

## **THE BETRAYER AMONG US**

**Luke 22:1–23**

**Dr. George O. Wood**

We're continuing along through the journey of this third book of the New Testament, the third Gospel.

“Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was approaching, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some way to get rid of Jesus, for they were afraid of the people. Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve. And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus. They were delighted and agreed to give him money. He consented, and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present. Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, ‘Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.’ ‘Where do you want us to prepare for it?’ they asked. He replied, ‘As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, and say to the owner of the house, “The Teacher asks, ‘Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’” He will show you a large upper room, all furnished. Make preparations there.’ They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover. When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, ‘I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.’ After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, ‘Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.’ And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body given

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for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table. The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed, but woe to that man who betrays him.’ They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this” (Luke 22:1–23, NIV).

My message this morning focuses on the theme, “The Betrayer Among Us.” Maybe this title is not a positive and happy and feel-good title. But it deals with a very real thing in life. The real thing of betrayal. It raises immediately a searching question, could there be some or all of Judas in me?

As you read the account that I have just read, not only in Luke’s Gospel but also in Matthew and Mark, you will find that there is some very specific language that occurs in Matthew and Mark on the part of the disciples that is not mentioned in Luke. That is, when Jesus said this to the disciples, “One of you will betray Me.” According to the King James Version, the translation at that point is, “They all said one after another ‘Is it I? Is it I?’” Of course, when it reads that way, it carries with it the connotation that each of them felt themselves to be susceptible. That they all were potential traitors.

If you compare those same passages however with a new translation like the New International Version, from which I’ve read today, you’ll find that instead of the question being asked, “Is it I?” it is translated instead, actually a more accurate translation of the underlying Greek text, rather than saying, “Is it I?” the question is, “Surely not I, Lord!” Now it becomes a statement of denial, “No, far be that from me. I couldn’t do that.” So they all say, “Surely not I, Lord!” Except for Judas, who changes one word in the phrase. Judas instead of saying, “Surely not I, Lord,” says, “Surely not I, Rabbi.” In that change of title for Jesus is the heart of Judas’ problem.

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Judas had come to perceive Jesus not as the Lord. He was willing to ascribe to Him the title of teacher or rabbi, and that was it.

One looks at the earthly results of Jesus' ministry and sees at the very end of His public ministry He had twelve close followers. His crowd was reduced to twelve, and one of those twelve became His betrayer. If that ratio were to hold true, let's say, in this audience today, it would mean that 8.33 percent of this crowd would wind up being like Judas, if one out of twelve betrayed, but there's no indication in the Gospel that indicates that's a ratio by which we can judge. Certainly, as we look at the state of the family in America today, not only the non-Christian family but the Christian family as well, we see that there is a great deal of betrayal that is taking place in human relationships. As pastor, I scan my heart and eyes across the body of believers which I know—this church. I see also there have been those who have fallen away from Christ who once sat with us, who once worked with us, who once blended their hearts and hands and voices singing the songs of Zion who are now in a far away country. It raises the probing question in our life as to whether the prospect of Judas being present in us exists.

It is clear, from reading the Gospels, that the role of Judas is a critically important one. We see in all the Gospels a testimony to the fact that the religious authorities had determined not to arrest Jesus when He was with a crowd because they were afraid of the people. Jesus was extremely popular and Jerusalem at Passover time doubled or tripled its population. Many of these came from Galilee, where Jesus had done His great works and no one dare lay hands on Him when He was in the temple or in public. It would be in private where they could get a hold of Him. Matthew and Mark's Gospels tell us that since Jesus was so popular with the crowds, the religious authorities already decided not to try to arrest Him during Passover.

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One thing changes their mind, however. It is that Judas comes. They need a private and a quiet moment in which to arrest Jesus, in which they feel He cannot be protected by His partisans.

Judas will be the one who provides them that moment because he knows where Jesus goes when He's not with a crowd.

Jesus, knowing that Judas has already predetermined to betray Him, makes His plans in secret so that the time that He will have to share the Passover with the disciples will be kept as protected information. None of the disciples know. When the day comes for the Passover, which is the evening before Jesus' crucifixion, He takes two of His most trusted disciples, Peter and John, and sends them into the city and says, "Go there and you will find a man carrying a water jar. Follow him and that's where you should prepare the Passover." He doesn't tell them who the man will be. He just says he will be carrying a water jar, which evidently means that Jesus had prearranged for the place where He would have those moments with His disciples. And carrying a water jar as a man would be the most unusual thing. Men carried skins instead of water jars. So for a man to be carrying a water jar is a sure tip-off that there had been a prearranged sign. They were to follow him.

