

"THE MAN WHO WAS FOR SALE"

Matt. 26:14-16
Matt. 26:47-50
Matt. 27:3-5, 6

Several years back a lady wrote a letter to the Baptist Hour and she began "I want to thank you for saving my life." The letter was from a woman probably young in years but old in assorted experience. In despair, she had gone to a hotel room and was preparing to take her own life. The radio was on, possibly in an effort to drown out her misery. The Baptist Hour came on suddenly. The lady said that ordinarily she would have switched to another station, because she did not listen to religious programs. But a question which the speaker offered caught her attention. So she sat down and listened to the broadcast. By the time it had ended, she had gotten control of herself and instead of taking her life, she wrote a letter of thanksgiving.

Now there are thousands of people who want to write letters, who want to say that I have been helped, unknowingly they are moving on a dead-end street. They live on a dead-end street. In every busy city there are dead-end streets. And of course, there are dead-end streets in life, where people meet death in their journey. And tonight we want to take the story of a man in the New Testament by the name of Judas Iscariot, and discuss his life. Because here was a man who traveled a life, and was for sale.

Many years ago, but not too far back, Marilyn Monroe - who came up in life the hard way, an unwanted child - lived in a foster home and did not find the love and security. And yet she had glamour and made thousands of dollars. She found no satisfaction in money, in three ex-husbands. And she wrote a note that something's got to give. Life had become burdensome for her. It was distressing and therefore she had to find some way out. Instead of knowing how to go, and how to get out of

it, and how to look up in faith, she looked to drugs to bring about death. And thus
- something ^{Had to} did give -- it was her life.

Now when you read the story of Judas, you have a similar sad, tragic commentary
of one who was a traitor and sold his Master.

Men have betrayed their country. Men have betrayed their Army. Men have
betrayed their friends. Men have betrayed their families. And imagine Jesus as a
piece of merchandise, bought and sold, between man and man. And this is the story
we have tonight. And I want to help you understand this story by using about six
questions.

First, who was he? Val 4

We consider the "who". This man, Judas Iscariot. The name Iscariot means a man
of kerioth. A small village in Southern Judea.

So his name really is Judas - a man of kerioth.

In all probability he was of the tribe of Judah - the same tribe of which Jesus
came. The Greek form of this word, of the Hebrew word, means Judah.

It could well have been that he was named after Judas Maccabeus - one of the
great heroes of the Jewish people.

His parents may have dreamed that he would someday be a great hero and a great
leader.

We do not know what Judas did before coming a follower of Jesus. There are some people who say he was a merchant in Jerusalem. And this might explain why he later was entrusted with the purse of Jesus, and the little band of disciples. John 13:29.

Now he was a man, no doubt, of great ambition. And this helps us to know who he was.

II. What he might have been.

When we think how he joined the 12 Apostles - and Judas was among them. He was not a helpless man in the hands of fate - his decisions were his own.

Perhaps tonight I am speaking to someone, who like Judas started out in life with high hopes and dreams. You may be the pride of your family. Your friends may look upon you, as a person who is really going places. You may be destined to do big things in this world. It is so important that you study the downfall of Judas - and that you discover here was a man who might have been something, but tragic indeed, was the end. He might have been a good and a great man.

Remember he lived 3 years with the Master. He heard the words of truth and beauty that fell from the teachings of Jesus. He saw the deeds of mercy that were performed by Christ. And I imagine something in his soul responded to these things.

But something else kept him back from full surrender of self. Some evil thing that made him traitor to the son of God.

It is always this way in life - opposing forces battle for dominance and

ultimately one must win. This is the story in your life. Judas, who might have become one of the greatest in the Kingdom of God, but his name could have been living among the sons of men. But he took his place - not among the great. But he took his place among the crucified. And his name will be dispised until the end of time.

Now there are some who try to picture Judas as a radical revolutionary, who expected Jesus as the Messiah, but he was impatient. He wanted ^{to} for force Jesus to demonstrate to the public that he was the Messiah.

What he might have been - I ^{WANT} ~~was~~ you to notice that Judas Iscariot was the only Judean of the Apostlic band. All the others were Galileans. And as we observe that, it is not unimportant. Of the twelve men Jesus chose, that they might be with him. Eleven of them came from the North, of the country - and one from the South. The Southerner was Judas Iscariot. He spoke with a different accent, no doubt.

