16</sup> From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

<sup>17</sup> On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?" <sup>18</sup> He replied, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.'" <sup>19</sup> So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.

<sup>20</sup> When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. <sup>21</sup> And while they were eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me." <sup>22</sup> They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely not I, Lord?" <sup>23</sup> Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. <sup>24</sup> The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born." <sup>25</sup> Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "Yes, it is you."

<sup>26</sup> While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." <sup>27</sup> Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you." <sup>28</sup> This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>29</sup> I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom." <sup>30</sup> When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

The passage that preceded this, the one about Mary anointing Jesus, gives us some insight into what was taking place. The Gospel writers put these accounts back to back for a reason. Thank God for John's account that tells us Judas was upset about the waste of money when Mary poured the pure nard on Jesus' head and feet. (John 12:4) Though others joined with Judas' complaint, Jesus rebuke must have stung Judas in a very deep way. He was the treasurer. His service to the group was in handling the finances and part of that included giving to the poor. Though his real reason for the complaint was his personal use of the group's finances, his pride was wounded because he felt this was his place of authority that Jesus was infringing upon. (John 12:6)

Various commentators give different reasons for Judas' actions. Some claim that he was trying to force Jesus' to display His power by putting Him on the spot, thus the remorse after the plan failed, ending in Judas' suicide. (Matthew 27:5) Others think that he was a zealot and had grown tired of Jesus' lack of any physical assertion of power against Rome. No one knows for sure what was going on in Judas' mind, but we do know what happened. Satan entered Judas. Two Gospel writers mention this fact at this point in the Gospel story. (Luke 22:3; John 13:27)

**Commented [notes1]:** 4 But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, John 12:4 (NIV)

**Commented [notes2]:** 6 He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it. John 12:6 (NIV)

**Commented [notes3]:** 5 So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself. Matthew 27:5 (NIV)

**Commented [notes4]:** 3 Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve. Luke 22:3 (NIV)

**Commented [notes5]:** 27 As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. "What you are about to do, do quickly," Jesus told him, John 13:27 (NIV)

For Satan to enter him, there had to be an opening, an invitation. My guess, because of the context, is that Jesus' rebuke festered in Judas' heart. His wounded pride turned to jealousy and unforgiveness, both of which are an invitation to Satan to turn our hearts toward some action from which there is no return. (Hebrews 12:15)

**Commented [notes6]:** 15 See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. Hebrews 12:15 (NIV)

Have you ever stood on that precipice? We all probably have in different ways. Oh, it may not have been something as severe as this act of Judas, but it had eternal consequences nonetheless. It may have been a harsh word. As soon as it left your lips, you wondered how you ever allowed yourself to speak it. It may have been an action, in a moment of rage, something you will forever regret. It may have just been denying Christ by remaining silent when the Holy Spirit handed you a clear-cut opportunity to speak out. In all these scenarios pride and selfishness came first. You cannot take back what was done or left undone. I am not saying that Satan entered us, but that in a moment of weakness we yielded to his suggestions. What a warning to us, do not give the Devil an opportunity to prompt us to do something in a moment of prideful anger that we will forever regret. (Proverbs 29:11)

**Commented [notes7]:** 11 A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control. Proverbs 29:11 (NIV)

<sup>14</sup> Then one of the Twelve--the one called Judas Iscariot--went to the chief priests <sup>15</sup> and asked, "What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" So they counted out for him thirty silver coins. Judas fulfilled prophecies by accepting that money. (Psalm 55:12-14) Even the amount had been foretold by Zechariah. <sup>12</sup> I told them, "If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it." So they paid me thirty pieces of silver. Zechariah 11:12 (NIV) The amount was the same value the Law placed on a slave. The Suffering Servant was purchased for the price of a servant. (Exodus 21:32)

**Commented [notes8]:** 12 If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were raising himself against me, I could hide from him. 13 But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend, 14 with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship as we walked with the throng at the house of God. Psalms 55:12-14 (NIV)

<sup>16</sup> From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over. Satan's temptation played right into Judas' weakness, his love of money. (1 Timothy 6:10) Having received the money, he was then obligated to carry out his part of the deal. Almighty God's decree and the sinful will of a fallen man coincided to put into motion the redemptive details of God's plan. (Acts 2:23)

**Commented [notes9]:** 32 If the bull gores a male or female slave, the owner must pay thirty shekels of silver to the master of the slave, and the bull must be stoned. Exodus 21:32 (NIV)

**Commented [notes10]:** 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 1 Timothy 6:10 (NIV)

<sup>17</sup> On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?" <sup>18</sup> He replied, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.'" <sup>19</sup> So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover. In another passage, Jesus' said that He was looking forward to this Passover meal. (Luke 22:15) On April 10<sup>th</sup> at the Passover Seder we will have some more insight into why Jesus was looking forward to this time. It was a moment of profound teaching.