Why did Jesus want to protect His whereabouts at that moment from all the disciples? It was because, in that Last Supper, He was to institute Communion. It was because He was to give the body of material that we find that the Lord taught His disciples—John 13–17. It was a very important time when the Lord needed to protect Himself and His whereabouts. But Judas will be instrumental right after that event, slipping out of that room and telling the religious leaders that He has gone to the Garden of Gethsemane, where He could be arrested privately.

The issue of Judas has always been a theological problem for many, many people including myself. Because it brings right into focus the question of what relationship there is between

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human freedom and divine sovereignty. It's obvious, from reading the Gospels, that Jesus knows from the beginning that Judas is the betrayer. It's also obvious from the Gospels that Judas takes responsibility for his own action and is a morally free agent. The Scriptures never try to reconcile those things together but simply let them live side by side. I think, probably as a Christian, we do the same thing. We sometimes say in this church, somewhat jokingly, that we're not out as a church body to reconcile the great theological divergences that have existed in the church for thousands of years. We're not smart enough or bright enough to decide whether Calvin was right or Arminius was right on the doctrine of the election and sovereignty. We simply, when we get to heaven, find out we need to hold God's sovereignty with one hand and man's freedom with the other hand and simply say there are Scriptures that teach both sides.

It's interesting that Judas himself takes responsibility for his own actions. That is, when he's all done and he throws the thirty pieces of silver down after the crucifixion, he says this phrase, and I think we ought to let Judas be the chief witness on this matter of the relationship of freedom to sovereignty, "I have sinned." He doesn't say, "The devil made me do it." He doesn't say, "God forced my hand." He doesn't say, "I was preordained." He says, "I have sinned and have betrayed innocent blood."

There have been revival attempts, all during human history, to revive the character of Judas, to do a reconstructionist view of what he really did. The most recent reconstructionist view is the one that was advanced by the rock musical a few years ago "Jesus Christ, Superstar," in which Judas was portrayed as, really, a better hero than Jesus, for it was attributed to Judas that he had noble motives, that he really believed that Jesus had the chance to be the political Messiah, the one who kicked the Romans out of the country and established the kingdom of Judah as the

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Davidic king. So therefore, as Jesus hadn't tipped His hand up to that moment, Judas was hoping to force Him into a situation where Jesus would be forced to reveal His power.

Such an idealistic view of Jesus, however, does not square with the witness of Scripture. Jesus Himself says it would have been better for Judas had he not been born. It ascribes to him no noble motives. John says there wasn't a noble motive in his bones when he says that he regularly stole from the treasury, which he had custody of. Peter, in Acts 1:25, before the day of Pentecost, at the very birth of the Church, is saying, Judas had already left to go to the place where he belonged. So the New Testament takes a far more dire view of Judas.

The issue of Judas raises the question of how one becomes a betrayer. I'm sure when you look at Judas and overlay it against your own life, we'd have to say that Judas didn't start out to become a betrayer, and I doubt anyone who ends up in immoral sin or who winds up as a betrayer ever intended it to be that way when they began. Judas had begun following Jesus at the same time as the other disciples—John and Andrew and Peter and James and Nathaniel. He'd been with Jesus from John's baptism. He had been selected to be one of the inner Twelve following Jesus, spending a whole night in prayer. He had been sent out with the Twelve and then with the seventy to do great miracles. Judas had prayed for people and they had been made well. He'd cast out demons. He'd preached the good news of the gospel.

We know also that Judas had seen the great miracles of the Lord. He was in the boat in Galilee when it almost sank—twice. He was one of the ones who distributed the miraculous multiplication of the loaves and the fishes. He'd heard Christ's great sermons, the Sermon on the Mount, the teachings in the synagogues. He'd been party to all that had happened. But somewhere along the line, he began to suffer a declension away from Jesus. He began to have a divided heart. The more he followed Jesus the more divided his heart became.

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I think that what happens to Judas is the same thing I see on occasion happening within a marriage. On a wedding day, betrayal is the farthest thing that is on the mind of the bride or the groom. But over a period of time, in the relationship there may be hurts and injuries that occur, disappointments, struggles, lack of communication and what is inconceivable in the day of the blossoming of love, becomes later a dagger thrust into another person's heart.

