

Hanging Out With Jesus: Why There Is Still Hope For Every Judas

Unedited Transcript

Matthew 26:1-5, 14-16; Mark 14:1-2, 10-11, Luke 21:37-22:6

Good morning, men! Welcome to Man in the Mirror's Men's Bible Study, where we always have room for one more guy. Our former table leader, Pete Greenfield, runs an online group down at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church here in town. In a moment I'm going to give a shout out to them to celebrate their long time membership. The reason for that is that local Area Director Pat Leupold, raise your hand Pat, just put together a *No Man Left Behind Essentials* training at Pete's church. Pete was the local leader that helped put that together. They had sixty-five leaders from twenty-five area churches attend that training, plus six Area Directors from around the state of Florida were also there. Pete is out here doing a small group with the video Bible Study but has also caught the vision to make disciples and spread the message. So, I just want to celebrate and honor you, Pete, and your group of guys. They're called Men in the Morning of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Orlando, FL. Pete is their leader and their group meets on Monday mornings at 6:20 am at the Family Life Center using the video Bible Study. So I wonder if you would join me in giving a big celebratory shout out to Men in the Morning? One, two, three, hoorah! Welcome guys, we are honored to continue to have you with us.

Our series is Hanging Out With Jesus. By the way, at the training, one of the Area Directors, John Williams, was there. He sent a message this week via Facebook about an appointment with a pastor. Then when he left the appointment with the pastor, talking about how to disciple men more effectively, his wife sent him a text that she had been having a really rough day. He sent her a text back saying so sorry, love and kisses. Unfortunately, it didn't go to his wife, it went to the pastor he just met with. So you take a couple steps forward and you take a couple steps back in this ministry.

Our message this morning: Why There Is Still Hope For Every Judas. We have wrapped up all of the public teachings of Jesus last week. The sheep and the goats, that's the end of the public teachings and now Jesus is going to focus on giving instruction, teaching, insight, challenge, inspiration, motivation to his disciples. However, one of those disciples, Judas, is about to make a tragic and horrible mistake. So we're going to look at that transition story this morning as we look at stories about Jesus in the gospels.

Here's something to get hold of. Some of us in this room are absolutely clinging to Jesus Christ. We are absolutely walking in the power of God, we are living out our faith. We are experiencing joy! Things like Galatians 2:20 make sense to us. I've been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live the life I now live in the body. I live by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me, and that excites us! But there are also men here this morning and online who are barely holding on. They have betrayed Jesus. They have done something that is so horrific, so terrible, they are so filled with shame and guilt that they, you believe it's just too much! It's unforgivable! Even if God would forgive you, you can't even forgive yourself! That's the kind of man that we're going to look at this morning in this story of Judas. I would like to dedicate this to every man who has ever felt the sorrow of betraying Jesus or known someone who has.

What's Going On Here?

Why there is still hope for every Judas: first of all we'll look at the passage and see what's going on. Matthew 26:1:

The Plot Against Jesus

When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, ² "As you know, the Passover is two days away –

What is the Passover? It's very symbolic in the ministry of Jesus because when the Hebrews were slaves in Egypt, God spared their lives by instructing them to slay a lamb as a sacrifice and then sprinkle the blood on the door posts and the lintel, and then when God passed through Egypt and killed the Egyptians, he would pass over every house where the blood of this animal sacrifice was. Symbolically, Jesus is now becoming that Passover lamb. He's going to be betrayed and crucified on Passover. Notice here it says two days hence, so in Bible times they always count the existing days, so this would be Wednesday and then Thursday this is going to happen:

and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified."

It's quite interesting here because this is a prophecy or a prediction that Jesus is making about when he will be crucified. It's tomorrow, two days hence. This has always been the plan. He does it willingly. This is the reason he came. He came to seek and save the lost and this is the way he plans on doing it, to allow himself to be unjustly crucified for our sins. Reading on, we have a little bit of a timing problem developing here:

³ Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, ⁴ and they schemed to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. ⁵ "But not during the festival," they said, "or there may be a riot among the people."