**Commented [notes11]:** 23 This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. Acts 2:23 (NIV)

**Commented [notes12]:** 15 And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. Luke 22:15 (NIV)

There is a mystery about the place where the meal was to be prepared. Did Jesus divinely discern that this man would offer the place where the meal was to take place, or was it prearranged? In the other synoptic gospels, Jesus tells the disciples to look for a man carrying a water pot. That would be unusual, because women usually carried the water. (Luke 22:10-11) They were to follow him and ask the owner of the house in which he served for the use of a room to prepare the meal.

**Commented [notes13]:** 10 He replied, "As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, 11 and say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'" Luke 22:10-11 (NIV)

The two that Jesus gave these instructions to were Peter and John. (Luke 22:8) In telling them like this, Judas would not have known the location to tip off the religious leaders and thereby interrupt this important time of teaching. It appears that Jesus prearranged the location and gave these covert instructions to keep that time of teaching uninterrupted.

<sup>20</sup> When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. <sup>21</sup> And while they were eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me." Historians see this as a U shaped table. Couches around the outer edge make it possible for the guests to lie down as they eat. The servants could come into the middle of the U to serve the guests. As they reclined at this very special meal, the third Passover of Jesus' ministry with His disciples, He pronounced this very ominous warning.

I wonder what affect it had on Judas. Jesus knew it would happen because He knew the Scriptures, but what was Judas thinking? John tells us that Jesus washed the feet of the disciples while Judas was still among them. (John 13:10-11) How could he remain determined to betray Him after that? Was Jesus giving Judas a chance to change his mind and repent of what he had done?

<sup>22</sup> They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely not I, Lord?" <sup>23</sup> Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. One by one they expressed they could not be the one. Jesus depended on the Psalm 41 passage to answer them. (John 13:18) <sup>9</sup> Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me. Psalms 41:9 (NIV) Many think that Judas grabbed the place of honor next to Jesus, and therefore shared his dipping bowl.

<sup>24</sup> The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born." Jesus had clearly seen in the Messianic Psalms (Psalm 22:16) and the Suffering Servant Songs of Isaiah (Isaiah 53:7) that He would be betrayed and crucified. In one last attempt to turn Judas from his course, He pronounced the severity of his decision. Some well-meaning folks think Judas is in heaven. How could Jesus say, "It would be better for him if he had not been born," if he died and went to heaven? (John 6:70) This is the sad fate of those who irrevocably harden their hearts and yield themselves to Satan. Jesus gives us all chance after chance. He warns us of our fate should we be determined to go on with the course we have set.

<sup>25</sup> Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "Yes, it is you." The Gospel writers tell us that no one understood at that time why Judas was leaving. Perhaps this conversation was a quiet one between the two of them so that the rest did not overhear. The disciples thought he was going to give a donation to the poor or some other Passover preparation. (John 13:28-29) Jesus told him to hurry up. In other words, nothing would dissuade Judas, so get it over with. What went through Judas' mind as he walked to the meeting place of the chief priests? The life he had known for the last three years was about to end. Did he consider the warning Jesus had just given him, or was nothing getting through? Was he excited about getting on with his life, or was he wondering if the disciples would

**Commented [notes14]:** 8 Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover." Luke 22:8 (NIV)

**Commented [notes15]:** 10 Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." 11 For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean. John 13:10-11 (NIV)

**Commented [notes16]:** 18 "I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill the scripture: 'He who shares my bread has lifted up his heel against me.' John 13:18 (NIV)

**Commented [notes17]:** 16 Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet.

Psalms 22:16 (NIV)

**Commented [notes18]:** 7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. Isaiah 53:7 (NIV)

**Commented [notes19]:** 70 Then Jesus replied, "Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!" John 6:70 (NIV)

**Commented [notes20]:** 28 but no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. 29 Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the Feast, or to give something to the poor. John 13:28-29 (NIV)

retaliate? All that we do know is that his heart was so hardened that the words of Jesus did not get through to him. He was determined to go through with it.

(Distribute the bread)

<sup>26</sup> *While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."* Jesus and the eleven were celebrating a traditional Passover meal. They had no doubt recounted the liberation from Egypt and the first Passover. They had talked about the bitter servitude there and being delivered by the hand of God. The first two sips of wine had already taken place. The main meal was eaten. Now Jesus did something that was out of place for a Passover Seder. He took bread, broke it, and gave it to His disciples. In those days, the Lamb was the last thing to be eaten. It was to linger on your taste buds to remind you of the sacrifice paid for sins. But Jesus added this bread, that later became a traditional part of the Seder meal, now referred to as the *aphikomen*. He probably prayed the traditional prayer for bread, "Blessed are Thou O LORD, King of the Universe that gives us bread from the earth."