This happens with Judas, and it happens in life when a person doesn't deal with calluses—physical calluses, spiritual calluses, relational calluses. They build up over a period of time. One doesn't start out intending that that callus become so thick that eventually the heart itself is desensitized. But it occurs. And it occurred here with Judas. It may be occurring in your life.

What was it that brought Judas to this point of being a betrayer? I think that, when it all comes down to it, there were two things that were present in his life that, when they're present together in any life mix—like gasoline and fire—they could cause a tremendous explosion.

The two things present in Judas' life, which put him on the road to becoming a betrayer are:

**I. First of all, the fact that he did not deal successfully with disappointments that he had about Jesus.**

Let's face it. He was disappointed with Jesus. John's Gospel tells us that much (John 12:4–6).

The scene is Saturday before Passion week. Five days before the Scripture we just read about from Luke 22. In Bethany, the little town just a couple miles away from Jerusalem, Jesus has had an expensive bottle of perfume dumped on Him by a person who loved Him dearly—Mary.

Judas protests that. John tells us that one reason why Judas protested was that he was not really concerned for the poor and the money not being spent on them, but he really was an embezzler.

We might also say that this is sort of a straw that broke the camel's back, that there had been a series of successive disappointments that Judas had had in Jesus and this becomes the

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culminating act, in which Jesus sits there and receives perfume dumped on His body for His burial rather than asserting Himself as the political king and ruler. Their ways had diverged. Maybe their ways had begun to diverge months before, up in the northern most part of Galilee, a hundred and fifty miles away, when up in Caesarea Philippi Jesus had been confessed as Lord by the disciples, but He began to immediately teach them that He was going to go to Jerusalem and die. Maybe it was at that point that Judas began to be disappointed. But disappointed, he was. His disappointment with Jesus grew and grew and grew until he not only became an embezzler, thought nothing about taking money out of the treasury, but he also became one in whom Satan entered and he went to betray the Lord.

I simply suggest that one of the lessons flowing out of Judas' life is that we need to be careful that we deal with our own disappointments in respect to Jesus. You might say to me, "What are you talking about? I'm not disappointed. I've never been disappointed in Jesus." I know that there's a gospel song that says "there is no disappointment in Jesus." But I must, as a human being as well as a Christian, be candid with you and tell you there have been moments in my life when I've been disappointed with the way Jesus did something. It had not personally been the way that I would have done it. Maybe you feel that way. Maybe you're going through a fresh experience in your life where the answer to your prayer is not at all the way you thought the Lord should come through for you.

I think one of the greatest disappointments I ever had as a Christian was about seventeen years ago, when I was simultaneously serving as associate pastor and minister of youth at my home church, Central Assembly, in Springfield, Missouri, as well as campus pastor at Evangel College in Springfield, Missouri. In the youth group at Central was a young man by the name of Cricket. He was all that his name implied—lively and energetic. Cricket was a guy who, if ever a sixteen-

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year-old has had it together, Cricket did. He was the most popular kid in the youth group. We had a large youth group of over one hundred teenagers. He was musically talented. In fact, I remember the solo he played one Sunday morning for the offertory on his cello that brought a tremendous ovation which was rather rare in our conservative church in those days. Cricket was everybody's ideal of what a good kid could be like.

What made Cricket so special was also his family background. He was doing so well in spite of the tragedy that had occurred in his life. For his mom and dad were missionaries to the Belgian Congo and when there was a Congolese uprising in the early 60s, his dad, J. E. Tucker, had been taken out by insurgent rebels and had been beaten to death by the butts of rifles, and they had so mangled his body that, when they were through with him, they threw him into the river that he might be eaten by the crocodiles. His body was gone. His wife and their three children, of which Cricket was the youngest, returned to the United States, to Springfield, Missouri, to try to get their life put back together again. Somehow, Cricket had survived all of that and had come through as a bright and shining star. He was a person who dearly loved God.

Shortly after he'd played his cello solo at Central Assembly, a couple weeks later, he was with some of the youth group in Arkansas. They were working, building a log cabin. Cricket, with another kid, was carrying a big log over to the cabin—balanced on their shoulders against their head. On the count of three, they were supposed to drop it. Cricket evidently didn't hear the signal or got it mixed up, but on the count of three, instead of letting the log go, the other friend let the log go but the log hit Cricket on the base of the head and immediately rendered him unconscious. He was brought back to the hospital in Springfield, Missouri, where he lay, kept alive by a respirator for not just days, but weeks and months. I'd go, frequently, and stand at Cricket's bedside, as did other people, praying that God would visit him with healing.