So we have a bit of a dilemma, we have a problem that needs to be solved here, and that is that Jesus says in two days time I'm going to be handed over and crucified and the people that are going to do it are now saying no not during the Passover. That's at least ten days down the road, so how is it that God provides to resolve this timing problem. By the way, this is important because just imagine what it would mean if Jesus was not born of a virgin, was not born in Bethlehem, did not go down to Egypt so they could come out of Egypt according to prophecy, if he was not born in Nazareth, if he was not pierced for our transgressions, if he did not lead a sinless life, and if he was not crucified when he said he was going to be crucified! We'd have a huge problem because the credibility of this book would then be called into question. Now, it's being called into question for all kinds of spurious reasons, but that would actually be a real reason! So it's extremely important that God resolves this particular problem, and how does he do it? God uses Satan for his own ends. In this passage now, the next little story is actually out of sequence chronologically. We already did this story a little bit earlier, and that's Jesus being anointed at Bethany. This story continues at verse 14:

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

¹⁴ Then one of the Twelve—the one called Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests ¹⁵ and asked, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?” So they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶ From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

Satan tempted Judas to do Satan’s dirty work, and we’ll look at a couple of scriptures here just to point that out. Satan knew his weakness. In fact, we know from the book of John that Judas was the treasurer, he handled all the money and it says right in the Bible that he frequently dipped into the money for his own accounts. So he was a greedy guy. Not that anyone here would ever be like that, but this guy was like that. He had a little greed in him. So Judas betrayed Jesus Christ of his own free will, but God made it happen. That is free will and sovereignty. It’s mysterious, there are some things we never really will understand, the human mind cannot comprehend how mankind can have free will and God can be sovereign at the same time, but you see it over and over in the Bible. God sovereignly orchestrates all events through the free will of the choices of the men he has put here. It’s interesting when you look at this story. You have to say Satan is really pretty stupid. Why, if he wanted to destroy the credibility of the Bible, why didn’t he just help the chief priests and the Pharisees lay off? If he had not incited Judas to betray him, then Jesus’ prediction would not have come true. Do you see what I’m saying? He’s stupid!

So Judas did this for thirty pieces of silver. By the way, in the book of Exodus, that was the price to be given for a slave that had been gored by an ox, that’s how much value they were putting on Jesus. If you want to look it up some other time, Zechariah 11 verses 12 and 13, there is a prophecy here that he will be sold for thirty pieces of silver and that that money will be thrown to the potter. As you know, there was a potter’s field that was bought with this thirty pieces of silver.

What happened to Judas? This is the question I want to get at. I already said that he was a treasurer. In one place it says that Satan tempted Judas to do this. In another place it says that Satan actually entered, but what I want you to see in chapter 26 verse 24, Jesus says:

²⁴ 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.”

What does that mean? It could mean a lot of things, but one thing for sure it means is that you’re not going to name your son Judas! Just imagine what was going on with the other Judas’ at that time. I’m sure they all started using their middle name! The name Judas was to that generation what the name Osama is to our generation! It was the most despised name on the planet because this was the man who betrayed Jesus. Now, that would be one reason why it would be better to have not been born than to do this. There may be other reasons, but here’s what I want to get across this morning; we can’t know whether or not Judas is in heaven, but I want to convince you that if he is, it should come as no surprise. Does that shock you? I can’t tell you, and no one can tell you, whether or not Judas is in heaven. But, if he is, you should not be surprised, and the reason you should not be surprised is because of today’s Big Idea: **Once we have believed in Christ, we can never fall so far that God will not restore us.** It doesn’t say that God cannot restore us, but that he will not restore us. In theology, this is called the perseverance of the saints, or it’s called eternal security, or sometimes it’s called once saved, always saved. The idea is very simple; nobody who has ever believed in Jesus can fall so far that he is beyond the reach and the grip of God. John 6:37-39, Jesus says all that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me, I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my will, but to do the will of him who sent me, and this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me but raise them up on the last day. Philippians 1:6 says he who began a good work

in you will carry it on to completion. Some place in 1 or 2 Timothy says if we are faithless, he will remain faithful for he cannot disown himself. Men, the truth can't be what we want, it has to be what it is, and then you can either to decide to believe and accept it or not. The truth can't be what we want. For you, the impact of this is phenomenal! You don't want to believe that you're forgivable! You don't want to believe that your shame can be removed! You don't want to believe! You love reveling in the despair of being a victim! You're not a victim! You don't have the right be a victim! Because Jesus Christ, in whom you believed died for your sins, and you can never fall so far that he will not restore you! It's not possible!

