

‘Have you sold Jesus out!’

There was a man who was invited to a fancy dress party and so he thought that it would be good to rent a devil costume, a big red outfit with the tail and the horns and the pitchfork, the whole thing. He was on his way down this country road when a violent thunderstorm broke out and he wanted to find a place of shelter. And so down the road there was a little old country church having a revival.

That storm was hitting the church building really hard, the man ran into the church, and when the people saw him they panicked and went nuts. People started screaming shouting and leaping out of windows and doing everything they could to get out of that building as fast as they could. Except for one old guy whose trousers were caught on a pew and he couldn't get out. And so the next thing he knows, there was thunder and lightening, that one old man, and the man in the costume. He turns around and says, “Now devil I've been coming to this church for 25 years, but I want you to know that I've been on your side the whole time.”

Even though he moved among Jesus' disciples, the man was going to study today has been on the devil's side for a long time. And that's why he made a bargain, which was as hard as his heart. **What kind of man would bargain for Jesus?** The man was going to talk about today is the man **Judas** and although he's not a pleasant person to study, he gets a lot of attention in the gospels and so we need to ask ourselves **why?**

You see I don't believe that anybody suddenly becomes influenced. I want to spend a little time this morning giving you some background on Judas. You see I don't believe that Judas was ever a second-class disciple. Remember he was chosen by Jesus to be numbered among the twelve after Jesus spent a full night in prayer. Judas was treated, he was taught just the same as all of the other disciples, and he was sent out by Christ to minister by the same apostolic authority.

Yes! Judas went out in the name of Jesus and healed the sick, **imagine that?** Imagine looking back years later and when you realise that your baby is alive because Judas healed him. **Yes!** Judas went out in the name of Jesus and cast demons out of people. And **Yes** Judas went out and preached the good news that the kingdom of heaven to the multitudes. Judas was just as much a disciple as anyone else.

In fact, I think a lot of our portrayals of Judas are way off the mark. Every picture I've ever seen, an artists portrayal of the disciples, always has Judas a way off in the corner. Now I don't know why, but he's always a skinny looking guy. Kind of small and thin, he's always got dark hair and a goatee beard but I don't know what that means. But he's always a sinister looking guy and when you take one look at the picture you will always say that, “**That guy is Judas.**”

Because if he wasn't Judas, he probably is a gang leader. **Well how do we know that he wasn't a big guy, with a big old smile on his face, how do we know that Judas didn't have the heartiest laugh of any of the disciples?** This man was as zealous as any of the twelve. The other twelve trusted him enough that when they needed someone to take care of the money, they picked Judas. You see I think Judas probably like the others was just as passionate in the beginning as any of them. He was a nationalist just like Peter and John and Simon. He thought Jesus was going to launch the political liberation of Israel, and he was on the ground floor to make it happen.

But what I think happened, I think sooner than the others, Judas was the one who realised that Jesus wasn't willing to be the king, he wanted him to be. I believe that Judas became disillusioned. Imagine that he is the treasurer of a nearly bankrupt movement, following a man that in Judas' opinion cannot take advantage of the moment.

I think for Judas the real turning point is in **John 6**. Jesus feeds the multitude and the Bible says in **John 6:15**, “**They were so impressed, they came by force to make Him king.**” Now this is the moment all the twelve have been waiting for. “**Let's crown Jesus, let's round up the troops, let's ride into Jerusalem and let's liberate Israel.**”

Do you know what Jesus did? He refused, He withdrew from the multitude, when they came to find Him the next day, He preached one of the fieriest sermons He ever preached. He says, “**The only reason you're here is for the food.**” He started talking about eating His flesh and drinking His blood and the Bible says that after that in **John 6:66**, “**Many people started to turn away.**” And in Judas' mind Jesus blew it.

And that's when Jesus said something very interesting that he hadn't said yet in **John 6:70+71**. After the people had started to walk away, Jesus said, “**Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!**” (He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, was later to betray him.)”

Now I don't know if at this moment Judas plans to betray Jesus, that's still two years away. But at this moment already in the heart of Judas is frustration and disillusionment that Stan is going to start to work on. From that moment on, Judas began to live more and more of the life of an impostor.

