

Hanging Out with Jesus

Stories about Jesus from the Gospels

What Should You Do When You've Been Betrayed?

Unedited Transcript

Matthew 26:47-56, Mark 14:43-52, Luke 22:47-53, John 18:2-12

Good morning, men! Please open your Bibles to John 18. We'll be at verse 2, John 18:2. Let's go ahead and do a shout-out. Today, the shout-out is going to the Men's Group of Atascadero Bible Church in Atascadero, CA. 6 men who have been meeting for 1 ½ years on Wednesdays at 7:00 pm at the North Country Healing Rooms using the Video Bible Study. Led by Wes Redding and we are looking for a Field Representative for the Atascadero, CA area! I looked this up and it's midway between Los Angeles and San Francisco. I looked at the street view and gosh, it really is beautiful, really nice, Atascadero Bible Church, so I wonder if you would join me in welcoming our new group, the men's group at Atascadero Bible Church with a warm welcome. One, two, three, hoorah! Welcome guys, we're really glad to have you with us!

The series is Hanging Out with Jesus. This is just too funny. I don't know how this is going to work out, but I recorded a voice mail that I received from Bill at the Gift Recovery Department. I wanted to play it for you. Let's see how it works:

Hi, Bill here with the Gift Recovery Department giving you a call in regards to the \$25,000 cash giveaway that we sponsored sometime back within the last 18 months. The reward period is officially coming to an end. We are looking at your name and we have very good news for you. What you need to do as soon as possible is give us a call toll free here in the office at 1-866-826-0823. Again, that's 1-866-826-0823. There's no obligation to buy or purchase anything, but you do need to give us a call as soon as possible to avoid forfeiting your check. Congratulations!

Thanks, Bill, at the Gift Recovery Department. By the way, I didn't call him, so if anybody wants to call and claim my \$25,000 gift, you can see me afterwards and I'll give you that phone number. That's what we call a con. That's what we call a con. That's different than a betrayal because when you have a betrayal, it's somebody ... A con is just somebody you don't know, an enemy, but a betrayal, when you have a betrayal, there was a trust. There was a relationship. It might've been a relationship with an individual or it could be a relationship with an institution, a trust in the government, or a trust in the employer, in some kind of a social contract that existed.

Today we're going to talk about what should you do when you've been betrayed? We're going to look at the story of Jesus being betrayed by Judas. Now when we look at the Bible stories, we do the Christian history and we do the theology, but as you know, we are also trying to figure out what is the application for you? What do you do when it's 9:00 and the phones are ringing and the customers are betraying you

or the employer is betraying you or your business partner is betraying you? What do you do about the issue in the text then? This is very much about so what, we read the Bible, but so what? Then not only so what, but now what? What do you actually do about it? Today, we're going to look at the story of the betrayal of Jesus, but in the context of how it can help us live our lives following the example of Jesus in bringing glory to Him by the way that we, ourselves, handle betrayal.

The Dynamics of Betrayal

Let's look a little bit at the dynamics of betrayal. The dictionary, I thought the dictionary did a pretty good job of helping just understand the different nuances of betrayal. The first definition, and the one that would apply to Judas, to deliver or expose to an enemy by treachery or disloyalty. The dictionary gives Benedict Arnold as the example, but we would give Judas, right? Also, to be unfaithful in guarding, maintaining, or fulfilling. To betray a trust is the example. To betray one's friends, to betray a secret. Benjamin Franklin once said that 3 people can keep a secret as long as 2 of them are dead. An unfeeling remark that betrays a lack of concern. To deceive, misguide, or corrupt. The example, a young lawyer betrayed by political ambitions into irreparable folly. Then to seduce and desert. That's the dictionary definition of it.

We see it everywhere. Betrayal is, it's almost like another element of oxygen, isn't it? It's just everywhere you see. The problem, of course, is that betrayal is so corrosive, it creates such a toxic environment for us that it's good to know how Jesus would want us to respond to it. Examples, of course, would be somebody telling you a lie to your face or the truth behind your back, right? Or they could also be telling a lie behind your back, as well, somebody throwing you under the bus. You're at a big meeting. I was at a big meeting, so institutions can betray you. People, of course, are the ones in the institutions that do the betraying.

I'm a past president of the University of Central Florida Foundation. They had a committee, a meeting of former presidents to nominate, I can't remember, officers or new directors. Anyway, I come into the meeting. Here are all these other former presidents of the University of Central Florida Foundation. The executive director throws me under the bus in the meeting. I won't go into all the details now, but he threw me under the bus. I was so humiliated. I excused myself from the meeting under the pretense that I had another meeting that I had to go to. I have never, ever once had any contact with the University of Central Florida since that time, 15 years ago. I block their emails. I just have no interest in UCF because of the sting, the toxicity of that betrayal.