From the Westminster Confession, a creed that is one of the best creeds that's ever been written: they whom God hath accepted can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end and be eternally saved. That's a compilation of the scriptures, and I've dumbed it down for me and you. **Once we have believed in Christ, we can never fall so far that God will not restore us.** It's not that he cannot restore, it's not even optional, he will! That doesn't mean there are no consequences, and it doesn't mean we are unprotected from the unrighteous exercise of our free will. The confession goes on: nevertheless, they may through the temptations of Satan (as did Judas) and of the world, the prevalence of corruption remaining in them and the neglect of the means of their perseverance fall into grievous sins. Good Lord that happens! That happens here! That happens this week! That happened on your way here this morning for some of us! And for a time continue therein whereby they incur God's displeasure. Fellowship with God is broken. When you sin, you do not lose your salvation. When you sin you break your fellowship with God. Whereby they incur God's displeasure and grieve his Holy Spirit, come to be deprived in some measure of his graces and comforts, have their hearts hardened. You're thinking of people right now, maybe yourself, maybe somebody you love, maybe it's a wife, maybe children or grandchildren, maybe it's a coworker, maybe it's a close friend or neighbor. Have their hearts hardened and consciences wounded. Hurt and scandalize others. Every week in my line of work you wouldn't be surprised to hear this, I hear of at least one or two men who are scandalizing their wives through acts of adultery or infidelity or wives doing that to their husbands. Addictions... hurt and scandalize others and bring temporal judgments upon themselves. Yeah, that happens! That's what happened to Judas! That's why it would have been better if he had never been born, because of what the name Judas represents. But he is a proxy for all of us!

How Do Men Betray Jesus Today?

What one question best captures what really needs to be asked and answered at the moment? How do men betray Jesus today? How do we do that? We could be here for a three week seminar, but just to use some of the things that come out of the life of Judas, Judas was a treasurer. So we misappropriate funds. How do we do that? We rob God out of his tithes and offerings. He blesses us with a hundred dollars and we bless him with one back. In Malachi 3:10, he says test me now on this and see if I will not pour out a blessing so great that you will not have room to take it in. We don't do that, instead we misappropriate funds. Remember the story of Ananias and Sapphira? They had their own money, they could do with it whatever they wanted, but then they pretended that they brought more than they brought. They both lied and they both suffered the ultimate consequence for that. How do we rob God? I heard pastor David Uth at First Baptist Church in Orlando say in a sermon one morning that he realized that he was receiving health insurance paid for by the church and so he realized he was getting that without tithing on that amount so he has his staff calculate the amount of health insurance he receives and he pays a tithe on that as well. Guess what? I heard that and bam! I've never done that, and I started doing that! Immediately! Why? Because I don't want to misappropriate the funds that have been given to me. So that's one way men betray God, they don't give God what he's do.

Another way, in verse 15, what are you willing to give me? We betray God for worldly wealth. If you have been sucked in by this prosperity gospel, the idea that does God want to bless you? Absolutely! Is that the reason to be a Christian? Absolutely not! But there are entire legions of teachers and preachers and churches where the whole focus is on following God so that God will make us rich! So that we can get something from God! That's what Judas was doing! So you think being a Judas is so bad, but there are Judas' all over the place!

Other ways that men betray Jesus today, they betray Jesus by their silence. We look at the parable of the sheep and we talked about feeding the hungry and giving something to drink to the thirsty, inviting strangers in, all those things. Guess what? When we see injustice and we are silent, we are betraying Jesus! Guess what? When you see someone who needs to be disciplined, who needs to know Christ, and you remain silent, guess what? You are betraying Jesus! When you see an act of service that's within your power to do, just like the Big Idea from last week! What does it say about us when you see someone in need and you don't do anything when it's in your power to act?