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Then came a ray of hope in all of this. Katherine Kuhlman was coming to town. She was coming to our church. Everybody knows that there were great miracles in Katherine Kuhlman's meetings. There was medical affirmation. It's not even open for doubt. God did marvelous works through Katherine Kuhlman's ministry. She came. We so badly wanted Cricket in that meeting, but he couldn't make it to the meeting unless he was brought by ambulance and the respirator was alongside, and the oxygen tent or whatever they were using. I remember some sort of canopy stretched out over his bed. The family decided to go ahead and bring him. So that day, when several thousand people were packed into that large sanctuary, in the back, where the standing room was, there had been room made for Cricket's hospital bed and all the mechanical apparatus that went with it. I was standing there in the back myself, near Cricket, praying. I know Katherine doesn't have a line where people go through and are prayed for and are healed. That was her ministry, to simply call out a healing. I thought she could surely see Cricket, the bed back here and all the people dressed in white. She surely knows. But the meeting came and went. It was a powerful meeting. God moved mightily, but He didn't move on Cricket. I think one of the saddest moments was when the end of the service came and, just before the benediction was given, the medical people needed to get Cricket out before everybody started heading for the doors and the family, with slumped shoulders, headed back out the door to the ambulance, back to the hospital, where, within a couple of months, Cricket would pass away. I went to class the next day. I was teaching a class at Evangel College, and before the class started, one of the young men in the class had the most radiant look on his face. He said, "I was at that Katherine Kuhlman meeting yesterday. I had broken my little right toe last week. I was in so much pain I couldn't put my foot down. I was sitting there in the church and all of a sudden God, while Katherine Kuhlman was speaking, miraculously reached in and healed my little toe

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and I found I could suddenly stomp on the ground and it didn't hurt at all. And it is well today."

And he proceeded to stomp to prove that his foot was well.

Instead of being happy, I was totally disgusted. I said, "God, this isn't fair. This kid with the little toe, that dumb thing could have remained broken and would have healed normally in a few more weeks. But Cricket had a bigger problem. What is this Russian roulette in regard to healing, that a kid with a broken toe gets healed and You can't see the guy back there on the respirator, the sixteen-year-old kid, struggling for life on the hospital bed?" I still haven't come totally to terms with that.

I think that's one of the struggles that we have as Christians. There are going to be those moments of disappointment. Just shortly after this incident happened, my wife's father fell ill with cancer. Her mom had passed away when she was just two years of age. He had worked all his life at minimum wage at the Dan River cotton mill and he deserved a decent retirement and some years of enjoyment after all those years of sweatshop labor. Employers ought to pay their employees a decent wage. He'd worked all his life and now he has cancer and dies, and never gets a chance to enjoy his retirement. I thought, for a while, that Jewel and I were going to have to leave the ministry because she was so bitterly disappointed with God. It was all we could do to pull through that. She finally pulled through and got some resolution on it.

But we have to deal with those kinds of disappointments. One of the things that can happen while you're dealing with disappointments, and we don't know when Judas' disappointments began but those disappointments then can become an excuse for our own irresponsible—and in some cases, immoral—behavior. I wonder if Judas didn't blame his stealing from the bag on the basis of, "Well, Jesus isn't proving to be what He should be. Why should I be what I'm supposed to be?"

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The real tragedy, when you look at Judas, when you look at the long run, is he checked out too soon. If Judas had lived seventy-two more hours, if he hadn't gone out on that premature suicide after the crucifixion of Jesus, if he had lived seventy-two more hours and been around for the resurrection, the same Lord that forgave Peter would have forgiven him. But he checked out too soon.

That's what I realize as I try to get resolution on Cricket's death and other tragedies I have seen as a pastor. One of the dilemmas of the Christian life is that we can blow it all if we check out with Christ before He's done with our life. One of the things that the Lord is doing in this room with the disciples is that He's telling them, "I know one of you is going to betray Me. In fact, all of you will fall away." But He's also saying, "I'm going to take this cup and I'm going to drink it anew with you in the kingdom of My Father. Don't check out before that's done." "Surely not I, Lord!" That's the secret. To realize that He is the Lord.