Now I have other betrayals, too, that are much more personal and painful, but that's just one example. You've had that. You've had others. Some of you have been betrayed by a spouse. Maybe it was infidelity, but maybe it was something not quite as bad as that. Some of you have been betrayed by a child. Peter Ustinov once said, wisely, I think, that parents are the bones upon which children sharpen their teeth. Any of you who have teenagers know what I'm talking about. Of course, any of you who have been a teenager know what I'm talking about, too, because we've done it to our parents and now our kids do it to us, right?

There are other kinds of betrayals. Some of you have people that you work with. They throw you under the bus. They're constantly betraying you. These are people that you used to go to lunch with. Course, now you don't want to have anything to do with them. That's understandable. Could be suppliers, relatives, customers. It could be your employer if you work for somebody, but it could just as easily be your employee. I remember once having an employee who was spreading these vitriolic, venomous,

hurtful, just mean-spirited rumors about me. This is somebody I had worked with for over a decade at that point. I asked this person into my office and we sat down. An employee, I'm the employer. I said, "Why are you doing this to me? Why, why are you saying these, these awful, terrible things? You know they're not true." She said, "Oh, I didn't mean any of it." I said, "What? You're kidding me. Do you realize the destruction that you've done here?" She said, "I didn't mean any of it." She said, "You, you and Patsy, I mean, don't you ever, don't you ever talk about getting divorced?" I said, "What? No, we never talk about getting divorced."

The point is that she didn't think it was all that big of a deal and yet, the impact of it was such that to this day, to this day, the relationship has never been the same and it never will be the same. Now have I forgiven? Yes. Have I forgotten? No. Can I trust that person in the same way that I trusted them before? It's difficult to do that. It's difficult to do that. These are some of the dynamics of betrayal.

Let's take a look at our text. We'll start at John 18:2. They're up in the garden at Gethsemane. Now Judas, who betrayed Him, he is the betrayer. He knew the place because Jesus had often met there with His disciples, so this is one of their hangouts. This is one of the places where they have this small group meeting. Okay. This place where Judas does the betrayal, it's a sacred place. It's where they had the small group meeting for crying out loud. Verse 3, "So Judas came to the grove guiding a detachment or a cohort of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns, and weapons."

Keep your finger there, if you would. Let's flip over to Luke 22:48, so it's Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, so it'd be to the left, Luke 22:48. You'll see 4 Scriptures across the top of your listener's outline. This story is repeated in different ways in all 4 of the Gospels. There's some nuances that are different and we'll talk about a few of them. There are a lot of them and you can look at them on your own, of course. Verse 48, "Jesus asked Judas, 'Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?'" Judas had arranged to give the signal that he ... Of course, that's culturally. That would be, today, like saying okay to the guy, "Let's fist bump." Okay. Today it would be like saying, "Hey," when I give a fist bump to Kevin, "That's the guy. That's the guy. Arrest him." The kiss is just a cultural thing there. There's no real significance in that other than the fact that it's the way that 2 friends would greet each other. Whoops, not a friend anymore, but it's the way that 2 friends would've greeted each other at the time.

All right. Now let's just go back to the John passage, continuing on. This is an ineffable moment. "Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to Him, omniscient in His divine nature, went out and asked them, all these people that came with lanterns and swords, 'Who is it you want?' 'Jesus of Nazareth,' they replied. 'I am He,' Jesus said. Judas the traitor was standing there with them. When Jesus said, 'I am He,' they drew back and fell to the ground." Now that is very interesting because this is the same Jesus in whom there is nothing attractive, this is the One who, the suffering servant and so forth, this is the One who became disfigured beyond recognition. Why did they shrink back, why did they fall to the ground for crying out loud? We don't know, but it must be, or it's very likely, that there was some breaking through of the transcendence of God that created this moment, like on the Mount of Transfiguration when the 3 disciples didn't know how to handle the appearance of Jesus turning into His glorified state or one of His glorified states or some glorified state.

They fell to the ground. All right. I want to continue, verse 7, "Again He asked them, 'Who is it you want,' and they said, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' 'I told you that I am He,' Jesus answered. 'If you're looking for me, then let these men go.' This happened so that the words He had spoken would be fulfilled." In John 6:39, "I have not lost one of those you gave Me." Interesting. We know that they went ahead and arrested

Him, so even though, even though they had this experience with God, whatever the experience with God that they had, it was powerful enough that they fell back and went to the ground. Even so, even so, they went ahead and they arrested Him and all the other things that they did to Jesus. It's worth just taking a little note to comment that people see what they want to see and people do what they want to do. A made-up mind is almost impossible to change.