And he had been appointed as the accountant, the keeper of the bag - the money. As the company moved from place to place, they needed someone to manage the money.

There is another thing to think about here - this was a company of 13. That is probably the origin of the superstition concerning the number 13. 13 sat down to the Last Supper - and one of them was a traitor.

Superstitious people have dreaded the number 13 ever since. When, in the company, of Disciples of this size moved from place to place - it was better to have one person handle the expenses to save the trouble of the company for the folks

they were dealing with. Judas Iscariot was that man. He had business ability. And our Lord made use of it. So this again, helps us to see something of what he might have become.

III. What made him go wrong?

Why did Judas come to such a tragic end.

John 6:70 - Jesus said, have not I chosen 12 and one of you is the Devil. He spoke of Judas Iscariot. What was wrong with this man. We may conclude from Jesus' own words, that he was not a Christian.

Yet, he pretended to follow Jesus. He thought of Jesus, no doubt, as the political Messiah. He thought it wise to get in on the ground floor with an ambitious enterprise.

It would be well for you to examine your basic motives in life. Are you living for self only - or are you living for others.

Perhaps you might ask yourself the question that John Kennedy, President, asked - ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.

Now Judas lived solely for self-gratification. Even if you win at this - you lose. For things cannot satisfy the deepest longings of your heart.

You reach for the world and you get it. You only find that the world does not

satisfy your soul. That you are still empty, and you realize that all which you possess cannot peace of mind ^{or} ~~of~~ peace of soul. Now Judas may have had an abundance of things.

What I am trying to say to you tonight is that every bum on skid row does not commit suicide. Nor every broken man or woman in a lonely hotel room. But often, men and women of prominence have reached the climax of a selfish seeking life, and they find it only empty.

Now, no one starts out to become a suicide victim. You start with the first step on the wrong road. And then you travel that road until it becomes a part of your life. Judas was first (selfish and ambitious). Second, he took up probably petty theft. And finally he had a resentment toward all life. And he - the thing that was wrong was not corrected until it was too late.

The real thing that made him go wrong was greed. And this is one of the most pressing social problems of our day. In our agricultural system - both landlords and tenants really prevent a solution. Many owners rob their tenants. And many tenants steal from their owners. And so they build up a continuous system.

This is true in industry and in business. Greed eats away at the very vital fabric of the order. We are greedy for profits - so greedy that this greed is making it impossible for profits. You take the example in government which has been compelled to provide decent housing for under-privileged people. Private capitol gouges rent and sub-st_{and}ard housing. And there are people who rent for 25% return on their

capitol. And this gets to be greed. And of course, this is not just found in Communism and Socialism - it becomes a part of character.

And this was the thing that undermined Judas. When he first came to Jesus, he must have been, no doubt, sincere. He was seeking the true values in life. He was chosen as Treasurer of the group. But increasingly the temptation got a hold of him and at last, reached the weakest point.

No one knew that at the time, not even Judas. How like life that is. Our tests always come not in the things in which we are strong, but in the areas of our weaknesses.

Now the act of Judas was no impulsive act. It was not done on the ^{spur} spur of the moment - but it was a slow deterioration of character. Until the money bag became the acid test - and the Spiritual values had been eaten away. I can well believe that the struggle against his besetting sin had been resisted maybe a number of times. And the temptation to him to take from the common funds had been his.

Now if Judas, instead of toying with the idea, had slayed his greed when it first raised it's ugly head - then how different it might have been with him.

We must remember that the thing that made him go wrong, greed, was an attitude. It really has nothing to do with quantities - greed is grasping. You really can't measure greed by an amount because greed is something that snatches whatever it can get. Whether it be little, much, or small. And people many times commit murder for 15¢ or a few dollars. Any sum, to him, would have been a good sum. When greed motivates human conduct - the most insignificant sum will be sought after.

Now let us not think that only the rich people are the greedy people. No, by

no means. And that poor people are generous people. Greed knows no lines of such economic divisions. Greed can be found among the poor as well as among the wealthy.