I had a young Christian friend who was a father. He had a little three-year-old he was praying for to have a cold healed. Nothing was happening in answer to his prayer. He was really frustrated. He said to me very directly, "I don't understand how we can call God Father. If I had the power to heal my daughter I wouldn't, as a normal, natural father, let her have this cold. I don't understand why God doesn't act for my daughter." I looked at him. It's hard for me to confront people, but I said to him in one of the confrontational kind of modes that I am never in, "What you've just expressed is the very foundation of idolatry. Idolatry is insisting that God conform to our image of Him, whether that image be mental or metal, God has to meet your terms." He sort of jumped back from me, but it was a word that made sense to him.

It's a word that makes sense to me. I'm here to tell you today something I'd rather not have to tell you. I'd rather tell you something light and happy and cheery and "everything's going to be

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all right.” But I’m going to tell you, if you serve Christ for any degree of time, that you’re going to face disappointments as a Christian. You’re going to face disappointments if you don’t follow Christ. But you’re going to face disappointments. You’re going to find that people disappoint you. You’re going to find that circumstances will sometimes disappoint you. You’re going to find that Jesus at times will not come through for you as you expect Him to. Just don’t check out prematurely before God is done with you.

One of my favorite passages in the Bible is Romans 5:3–4, which says, “Suffering produces staying power or endurance and staying power makes character and character produces hope.”

What Judas did was short-circuit that process. Adversity, that is, his down opinions in life.

Adversity in him did not produce staying power, because he checked out before that staying power had a chance to develop. I have seen that happen with people. Instead of adversity producing staying power, I have seen adversity produce blame. I have seen adversity produce bitterness. I have seen adversity produce irresponsibility. I have seen it produce passivity and resignation. I have seen it produce anger. Disappointment.

In the midst of our disappointment, we need to refocus on the fact that Christ has promised us that He is never going to leave us or forsake us. That He’s with us always and that there is a new age coming. And that we’re going to be part of that. He gives us communion as a sign of the fact that He loves us and died for us, and that we will again, in the kingdom of God, share that with Him. So when we take communion, whenever we do it, we’re holding in our hand a visible sign of the fact that we’re linked with the identity of Jesus. And just as He experienced crushing adversity in life, we may too. But adversity is never God’s last word. In the end comes resolution and resurrection, and it’s up to us to finish the race and complete the course.

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The beautiful hymn says, “It will be worth it all when we see Jesus. Life’s trials will seem so small when we see Him. One glimpse of His dear face all sorrows will erase. So bravely run the race until we see Christ.” We must, as Christians, deal with our disappointments. When we’re injured by other people in the Body, we must deal with those disappointments. When we’re injured by members of family, whether it’s a spouse or a child or a parent, we must deal with those disappointments. We must also reach out to forgive or to let go or, in whatever way we can, not let that disappointment derail us.

When disappointment is joined by the second ingredient, it produces a deadly combination.

### **II. The second ingredient was: he did not deal with moral sin in his life.**

He had begun to steal from the treasury. John 12:4–6 tell us that he was not only a thief, but he was a hypocrite. That is, in criticizing the woman for her gift to Jesus, he was being hypocritical because he didn’t want the money to really go to the poor. He just wanted to have more opportunity to embezzle.

Judas, therefore, is an example of a person who does not let go of secret sin. As he goes on sinning, his capacity to sin increases. Indeed, you will find this to be the case. I wonder when that first moment was that Judas reached into the bag and pulled out money for himself. Was it after there had been a day when there had been a particularly good offering for the ministry of Jesus? That he looked at all that and said, “The group doesn’t need this but I could use a little extra.” Or was he sort of piqued because Jesus had maybe disciplined him that day and said something to him that was corrective? When was it that that moment came? It probably came the first time he just took out a coin. Just one. As time came along, it became easier, then, to maybe take a coin out, and maybe not one but two, until finally he was reaching for a big amount, like the one the woman who had used her livelihood gave to Jesus. He gradually had a greater

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capacity, until he reached the point where Satan himself entered Judas and he became morally incapacitated and indeed did more evil than perhaps in the beginning he ever thought it was possible for him to do.