So this is all of us. Anyone can be a Judas potentially. But this is an application oriented Bible Study, so instead of just scaring the hell into you, we want to talk about the Gospel, and the Gospel of Jesus is even if you have done this Judas thing, even if you are filled with this guilt, even if you don't feel like you are forgivable, even if you have someone in your own family and they have done something so despicable that you don't think you could possibly forgive them and they could never possibly be forgiven by Jesus, guess what! You're wrong! You're absolutely wrong! Judas may not be in heaven, but you shouldn't be surprised when you get there if he is, because once we believe **once we have believed in Christ, we can never fall so far that God will not restore us.**

How Does This Inform Our Lives And Ministries?

Final thought, how does this inform our lives and ministries. First up, Jesus said a new command I give to you that you perfect your theology... No. Is theology important? Absolutely! But Jesus says all men will know you are my disciples if you love one another, that's the new command I give you, that you love one another. So brothers, when you see someone who has done a Judas thing, restore them! Bring them back! Don't write them off! It could be your pastor caught in an adulterous affair! We've had three high profile ones in the community in the last year! My pastor says for every one you hear about, there are ten others you will never know about! Don't write them off! If your wife commits adultery, you can get a divorce, that's Biblical, but how much better to try to help restore her, to bring her back! Galatians 6:1 says:

Doing Good to All

Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently.

The Big Idea again today, **once we have believed in Christ, we can never fall so far that God will not restore us.** God's normal way to restore us is through other people who are obeying the command to love one another, who are following the principle here in Galatians 6, restore him gently.

Secondly, how does this inform our lives? We should never write anyone off! Especially those who have made a profession of faith in Christ. You never know what God's ultimate plan is for that person. Don't write your wife off, don't write your kids off, don't write your neighbors off, don't write your gym and

track buddies off, don't write your ping pong pals off. Whatever you're doing, don't write them off! And stay alert! It says right here but watch yourself or you also may be tempted. In Hebrews 13:2, we talked about this last time that some people have unknowingly entertained angels. There's a flipside to that. Some people have unknowingly entertained the devil. 1 Peter 5:8, stay alert! Your enemy, the Devil, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for somebody to devour! Flick him away!

Finally, you can come back from a Judas moment. You or anyone that you care about. I want to close in prayer, and if you have betrayed Jesus in some way and you're doing your best to make it up to him, you don't have to do that. You'll never be able to fall so far that he will not restore you. He wants to restore you, he wants to take away the shame and guilt, he wants you to experience his forgiveness. So if you have had a Judas moment or you know somebody who has had a Judas moment and you realize that you have been unfaithful to them, that you have not been willing to carry their burdens, that you need to go to them and help restore them. Do you have a face in mind for that? I want us to pray, and I want to give you an opportunity to receive the forgiveness that Jesus wants you to have and to extend the forgiveness that Jesus wants you to extend. Let us pray!

Closing Prayer

Our dearest Father in heaven, this is a little bit of a different way of looking at Judas. Maybe for some men, a completely radicalized way! But Father if Judas is not heaven, only you know that. We can't know that, but what we can know is that it would not be a big surprise if he is because of this idea today that you will do whatever is required to restore us. We who have believed in Christ. So the issue of Judas is not what did he do wrong but did he believe in Christ? So men do you believe in Christ? If you do and you have done a Judas thing and you have wondered if you could ever make amends for it, the answer is no you can't, but Jesus Christ did, and he wants to Passover you right now. Will you accept his Passover? If so, let me invite you to pray this prayer silently to yourself.

Lord Jesus, I have sinned against you. I'm a betrayer and I have not known how to get back to you. Lord, I see right now that more than anything you do want to forgive my sin. So I repent. I'm sorry, I ask for your forgiveness and by faith I receive it. Remove my shame, remove my guilt, let me walk in the power of your Holy Spirit.

For those of you who have someone in your life that they've done a Judas thing, maybe to you or to somebody else. Maybe you're watching them self-destruct, maybe they're dragging you down with them, let me encourage you to pray this prayer for them silently to yourself.

Our dearest Father, this person who has done this Judas thing, Lord it's bringing them down, it's bringing me down, maybe it's bring our family down. Lord, I pray that this would not become a stronghold for them, or if it has that it would be broken. That you would invade their lives, convict them of sin, lead them to repentance, and restore them and come quickly to do this. A spouse, a child, a friend, a coworker, a neighbor. We ask these things in your name Jesus, amen!