In tracing the process of Judas's greed and problem we can see the deterioration in his life as his character changes. When they were at the home of Simon in Bethany he protested that when he termed the waste of precious ointment which might have been sold for much money. Now his greed was calculated - in terms of trade. And John adds that Judas made his protest not because he loved the poor but because he had become a thief. He really lost his capacity to recognize any human need, other than the need of money.

I wonder if our Relief Agencies for the poor are not blind - just as blind as Judas to human needs, which cannot be met with cash or surplus commodities and they can not be met with red tape.

Judas had not much further to go after that day in Bethany because he was blinded by greed. And no longer was he thinking in loyal devotion, love, sacrifice - but at that point he was ready to betray one who had met a great deal to him. Of course Judas sounded real pious when he talked about saving the ointment that could have been sold for 300 pence - and given to the poor.

Francis Bacon said, if money be not thy servant it will be thy master.

Robert South said, mammon has enriched his thousands and has damned his ten thousands.

Calvin Coolidge - prosperity is only an instrument to be used, not a diety to worship.

So this thing caused Judas to betray Jesus because he chose to do it - he made a choice. There is something else, Judas was not one of his enemies. He was not one who had opposed Jesus, as one of the rulers. But here is a traitor - one who violates an allegiance. One of the disciples. He could speak tender words to Jesus.

The name Judas was likely a good word - but he spoiled it. And Judas used his friendship and for his own gain and greed. And that was a miserable thing to do.

IV. How did he sell out? V. 49

Now of course, he sold out with a price and with a kiss - these two things. And he betrayed Jesus with a kiss.

This kiss was filled with deception. Because you know a kiss is a token of friendship, love, and loyalty. And can never be thought of as a way of betrayal. But he said, whomsoever I shall kiss - that is he.

And he came, and said - Hail, Rabbi - and kissed him.

Now the full meaning of this expression here is that he over-acted his expression of friendship. His way to indulge in this foulness. That he put his lips on the cheeks of the son of God.

Someone has said the greatest word in the English language is God. And the meanest word is apprecisy. And this is exactly what describes Judas.

Bunyan said religion is the best armour a man can wear but it is the worst cloak.

Now Judas was playing the role of an angel. He was, by this kiss, deceiving and being deceitful and playing the part of Satan.

It was a well conceived plot - it was a snare. He had entered the downward way and was going at break-neck speed. He became enslaved by his love of the present world. And of course he was going to sell out to Jesus.

December 7, 1941 - with a special meeting in Washington - crooked council and dark politics were going on by the Japanese. And they attack the United States without warning. And described by Secretary of State Hall as being infamously false and fraudulent. Think of Judas - think of Japan.

This kiss of Judas was a sin - it was like a volcano erupting all sorts of lava. And so coming from this kiss, on this night, we see that it was something that was ever enlarging in the life of Judas as he went down the wrong way.

If the heart of Jesus could have been broken, surely being betrayed by Judas would have done it. And of course, you know that when some friend has betrayed you, and has not shown gratitude - how heart breaking it is.

Gregory Mantle gives an example of such ingratitude. He tells about in a little town where he was born. There was a man who works in the iron works - he worked as few men worked. He had a boy - his only child. His ambition for that boy was that he might become a doctor. The boy received the hard earned money of his father for his medical training. How that father economized in order that his lad might become a doctor. Then it came out that the boy was wasting his father's

money. And year after year it was the same story.

Later Mantle said - I resented that. I knew how that many had toiled - I knew the longings of his heart. And there in that home was the tragedy of disappointed hope - spending all of his strength that the boy might become what he wanted him to be. The boy failing to fulfill his desire and his father's desire. What a tragedy!

That is a great tragedy - but how much greater it is when the Heavenly Father offers his love to us and so freely give is. Many times it seems that it is all waste. The crime of Judas committed against none other than the son of God.

And the motive which led him to do it were those which had been woven in his own character and own life. That of selfishness.

We are told that fish which live in water caverns lose their eye sight. We know that men and women who live in selfishness lose their spiritual sight.

Let us ~~remember~~ that he sold out not only with a kiss - but he sold out for a price. The price for which Judas betrayed Jesus Christ makes the crime even blacker. He betrayed Christ to be crucified for 30 pieces of silver. His ruling passion was his love for money. The 30 pieces of silver for which he betrayed Jesus Christ for was the market price of an ordinary slave. And therefore, the door to Judas' heart was very cheap.