I heard a story about the famous composer **John Philips Souza** had a grandson with the same exact name. And for years he had very well paid living going places to be a guest conductor. And he would stand before the band and he would conduct the music that his grandfather had written. But you see the interesting thing is that the grandson couldn't read a note of music, he didn't thing about music. He was just an impostor, trading on the name.

I think for sometime, Judas started to live that way. He started to do the stuff but not listen to the music. In fact at some point it says that every now and then he would put his hand in the money to get a little out. He was determined to get something out of his association with Jesus. And with every small act of treasury his heart grew a little bit harder.

When we get towards the last week of Jesus' life, He's anointed at Bethany by Mary. Who opens a bottle perfume, which is worth a year's wages, her life's savings and she just extravagantly pours it on Jesus. And the Bible says in **John 12:4-6** "But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages." 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."

What's your attitude when you see somebody just praise God extravagantly? It could be by making almost a foolish gift of money. It could be by the way they worship on Sunday morning. It could be by the way they witness at their job. And sometimes they almost get too radical. Does it kind of turn your stomach just a little bit?

You see it did with Judas. For Judas the final straw for Judas was for Jesus giving a blessing to Mary for her extravagance. Look at **Matthew 26**. It's the same story, its right after the anointing at Bethany. It says in **verses 14-16**, "Then, (that moment, that night), one of the Twelve--the one called Judas Iscariot--went to the chief priests 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. From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over." Now I think Judas could have got a lot more. I mean this shows how far Jesus has sunk in his eyes. He could have pushed for much more from the chief priests. **30 pieces of silver** was just the price of a common slave.

By the way have you ever wondered why they needed Judas? They didn't need Judas to recognise Jesus. They didn't need Judas to find out where Jesus was. Do you know what my theory is? **3 times in the gospel of John** they sent guards to arrest Jesus and all **3 times** the guards couldn't do it. I think they were beginning to fear that Jesus was un-arrestable. And they said, "We need someone on the inside, some that can catch Him when his guard is down, someone that wont surprise Him so that we can get Him before He knows what's going on."

And Judas said, "I'm your man." And Judas got his bargain. And the Jewish leaders got their insider. And Satan got his opportune time to come back and attack Jesus. Because you see I think by this point Judas is now the disciple of Satan. And so he makes his deal.

And so we shift now to a few days later and we go to the upper room. All the disciples are gathered together to have a Passover meal. And **John 13:2** says something very interesting. "The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus."

You have to wonder was the blood money on him that night? Were the 30 silver coins in his pocket when he sat down to have supper with Jesus? Something else I think about is this, what was going on in the minds of both men when Jesus washed the feet of Judas? Judas knew what he said he was going to do and Jesus knew he was going to do it.

What were both men thinking when Jesus washed his feet? You see I think Jesus was about to get real personal with this battle. I think the Lord was about to make one last appeal to His deserting disciple. Now I want to show you what happened at the Supper because it was a real battle. Starting in **John 13:18-30**, Jesus says, "I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfil the scripture: 'He who shares my bread has lifted up his heel against me.' "I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am He. I tell you the truth, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me." After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me. His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. One of them, the disciple whom Jesus

loved, was reclining next to him. Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him which one he means." Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, son of Simon. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. "What you are about to do, do quickly," Jesus told him, but no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. 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. As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night."

Now notice that Jesus basically said **3 things** there. A prediction, an answer and a command. **1. The prediction**, He said, **"I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me"** Can you imagine the gulp that Judas had to restrain when Jesus said that? Can you imagine shock that he had to try and keep from registering when Jesus said that?

Now this text makes us face the sovereignty of God and the freewill of men. Jesus predicted His betrayal but predicted doesn't mean predestined. In other words, Jesus' awareness of Judas' betrayal doesn't excuse Judas from responsibility for his actions.

God does not design treachery but God can design treachery in His plan. God doesn't make men do evil but God can use evil men. Now later Judas' remorse is evident that betrayal was his choice. He did not have to betray Jesus, but God used that betrayal to save the world.

