



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 13:18-30

“Judas’ Last Chance”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We are studying the Upper Room Discourse, and we are in John chapter 13 and we’re going to read today verse 18 through verse 30. It’s helpful always in the reading of the word to remind ourselves of the context and last week on the Lord’s Day as we looked at the first of the studies in the Upper Room Discourse we noted that the Lord Jesus washed the disciple’s feet and essentially we made the comment that it likely is an illustration of the new commandment that follows. That is the evidence of humble love in our Lord’s activity is designed to highlight in illustrative fashion that we should love one another as Christ has loved us. He certainly inculcates humility and loving humility at that. And so let’s bear that in mind now as we turn to read the next section in which we have an individual in the twelve who does not really have a relationship to Jesus Christ inwardly though he may have one outwardly. Verse 18, now remember the Lord has said, “Ye are clean, but not all,” in the 10th verse. And then in the 17th verse he said, “If you know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.” Now there is one who is not spiritually clean, and further, there is one who though he knows these things or has had opportunity to know them is not a happy individual because he is not responsive to them.

“I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, he that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. (Our Lord refers back to the Old Testament

to the 41st Psalm written by David, descriptive probably of the period of time when Absalom and Achitophel were together in league against David raising a revolt against him. And Achitophel is the one who eats bread with him who lifts up his heel against him.) Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. (It’s very easy to see what our Lord intends by this text, the person who receives the agent of an individual receives the person. And then our Lord puts himself in the place of an agent and says he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me and of course he refers to his Father.) When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. (In the other accounts in Matthew and Mark it states that they were very perplexed by this statement.) Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. (Well that was John.) Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. (The sop was a little morsel of bread that the host at the feast at the beginning portion of the Passover Supper in which they ate the lamb he would reach over with the piece of bread and use the piece of bread to take out the choice piece of the lamb and give it to the guest of honor as they began their supper together.) And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the sop Satan entered into him. (Evidently the meaning of that is that he came particularly under the control of Satan.) Then said Jesus unto him, that thou doest, do quickly. (Very important statement, we’ll look at that later on.) Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor. He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.”

That’s a very vivid picture of what it means to leave the presence of our Lord spiritually and no doubt John had that in mind as he saw Judas retreating into the night outside. I think he would have his readers make the comparison with an individual who having opportunity to be in the presence of the Lord, turns away from him and in turning away from him it is to go out into spiritual night. May the Lord bless this reading of his word. Let’s bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father we are grateful to Thee for the privilege that is ours. So often we do not realize how wonderful it is to be able to gather together and freely open the Scriptures, expound them, expound the sovereignty and grace and beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ, acknowledge his Lordship, acknowledge that he is King of kings and Lord of lords and all kings and all authority are ultimately subject to him. In the United States we have such matchless freedom, we’re often very unappreciative. But we would give Thee thanks Lord for that privilege, and we thank Thee for the way in which we are able to meet on the Lord’s Day and look to him as the sovereign of the universe.

We thank Thee for our country and our President and for others in government; we pray Thy blessing upon each one of them, even upon those with whose policies we may not specifically agree. We ask Lord, Thy blessing upon them, in their work and may the things that they do be more and more conformable to the will of our Triune God in Heaven.

We worship Thy name today; we especially give Thee thanks for the Lordship of Jesus Christ. And we call him Lord by the Holy Spirit. We desire Lord to be more and more subject to him. If there should be some in this audience who do not yet know him thought they may have had many opportunities to know him, may today be the day in which in their hearts turn to Thee and by Thy grace say simply, I thank Thee Lord for dying for me, I receive Thee as my personal Savior.

We thank Thee to for the privilege of relationship with other Christians. We desire Lord to have the fellowship and encouragement from them that will be of help to us, and we pray that we may be of help to them. Enable us Lord as the Lord will exhort us shortly to love one another as he

has loved us. We thank Thee for our fellow believers who have ministered to us. And Lord we would particularly desire to minister to them in prayer. And we pray for those who are suffering, who are experiencing physical difficulties, who are having trials and difficult experiences, we commit to Thee and ask that thou will sustain them and build them up and encourage them and give healing and give help all in accordance with Thy perfect plan for our lives. We rejoice in the greatness of our great God today.

And Lord as the word of God is ministered; be with us in this meeting as we sing hymns of praise, may they truly come from the heart, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

[Message] Last week in our study of John chapter 13, the first in our series of studies in the Upper Room Discourse, designed by our Lord historically, to prepare the disciples, apostles for the time when he would not be here. We looked at the incident of the foot washing and made the point that this was a visible illustration of the new commandment which our Lord will give in just a few moments. It was designed no doubt to inculcate loving humility.