That he sold our Lord for 30 pieces of silver, is the root of all of all kinds of

evil - the love of money.

A minister was riding a street car in New York - when passing a very handsome church. A fellow passenger turned to him and said, if these Christians would stop building fine churches and give the money to the poor - it would be much more to their credit. I've heard that before was the reply of the minister. Indeed, and by whom, may I ask. Judas Iscariot was the crushing answer. He was reminding him of the occasion when Judas said the ointment might have been sold and given to the poor.

The account says that Judas went unto them. What will you give me and I will betray him to you.

Now it does not seem possible that money would have been a sufficient motive. His real motives were mixed with greed, jealousy, and ambition.

The simple truth is that Judas had a price -\$18.60. Surely he did not count that worth his own self-respect. Betraying Jesus for less than \$18.60.

But Judas thought of personal gain. This is not unusual. No doubt had some fine qualities as I have pointed out. He was strong in some ways. But the strong qualities did not lead him to betray Jesus.

Judas sold out. These three words tell the story. And they were disasterous words when we sell out our homes, when we sell our responsibilities, when we sell out our jobs, when we sell out of faith, our churches, our Saviour - when we sell our reputations. Too many of us have our price too - and it is often very low. It is so easy to sell out our convictions and young people do this often.

Betray Jesus for money? Why even John Rockefeller began to tithe when he was a small boy. And he tithed the first dollar that he ever earned. William Gladstone was a tither. William Colgate tithed every dollar he made. John Ruskin gave 1/2 and finally all of his income for God's work.

Chester Ward Kingley, that great Boston banker, heard his pastor pray, Lord give me a hand to get and a heart to give. And he began tithing and he gave away more than a half million dollars.

Harry McLeod, Troy, New York, asked his Pastor how to make the most of himself. Tithe said his pastor. He did so. And it helped young men get an education and he won hundreds of other people to this method of giving.

John S. Huyler, the candy man, on his way to a New Year's celebration lifted a check given him as part of profits - much larger than he had expected. He decided to go with his Mother to a Watch-Night Service. He consecrated himself and his substance to God that night - and finally he was given 1/2. And before his death, almost all of his income to God's Work.

Russell Cromwell - called a millionaire, gave away over 6 million dollars, to worthy causes.

Now, these men - would they betray Jesus for money. Yet Judas had his price.

Now the thing for you to understand is that Judas sold himself that night and 30 pieces of silver did not measure the price of Jesus - it was the price of Judas. He sold his religion. He dropped into iniquity and Jesus climbed into immortality - and today no mother names her son Judas.

V. Why did he hang himself?

Matt. 27:3 - Judas when he betrayed him - saw that he was condemned - repented himself. Now the word here "repent" - does not mean that he repented (the Greek word) here used is that he felt sorry. He felt bad about making this mistake and he brought the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priest. And he said, I have sinned. I have betrayed an innocent man. And they did not care about Judas or about his conscience. And I'll tell you the world doesn't care about your conscience tonight. You can be worried and say I don't think this thing is right. But the worldly people will say, ah, go ahead and just forget it. And they say, what is that to us.

Judas cast the pieces of silver on the floor in the temple. And the Bible says he departed.

And the Bible says he went and hanged himself.

Greed, is ever self-destructive. Having delivered Jesus into the hands of the enemy. Judas learned that there are things that money cannot buy. And Judas learned that his ill gotten gain had destroyed him. And robbed him of his peace of mind, stripped him of his honor, and left him empty-handed.

He was greedy to the end. He tried to shake off his burden of guilt.

He tried to redeem his own soul by throwing these 30 coins at the feet of the priest.

But it never occurred to him to go to Jesus, and help him bear the cross. He cheated himself and greed drove him to suicide.

It is strange that he was centered upon himself. Self-destruction is never any other way. It is the climax of self pity. He is not thinking of his friends. He is not thinking of his family, his loved-ones. He seeks only an escape for himself. He takes his life not in a way of sin - but in a futile effort he wants to escape the consequences of his sins. He ends his life because to him the values of life have been lost.

He has no reason to go on living because it seems to him that everything worthwhile has departed.