We also know that this was done to fulfill Scripture. We'll get to that. Jesus talks about that. The point is when you see what these men did, nobody's ever going to see you and fall to the ground, okay? If they did this to Jesus and proceeded to betray Him anyway, it becomes obvious that betrayal is not a rational act, so when somebody betrays you, you already know that they're not acting rationally. Answer a fool according to his folly. No, don't answer a fool according to his folly. Actually, it doesn't make any difference whether you do or you don't, you're not going to win because betrayal is not a rational act. There has to be a whole different approach than meeting bullets with bullets, meeting words with words. Now sometimes you need to have bullets to meet bullets. If there is physical abuse or verbal abuse or some kind of a violence that's involved, then ... Now this gets into all the just war, pacifist things, but I do think you can clearly say that the Bible says that you are allowed to defend yourself. You are allowed to defend yourself. You are allowed to defend yourself against violence, not only physical, but also emotional and verbal violence. You are allowed to defensively protect yourself.

I'm getting ahead of myself, getting ahead of myself. Here's the big idea for the day. Since it's not a rational act and we need to do it differently, the big idea today is this. **If God allows you to be betrayed, then ask yourself how can you handle it so that Christ, so that Jesus Christ can be glorified.** Do you remember, if you were here, you remember the message, but do you remember in the Bible it says in John 17:1, he says, "Father, the time has come. Glorify Your Son that Your Son may glorify You." Jesus has submitted Himself to the will of God. In the previous message, when we were talking about the garden scene, the idea is that the secret of fully embracing God's will is to fully surrender any will of my own. We saw that Jesus did that. He set the example for us. He's moving towards this act that will glorify Him so that He may glorify the Father. Jesus Christ is interested in being glorified through your betrayal.

Now does Jesus, does God set out to cause somebody to betray you? That's a huge theological hornet's nest that's been debated for thousands of years. I don't know, but I do know this. It happens. If it happened, a sovereign God, for whatever reason, allowed it to happen. If God allowed it to happen to Jesus, why shouldn't we be surprised He would allow it to happen to us? Because it's the way that Jesus handled the situation that allowed the Father to be glorified and the Son to be glorified. It's the way that you and I handle it when we are betrayed that will determine whether or not God is glorified.

Retaliation and the Use of Force

With that in mind, let's take a look at retaliation and the use of force. I want us to look at Luke 22. Now you can keep your finger in John if you want to, but let's look at Luke 22:49. Now I have just got to tell you something very interesting here because we're going to look at verse 49, but you may remember that Jesus said a couple verses ahead of this that, "Before, I told you not to take anything when you went out, but now take a bag and take a sword." In fact, might as well look at it. It said, verse 38, "The disciple said, 'See Lord, here are 2 swords.' Jesus says, 'That is enough.'"

Now why did Jesus tell them to strap on a sword? We don't know. Honestly, most of the things that are said, we know what was said, but most of the things we don't really know why. It could have been that Jesus wanted them to have this defensive weapon so that if they were attacked by marauders and

bandits out on the roads, which was common at that time, that they would have a way of defending themselves. He most certainly did not mean it as an offensive weapon, as we'll see in a moment, or it just may be that Jesus knew what was going to happen in right here now, next. He wanted to have a sword here so He could demonstrate His power.

Let's read at Luke 22:49. "When Jesus' followers saw what was going to happen, they said, 'Lord, should we strike with our swords?'" How many swords did they have? Two. "'Lord, should we strike with our swords?' One of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear." I love that. Really, it's so specific and so particular and so bizarre. Could that be a myth? How could that be a myth? Some people would say that.

Now keep your finger there, but let's look at a little bit more specificity on this at John 18:10. If you're having trouble toggling back and forth between these Scriptures, no problem, just sit, just listen and enjoy this. Sidebar, so why are the gospel writers writing different things? It's the issue of selection. Why are they selecting the exact scenes that they're selecting? In theology, there is this idea that God's word is divinely inspired, but written through human authors preserving their own personality. God, He's not having people mechanically as automatons or robots just writing down, He's not dictating to these writers. He's inspiring them in their own personalities, so different people are interested in different things. I've got a new tow vehicle for my camper. We could go out and have 4 of you take a look at it and come in here and describe it and what would we have? We would have 4 different descriptions.

Philip Brooks, talking about preaching, but it's also very relevant, he said that preaching, this is a very famous illustration, a very famous definition, rather, of preaching. He said, "Preaching is truth through personality." We could also say that the Scriptures are truth through personality. For whatever reason, whatever reason, Luke didn't think it was important, but John thought it was very important, so he identified the malefactor here who did the ear cutting, cut the ear off, however you're supposed to say that.

Verse 10, "Then Simon Peter, who had 1 of the 2 swords, he drew it and he struck the high priest's servants, cutting off his right ear and the servant's name was Malchus." There you have it. How did the disciples respond to this betrayal? Retaliation, retaliation, retaliation with force. What is retaliation? It's meeting like with like. We talk about, in our military strategy, proportionate responses. It's like-for-like retaliation. This is not even retaliation, is it? It's escalation. These other people, they came with swords, but they haven't used them yet. It's actually an escalation of the violence. Look what Jesus says, verse 11, "Jesus commanded Peter, 'Put your sword away. Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given Me?'"