In Peter’s case who, though he had many failures and many departures from communion with the Lord, it was an exhortation that worked. At the conclusion of the message last week I made the comment that in Peter’s first epistle which he wrote many years after this incident, he comments upon the fact that we are to put on the apron of humility. Now, it’s a rather interesting thing, at least to me, that the word that Peter uses for “put on humility” is a word that was derived from a Greek word that meant a knot, K-N-O-T, a knot by which a slave attached an outer garment of slavery to his inner garments. And so consequently, the word be clothed in humility is designed to suggest to the readers slavery. That is assume the lowly place of humility.

And so when the Lord Jesus arose from supper, laid aside his garments and took a towel and girded himself, putting on the apron of a slave to wash the feet of the disciples, that made quite an impression on Peter as he thought about it and it’s possible that he had that on mind when he said,

“Put on the apron of humility” or be clothed with humility, and the word built on the knot by which a slave bound his outer garments to his inner garments.

Later on this word also came to be associated with royalty because the same kind of knot by which the outer garments, the glorious garments of royalty were attached to the kings inner garments, the same kind of knot was used. And so this word that is translated be clothed within the Authorized Version or put on the apron of, was a word that later came to be associated, before Peter’s time, but came to be associated with the clothing of royalty. It’s almost as if Peter, reflecting upon this after many years and thinking about our Lord’s laying aside of his garments, taking the apron and the accouterments of a slave and then getting down upon his knees perhaps and washing the disciple feet, it was a beautiful picture of humility. But at the same time, it’s possible that Peter also saw in this magnificent demonstration of humility an expression of divine royalty. Because in the final analysis, divine royalty is serving royalty. In other words, in God there is service, and in God there is royalty, or there is sovereignty and there is humility. There is lowliness of ministration to others who cannot compare with them, but at the same time, sovereign authority. So, put on the apron of humility, it’s the combination of utter lowliness and magnificent transcendent loftiness.

Well it worked on Peter, but it did not work on another individual who was there, and that other individual is the twelfth of the apostles, Judas. What a character Judas is. An unusual man, the only Judaeon among the twelve, Judaeans were naturally thought of as being more sophisticated, more cultured because they came from the place where Jerusalem was, and the other apostles so far as we know, were from the rural areas of the North, looked down upon by headquarters in the capital of the land. So Judas is one that we might think of as being humanly speaking, one who had many more advantages than others had, educated, cultured. That may be the reason why passing by Matthew who had handled large sums of money, Judas was made the treasurer of the apostles. He had the opportunity to live with our Lord, to hear his sermons, to hear his counsel, to hear his rebukes of the other disciples, but at the same time, Judas was a person who did not have any inner relationship to the Lord. Now evidently our Lord’s work here of washing the disciples’ feet did not

work on Judas. He allowed our Lord Jesus to wash his feet and then left in order to consummate his betrayal later on.

You know if you want to picture something and make it stand out, it’s good to do it against a background that reveals the qualities of the thing that you wish to manifest. Now, Judas’ act of betrayal is presented here against the background of the apostles and our Lord’s magnificent exhibition of loving humility. If you ever go into a jeweler to buy a diamond, you notice that very often jewelers will put diamonds against black velvet. Now they do that of course because the diamonds shine against the black velvet and make them look extremely good. In fact, they look larger. They could go in the back and get a little piece of diamond that you could hardly see and bring it and put it on some black velvet and it looks pretty good. Anybody who’s ever gotten married appreciates that. But Judas here is the background for our Lord’s foot washing of the apostles and also of their response to him. And so the Lord and Judas, here we have our Lord as the diamond, and Judas the black velvet background. It’s a magnificent story just as a story but of course, it’s far more important as a real incident.

All of us have at one time or another had some difficulties with Judas. We’ve wondered about the things that are said in the Bible concerning him. The Scriptures say that he betrayed the Lord Jesus, “As it was written.” In other words, the Scriptures foretold that he would be the one who would betray the Lord, and in fact, when we read that the Scriptures foretold this, we know there is no foreseeing unless there is foreordination. No one can know anything that is not foreordained. And so Judas’ act is a foreordained act, and foreseen because foreordained. And of course that’s very difficult for us to understand, it’s not easy, I would certainly not be the one to say it was easy, it’s not easy. It is however, Scriptural.

Another interesting thing about Judas is that when you look at what the Bible has to say about him you discover that Judas is no newcomer on the scene. The Old Testament actually speaks of Judas. Well I know you might think, “Well where is Judas’ name in the Old Testament?” Well, no Judas’ name is not in the Old Testament, but the Old Testament speaks about him. We have

authority from that from two very important people. First of all our Lord who found Judas in Psalm 41, and then the Apostle Peter who in Acts chapter 1 found Judas in Psalm 109. Remember when after our Lord had been crucified and after he had been raised from the dead and after he had ascended to Heaven, Peter said to the apostles, “Now we have only eleven apostles, and we need to select another apostle to take the place of Judas who went to his own place.” And he said, “Now, we ought to do it because the Scripture has spoken concerning Judas.” And he cites the text which says, “Let another take his office.” And he furthermore says that that text was a text written by David concerning Judas.