Now the bitter remorse which he had caused Judas to plunge and to die on that tree. His conscience knawed like death at his heart. The load of guilt was too heavy to carry.

Dr. Talmadge used to describe the wicked as saying when your work is done on earth and you enter the reward of your business, all the souls of men who you have destroyed will crowd around you and pour their bitterness into your cup. They will show you their wounds and say that you made them. And point to their thirst and say you kindled it. And rattle their chains and say - you forged them. Then their united groans will smite your ear.

Judas could not escape the terrible remorse any more than a man can run away from his shadow....at every turn it will still be there. That black thing dogging him on and on around and around - it is still there. And Judas is saying, God I cannot get away from it - I can't. This remorse of sin - this inner voice.

And as you hear him cry - I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood. And cast the silver on the floor.

I want to tell you - that night his joy vanished. His foundation crumbled. His Heaven faded. His son went down. His light went out. His blood chilled. His cry had put handcuffs on his wrists.

Judas went to those who had given him the money. But they mocked him and they displayed no regret.

How terrible it is to be confined by the corde of sin. God does not pay at the end of every week - somebody has said. But at the end, he pays. The Bible says the wages of sin is death.

So the question, why did Judas hang himself. Why did he do it? When he looked upon Jesus who had been condemned to die now - just like a man who had committed a crime, he realized what he had done. And he really wanted to call off the bargain - and get out of it. What could he do. The Scripture says that he was sorry that he was caught in his deed, sorry things had turned out not as he had hoped, sorry that the 30 pieces of silver did not satisfy him, and sorry that his conscience condemned him.

Therefore, regardless of the circumstances which converge on a person, in this moment of crisis something snapped. The basic instinct of self-preservation and suicide became an act of insanity. Many people have tried unsuccessfully to take their lives. And have learned how to live happy useful lives. But the Scripture says here that he went to his own place - which probably means Hell. He went there because he had never really accepted Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

He was not a Christian.

Now the Bible teaches that your life is not your own to take at will. God alone gives it and God alone has the right to take it.

VI. What lessons can we learn.

First, there is one remedy for sin. And that remedy is Jesus. And this is the way to prevent what happened to Judas. Trust your soul and life to Jesus as your personal saviour.

Second, make the whole order of your life to inform and conform to the fact that Jesus wants to be the center of your life. Sweep everything else aside.

I read the story of a fine Christian man who lost a fortune. He was heavily in debt in the 30's when the stock market crashed. But he paid every dime back that he owed and he continued giving and working for God. Wore patches on his clothes. He taught a Sunday School Class - and he became an honored and wonderful man blessed again with material goods.

As you see Judas bringing the money back there is no smile upon his face.

He really asked a bargain to be cancelled - he was sick of it. What men will do for money.

They laughed in his face - what is that to us - the deal is over. The damage had been done. The result of sin couldn't be recalled.

go on its way.

We had better beware starting things we cannot stop. Many times we have tried to take words out that we have spoken. Many times people gossip and say things about other people, and how they wish they could retrieve them. People had committed deeds that should not have been done.

We would give anything to start over again.

But one of the lessons we can learn is that we can't betray God and break his law and escape - this will corrode our spirits.

There does come a time when it is too late. The story of Judas is the story of that life.

Not all the excuses and good intentions in the world can make it otherwise and Judas had only one thing to say. Oh God, why did I do this thing.

A lesson we learn is that it is possible for us to live near the church, and then to backslide, and to be guilty of a betrayal. And this is what happened and happens so many times.

A brilliant lawyer climbing a mountain - his friend said watch out for that green slime on the rocks. Do be careful. The young lawyer said, oh, it's safe as anything. I couldn't fall here. They were the last words he uttered. And they picked him up at the bottom of the fall - a mangled body.

It is possible for people to be in church and not be a disciple in heart.

No one could answer that question for Judas without any serious commitment until some severe test comes, they are like everybody else.

Am I really Devoted to my Lord?
" Would it stand if a Crucial Test came?

Lesson - watch money - terribly dangerous -
" - Not limit our love forgiveness!

Judas forgot The Lord's message of forgiveness -
Put no limit on The grace of God -

Instead of picking out his own tree to die upon
Turned to The tree on which Jesus died & found
forgiveness -