They had heard Him teach that He was the bread that came down from heaven. (John 6:41) They had heard Him declare that we must eat His flesh and drink His blood to have life, (John 6:53) but they did not understand what He meant. The final food in the Passover meal was the Lamb of God, represented by the bread. He is God's manna. He is the bread of life. His sinless body was the Lamb God provided in our place to take away our sins. Then He asked them to eat it, telling them, "Take and eat. This is my body."

(Distribute the cup)

<sup>27</sup> *Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you."<sup>28</sup> This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.* This was the third cup of the Seder meal. It is called the Cup of Redemption. Jesus was revealing to them what the symbolism of years of tradition truly meant, to be redeemed, to have your freedom purchased! As the Children of Israel were slaves to Egypt, so we are slaves to sin. Someone had to come and redeem us, and the only price acceptable was the blood of a flawless sacrificial lamb. Sin demands death. (Romans 6:23) The life of the flesh is in the blood. (Leviticus 17:11) Jesus paid it all to redeem us from the curse of sin and death. (Hebrews 9:22) We are no longer slaves to sin. (Romans 6:17) We are on our way to the Promised Land. He gave thanks. Blessed are Thou O LORD, King of the Universe, which gives us fruit from the vine and redeems us from the hand of the enemy.

What covenant is He talking about? It is the new covenant predicted by Jeremiah and Ezekiel. The old covenant made with Israel was dependent on their obedience to the Law. That covenant was confirmed with the blood of sacrificial animals. There was a problem with that covenant. Every year you had to keep sacrificing for sins because guilt never went away. They could never be obedient for long. This new covenant is not dependent on the blood of animals or our obedience. It is a covenant in the perfect blood of Christ, based on His obedience. "Drink from it, all of you."

Listen to how the author of Hebrews puts it. <sup>6</sup> *...the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.* <sup>7</sup> *For if there had been nothing wrong with that*

**Commented [notes21]:** 41 At this the Jews began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven."  
John 6:41 (NIV)

**Commented [notes22]:** 53 Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."  
John 6:53 (NIV)

**Commented [notes23]:** 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
Romans 6:23 (NIV)

**Commented [notes24]:** 11 For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.  
Leviticus 17:11 (NIV)

**Commented [notes25]:** 22 In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.  
Hebrews 9:22 (NIV)

**Commented [notes26]:** 17 But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted.  
Romans 6:17 (NIV)

first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. <sup>8</sup> But God found fault with the people and said : "The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. <sup>9</sup> It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord. <sup>10</sup> This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. Hebrews 8:6-10 (NIV) Thank God for a new covenant. The writer was quoting Jeremiah 31:31-34.

<sup>29</sup> I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom. "<sup>30</sup> When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. To the Jews, wine represents the joy of life and celebration. (Psalm 104:15) Jesus was declaring that the times ahead would be tough, but until we meet at the Marriage Feast of the Lamb in heaven, He will not be celebrating. It was a declaration of His love and commitment to them. They were about to be separated, and Jesus would be so longing for their physical presence to again be with Him, that there could be no celebration until that day. How He longs to be physically present with us!

This thought struck me one day as I was reading the story. I asked myself how much I longed to be in His physical presence? I decided immediately that I wanted to be like my Master. (1 John 2:6) I told the Lord, "I so long to be in your physical presence that I will no longer drink alcohol of any kind until the day that I drink it anew with You in Your kingdom. That was about ten years ago. One day soon, I will be sitting at that table and I can say to Him, "I waited too. Cheers!"

There is more to Jesus' expression. The four cups of the Passover represent the four "I will" in Exodus 6:6b-7a. <sup>6b</sup>I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. <sup>7a</sup> I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Now do you see why He is waiting to drink the fourth cup? The fourth cup is the Marriage Feast of the Lamb when He takes us to be His own people and forever becomes our God. It is the cup of consummation. (Revelation 19:9)

Our passage today stands out as a contrast of betrayal and commitment. The passage preceding this tells of Mary's commitment to Jesus, demonstrated by an extravagant act of worship. Judas demonstrated how utterly selfish man can be by his commitment to self. Jesus' commitment to us is a heartfelt longing in love to see us perfected and forever in His presence. It seems that we are always making a decision between these extremes, living for self in the moment, or letting the love of Christ call us to a commitment to Him and to one another. Everyday we choose to be Judas like or Christ like. Consider the consequences, choose wisely, and live every day in the light of that decision.

**Commented [notes27]:** 31 "The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.

32 It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them, " declares the LORD.

33 "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

34 No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

Jeremiah 31:31-34 (NIV)

**Commented [notes28]:** 15 And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart.

Psalms 104:15 (KJV)

**Commented [notes29]:** 6 Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

1 John 2:6 (NIV)

**Commented [notes30]:** 9 Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" And he added, "These are the true words of God."

Revelation 19:9 (NIV)