You see the reason made the prediction was to let the other disciples know that He was in control. The situation wasn't out of hand. He said in **John 13:19** **"I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am He.**

In other words, later they were going to reflect, they were going to look back on that night. And they are going realise that, Jesus saw that coming, it was all part of a plan, He knew what was about to happen. And they were going to realise He really is the Son of God, He really is in control, He really is the Lord. That's why Jesus made that prediction.

But right now, they can't think about that. All they can think about is, **"Who! Who would betray Jesus?"** And so Peter motions to John and says, **"John find out! Who is it?"** And I think the disciples amazing lack of suspicion about Judas tells a **couple of things**.

1. It tells us that Judas hid his dishonesty very well. You can be a bargainer for Christ and other people will never know it. **2. Jesus must have treated Judas as well as any of the other disciples.** If they had seen over the years that Jesus had a problem with Judas, they would have suspected Judas but they didn't. Because there was nothing about the way Jesus loved Judas that gave them any hint that Judas would sell his Lord.

Now why do you think Peter wants to know? I'll tell because Peter wanted to take preventative action. Peter's got a sword. And all he needs to know is who is this room would sell out Jesus. Lifting one finger Jesus could have saved His life and ended Judas' like that. Peter would have jumped up and cut off his head so fast, Judas wouldn't know about it until he sneezed.

Jesus didn't do that. Instead He gave an answer that only Judas could respond to. He said in **John 13:26** **"It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish."** You might ask, **well why didn't they figure it out then?** Well because in that culture it was the custom for the host to honour a special guest by giving him a morsel from his hand. Let me take you into that room for a second and let you see it like you've never seen it before.

How many of you have seen a copy of Leonardo da Vinci famous portrait of 'The Last Supper'? It's a magnificent work but it's so wrong. They didn't sit at a long table, in chairs, with a white tablecloth. Passover was eaten lying on the floor.

You see they would have a U-shaped table, with the host up at the front, in the very middle. There was someone on the right in a special place of honour. And someone on the left in a very special place of honour. And everybody else would be down the sides. They would lie down on their left elbow and eat with their right hand.

You see that's why the Bible said in **John 13:25** that **"John was up against the breast of Jesus."** He didn't have bad table manners, John was right here, to the right of Jesus. Right up against His breast as they ate.

Now let me ask you, **who would have been right to the left of Jesus in the very special place of honour?** Somebody so close Jesus could take a piece of bread and hand it to him. Jesus gave Judas the place of honour at the Passover. And all that the disciples thought that was happening, in fact we know later from **Matthew** that Jesus and Judas were able to have a very private conversation.

Because it says in **Matthew 26:25**, **"Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "Yes, it is you."** Then he took that piece of bread, He reached over, and He handed it over to him. And I believe He was making a special appeal to Judas' heart. He was holding that piece of bread there and He was looking right into his eyes. And both men knew what He was saying, **"Judas I know it's you, I know what you're struggling with, I know what you're thinking about doing to me Judas, can you go through with it? Can you turn on me like that? Can you sell me out?"**

The Bible says, **"Judas took that morsel and when he did, Satan entered His heart."** As someone once said, **"It was Judas Gethsemane."** Jesus was knocking at the door of his heart and Judas threw open the door and told Jesus to stay outside and he invited Satan in. And just like in Gethsemane when Jesus made His decision and the angels came to give Him strength. Judas made his decision and the dark angel showed up that quick, to make sure he didn't change his mind. And in that moment Jesus knew that He had lost him. So He gave a command, He said in **John 13:27**, **"What you are about to do, do quickly."** By the way it's the only time in the Bible God and Satan gave a man the same command.

And do you know what John says? John says, **"When I look back on it, what I remember is how dark it was when he left, the last thing I ever remember of Judas is walking out in the darkness"**. Because it's always dark when you sell out Jesus. Now let me tell you the problem with preaching on Judas. Over the centuries, he has been so despised that we can't relate to him but the disciples could.

The question they asked when Jesus said, **"One of you is going to betray me"** is **"Is it I? Could it be me?"** I think that's the question we're supposed to ask because I think if we look deep into our hearts that we will admit that there have been times in our lives when we have made some hard bargains for Jesus. **You think about it!** Judas sold out Jesus for **30 pitiful pieces of silver** but do you know something I've sold Jesus out for less than that. **Haven't you?**

There have been times at your work when someone starts a filthy joke and looking a little weird was not important to me. So, I stayed there and listened to the joke and I sold out Jesus for a couple of minutes of thinking I was cool with my workmates.