It was a preacher of a hundred years ago, F. W. Favor, who said these powerful words, “He who dallies with temptation, he who tampers with evil, is never safe. People say that such and such a person had a sudden fall, but no fall is sudden. In every instance the crisis of the moment is decided only by the tenor of the life. Nor since the world began has anyone been dragged over into the domain of evil, who had not strayed carelessly or gazed curiously or lingered guiltfully beside its edge.” Periodically, we hear of some prominent person in the body of Christ who’s had a moral failure. We sometimes hear it said, “They fell suddenly into sin.” I was talking with a person recently who was in such a position in their life. The way they were rationalizing it was, “It just happened suddenly.” Things like betrayal don’t happen suddenly. They always occur over a long period of time. They begin with attitudes, they begin with actions which become interlinked, like a growing powerful chain that is bonded together until finally the apostasy and the declension away from reality and commitment becomes so great, that in the last analysis, betrayal happens.

It did not happen all of a sudden with Judas. It does not happen all of a sudden with any betrayal, any betrayal in a relationship and any betrayal between us and God. It is built up over time.

Therefore, this Scripture of Judas forces us to ask in our own life if we are dealing with disappointments in our life, if we are dealing successfully with them. Rather than letting disappointments get to our heart and corroding our spirit and making us bitter and depressed, are we dealing with those disappointments? And I mean, dealing with them through prayer, dealing

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with them through forgiveness, dealing with them through a real genuine commitment of our heart in a fresh way to God. Are we really dealing with our disappointments?

Then to add to that, are we dealing with temptation in our life? Is there a secret unrighteous side of our life which no one but us and God knows? No one needs to suffer the fate of Judas. Be honest with the Lord about your sin and about your failure. Deal with your disappointments.

Work through them. Judas checked out on the Lord before the Lord had finished. Let none of us check out on the Lord before He has completed his work in us.

When we talk about betrayal and about unfaithfulness, what a great contrast it is to look at the Lord Himself, who would never betray us, who will never betray us, who has never been unfaithful to us, but whose Word to us is always loyal. Whose Word to us says, “I am with you always.” Whose Word to us says, “I’ve got a great future for you. I’m preparing a home for you. There you will be with Me.” Whose word to us is, “He who endures to the end will be saved.”

The Christian call again, as we’ve said in these past Sundays, is a call to heroic commitment. It’s not a call to the easy. It’s not a call to the lazy. It is not a call a call to the soft and flabby spiritual heart. It is a call for heroism. It is a call to say, “I will follow Christ and lay it on the line. No matter what. If it is a choice between what God is asking me to do and what my feelings are asking me to do, I will choose what God has asked me to do. I will choose to be obedient. I will choose to trust. I will choose to forgive. I will choose to be loyal. I will choose to care. I will choose to continue in life and work for the Lord.” This is the call that the Lord asks of us as we serve Him today.

### **Closing Prayer**

Our Lord, we want to say, too, with the disciples that great word, “Surely not I, Lord!” There are so many within the room who serve You with such power and strength, that the thought of

## **THE BETRAYER AMONG US**

**Luke 22:1–23**

betraying You is the farthest thing from their minds. I thank You for their loyalty and commitment. But Lord, if one of twelve of Your closest companions could have that thought on his mind, it's possible that one of twelve among us could have that thought as well. We all do get bumped and injured in life, if we live long enough. We see things happen that we wish You would change. We ask You, Lord, to help us to deal with those moments when we simply disagree with You. We ask that in those moments we will not call You "Rabbi" but that we will call You "Lord." We ask that we will have the confession of Job, the man who suffered much, saying, "Though He slay me yet will I trust Him." We ask, Lord, that our loyalty to You will be deep and powerful, even as Your loyalty to us exceeds any depth of any ocean or any height of any sky. You are loyal to us, Lord. You will always be faithful to us. You've promised us that You would bring us through. You've not promised that You would waive every adverse circumstance in our life, but You've promised that You would never leave us as we walk through difficult circumstances. There are friends here who have been betrayed themselves; betrayed by family members, betrayed by friends. Maybe they've even felt betrayed by others in this local church or some previous local church. Lord, help us to reach out in strength and power in our life to give and to receive forgiveness. Let it not be a part of any one of us, that we should fall away from You. There's no future in that. Judas is an example that there's no future in falling away from You. But let his example be one that kindles in our heart an ever present desire, "Surely not I, Lord!" and may we stay with You, because death and crucifixion is never the end. Resurrection is always ahead. A new day's coming. Sunday's coming. We thank You, Lord, that You are the Lord of today. Purify our hearts, our motives and our desires, so that, in every part of us, there may be loyalty to You and to the commitments You give us in life. We ask this, Lord Jesus, in Your name. Amen.