I'm so far behind in this talk, I'm going to have to either talk 3 times as fast or skip some things, so I'm going to skip some things. What did Jesus tell them to do? Don't use your sword as an offensive weapon in retaliation or escalation. That's what He said. That's His message, part of His message here. We have a sword today. It's the sword of the spirit. Sharper than any 2-edged is the word of God, so we have a different kind of a sword. What could Jesus have done? Probably worth taking a look at Matthew 26:52. If you're trying to figure out what is Jesus' attitude or position or view about the use of force and violence, Matthew 26:52, Matthew 26:52. "'Put your sword back in its place,' Jesus said, 'For all who draw the sword or live by the sword will die by the sword.'" That's where that comes from, that little cliché live by the sword, die by the sword. That's where it comes from.

"'All who draw the sword will die by the sword. Do you think I cannot call on My Father and He will at once put at My disposal more than 12 legions of angels? How, then, would the Scriptures be fulfilled

that say it must happen this way?' At that time, Jesus said to the crowd, 'Am I leading a rebellion?'" If you want to know what Jesus' attitude about the use of force is, "'Am I leading a rebellion that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture Me? Every day I sat in the temple, but this all has taken place that the writings of the Prophets, the Scriptures, might be fulfilled.'" Matthew, keeping with the idea of the fulfillment of Scripture, has 2 examples there for that.

Why did not Jesus retaliate? Because He had His eye on the prize. He had His eye on the bigger picture. He was focused on His mission and so should you and I be. That mission was to bring glory to Himself, glory to honor, and complete the task that God had given Him. The big idea if God allows you to be betrayed, that's the question. How can you handle it so that Christ can receive the glory through your betrayal?

How can we move beyond the toxicity of betrayal?

Now to the real nuts and bolts, how can we move beyond the toxicity of betrayal? How can you do that? Ecclesiastes 7:21-22. "Do not be surprised at," no, that's a different verse. That's a different verse. "Do not listen too closely to every word that people say or you may what? Hear your servant cursing you. For you know in your heart that you, yourself, have also many times cursed others." Most of us have been sitting here thinking about being betrayed. Now it's time to also thinking about the possibility that sometimes we're the betrayer, you see. Not only have we been betrayed, but we also betray others.

Managing expectations is the first step here, having this backdrop. Ephesians 2:1-5, "Remembering that we were all by nature at one time objects of God's wrath, but God, because of His great love for us, has made us alive with Christ even when we were dead and so to look on others and understand that God is allowing them to go through what we went through at one time ourselves." That's the expectations.

Second is to overlook offenses. Proverbs 19:11, "A man's wisdom gives him patience." It is to his glory, it is to your glory, not even Jesus' glory, it is to the man's glory to overlook an offense. Let the little ones go. If you can, let the little ones go. Don't even think about them, just let them go. Manage expectations, overlook, and then third, forgive. Even if you have to end the relationship because the person cannot be trusted, and that's possible, nevertheless forgive them.

Matthew 6:14-15, right after the Lord's Prayer that Jesus says, right after the Lord's Prayer, "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." When we forgive other people, it's in our best interest. It's in our best interest to forgive because the toxicity of betrayal is un-forgiveness. Do you understand that? The toxicity of betrayal is un-forgiveness. If you forgive, you will feel, slowly, the ... That doesn't mean that toxicity suddenly, what's that when you get beamed up? Transports. It's not transported out of your body. It dissipates slowly or it breaks down. It's like a chemical in your body, this toxicity, so it takes time to break down. Forgiveness, forgiveness is the medicine, you see, forgiveness is the medicine. Take the long view is the final piece here. "Remembering that you've been predestined by the One who is working out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will," Ephesians 1:11. God is working out everything that happens in our lives, in conformity with the purpose of His will, even when He allows these things to happen. His goal is that you and I would bring Him glory. If He allows you to be betrayed, ask yourself how can I handle this so that Christ, Jesus Christ, is glorified? Who's betrayed you? Can you forgive them? Who have you betrayed? Can you go and apologize and ask them for forgiveness? This is the medicine. I hope you will use it and bring glory to Jesus Christ. Let's pray!

Closing Prayer

Our dearest Father, we first of all praise and worship You in the beauty of Your holiness, in the majesty of Your creation, and in the generosity of Your salvation. Lord, betrayal is just, it's as much a part of life as oxygen itself. We have been the betrayer and the betrayed and You have allowed it. You will allow it again. Show us, Father, how we can respond in a way that brings glory to Jesus Christ by taking and giving the medicine of forgiveness. We ask this in Jesus' name, Jesus' loving name. Amen.