Isn't that just as hard a bargain? One of your friends says something that is absolutely blasphemous towards God and part of you wants to jump up and defend God but part of you says, **"I don't want my friends to think I'm a weirdo"**, so you keep your mouth shut. **Didn't you just sell out Jesus for a lot less than 30 pieces of silver?**

Or maybe you find yourself in bed with somebody you shouldn't be with; in a place you shouldn't be and for a couple of hours of physical pleasure you traded Jesus. Or you're late for an appointment and you know you ought to tell the truth, **"Well sorry I was irresponsible, I should have been here no matter what."** And so you say, **"Oh man, the traffic was so bad, sorry I just couldn't get here on time."**

And for a few seconds of pride, you told Jesus to leave the room. I mean loved ones we do it all the time for a lot less than **30 pieces of silver**. Everyday Satan comes into your life and he comes into my life and says, **"Would you make a trade for Jesus today? What could I give you today for Jesus that would be a good deal?"**

Earlier I told you the story about the composer **John Philips Souza**; well let me finish the story. He reached a point in his life when he decided that he couldn't keep up the charade anymore. And from that point on, even though it was a lot of money to turn down, every time he was asked to come and conduct a band, he would say, **"No I cant do that, I cant pretend I'm something I'm not."**

I think maybe today, is your day and my day, to tell Satan we don't want to be on his side anymore. And I know were running out of time but just let me give you **3 quick things** you can do to hold your ground against the tempter. **1. Realise that Satan is willing to take time to enter your heart.** His patience finally paid off with Judas. **Have you noticed in your own life a gradual but increasing apathy for spiritual things?** Could you say right now, **"You know my passion for Jesus is not as intense as it was in the past."**

What Satan's doing is, he's just taking his time with you. Whispering in your ear, waiting for the moment to get you to sell out. Nobody else knows it, nobody here can tell. Maybe you're here at church today just like you've always been every Sunday for last so many years. Nobody here can tell but Satan knows, that your passion for Jesus just isn't what it used to be. And the door is getting more and more open and he'll wait and the moment will come and he'll walk right in. I want you to understand loved ones, Satan is patient, he'll take time to enter your heart. Today is the day to say, **"Stop trespassing at my house, I don't want you on my property anymore."**

2. Recognise those situations where you're most tempted to bargain for Christ. Stay away from them. It could be dishonesty, it could be addiction, it could be pornography, it could be lust, it could be bad temper, it could be greed. I don't know what it is but everybody's got **30 pieces of silver** and Satan knows what it is. And even more he can give it.

Whatever it is you would trade for Jesus, Satan's got a bunch of it. And he'll make sure you get a chance to get it. So that's why the Bible says, we've got to pray everyday, **"Father deliver us from evil, lead us not into temptation."** I think the **1st step** to strength is to confess our weakness to Christ.

This leads me to the **3rd thing** you've got to do. **3. You've got to revitalise your heart through daily communion with Jesus.** Listen close to what I'm about to say loved ones. Most of us do not suddenly kick Jesus out of our hearts. But over time we stop inviting Him in. And Jesus will not stay where He's ignored. And I wonder today if Jesus isn't trying to give you a morsel and say, **"Who will it be? Who's going to live in your heart?"**

There was a paediatric nurse who wrote an article in a hospital magazine one time and she said that what she would like to do, a lot of times with little children when she was checking them up. When she was putting the stethoscope in their ears and when she was putting it over their heart and let them listen. So she had a little **4-year-old boy** named **David**, she put it over his chest, and he heard that, **"Thump, thump, thump."** She said, **"David do you know what that sound is?"** And little David paused for a moment and said, **"Is that Jesus knocking?"**

Well yes it is, if you'll listen close this morning, Jesus is knocking. And the best way to keep Satan out of your heart is to keep inviting Jesus in. So, let's do that right now with our closing song, **"Into my heart."**