Now you could read Psalm 109 for the rest of your life and you’d never find the word Judas there, but Judas is there. That’s a strange Psalm that puzzled me many years ago when I was studying the Psalms. It’s a Psalm in which some of the worst things that could possibly be said about an individual are said by David under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Listen to what he says about one person whom he calls his adversary, he begins incidentally by speaking of plural adversaries in Psalm 109 but then in the 6th verse he narrows down adversaries to one particular adversary and for almost thirteen or fourteen verses through verse 19 he says things like this,

“Set thou a wicked man over him and let Satan stand at his right hand, when he shall be judged let him not be condemned and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few and let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless. (Think of that,) Let his children be fatherless and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds and beg, let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places.”

No need to read the rest of it, it’s all along the same lines, it’s an imprecatory Psalm. Now of course its only explanation is found in the New Testament where Peter says this Psalm is written about Judas. Now it’s not written directly about him, it’s written about him typically, and the philosophy of our Lord and the philosophy of Peter is very plain, after one reflects upon it for some

time. After all, David was a clear picture of our Lord, he was the king from whom the Lord Jesus would come, he was descended, he was our Lord’s ancestor. He was the one who was the historical David and the Lord Jesus comes along as the true, greater David. They were related, David a Messianic figure, our Lord the Messianic figure, so David was a type of Christ, he illustrated him. Now it doesn’t take much thinking although often we don’t do this thinking, I confess for many years this puzzled me, to reflect that if David is a type of our Lord, then David’s adversaries are also illustrative of our Lord’s adversaries.

Now who was David’s adversary? Well David’s adversary was a man by the name of Achitophel. Achitophel is an interesting man; he was a man who was close to Absalom, close to David. You remember that Absalom rebelled against his father, sought to carry out a revolution against him. And he and Achitophel combined to do this. Now Achitophel was very close to David, in fact in the Old Testament it is stated in the counsel of Achitophel which he counseled in those days was as if a man had inquired of the oracle of God. David felt free to go to Achitophel to discuss his affairs with Achitophel and Achitophel’s counsel the Old Testament says was like counsel that came from the oracle of God. And yet this individual is one who conspired with Absalom to revolt against the man who had been his benefactor and whose table he had sat to eat his food.

Now do you remember Achitophel’s end in the Old Testament? Well, Achitophel is the only person in the Old Testament so far as I know who consciously and of his own determination, hanged himself. And of course, Judas in the New Testament is his parallel. You see, even in the small affairs of Old Testament life God was working all things after the counsel of his own will. So that Achitophel becomes an illustration, a type call it if you wish, it doesn’t make any difference, the term type is not a technical term, an example of Judas himself.

Well, how can these terrible things be said about Judas? We’re inclined to think of Judas as a man who was caught in circumstances over which he had no control. And the web of circumstances were so compelling and finally he was caught up in them and you know, it’s amazing how many people really feel sorry for Judas. They feel sorry for him, they could never write this imprecatory



Psalm about him, they could never say of Judas as David did under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, “Let his days be few. Let his children be fatherless and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds.” But this is the sentiment of a God-inspired man. You see we never really understand God until we bow to the authority of Holy Scripture. Oh, it’s a puzzle to us, but we should go through the experience of thinking through these things until finally we can rejoice in the things that Scripture says.

Well our Lord modifies his evaluation of the apostles here, he had said, “You are clean, but not all.” He had said in verse 17, “I ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.” But in verse 18 he says, “I do not speak of you all, I know whom I have chosen.” You see it’s not Dr. Johnson who’s always talking about election. He says, “I know whom I have chosen,” Judas is not one of the chosen. “I know whom I have chosen, but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, he that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.” So he finds Judas in Psalm 41. That’s how Peter learned to find Judas in the Old Testament, from our Lord’s teaching.

I think I mentioned maybe last week; I got a letter from a local lawyer. Very nice letter, one which he expressed a great deal of appreciation for the ministry of the word, it was a very laudatory kind of letter, he was thankful he had turned into hear the ministry of the word over KLRD but unfortunately the next week in the message there came a mention of election, divine election. So he wrote me another letter, I appreciated his frankness, and I appreciated of course that he let me know how he felt the second time. One week I was in good standing with him, the next week I was not in good standing with him and he wrote and he said something like this, “Everybody knows that what you said is wrong.” I like that, because that’s really the direct approach and so I’m going to go the direct approach with him and send him a little article on unconditional election or how it’s impossible for a thinking man to think otherwise. So I hope I get a response from him because I appreciated very much his letter.

You see it is our Lord who talks about choice and election and if you’re going to have to stand with someone, you better stand with our Lord and the apostles even though you may not

understand everything, it’s best to be in their company. Now the Lord did not blunder when he chose Judas. Someone might say, “Why did he choose eleven men who were faithful men and then why did he miss in the choice of Judas?” Well others might say, “One out of eleven is not too bad, after all, eleven out of twelve, that’s a fairly good percentage, that’s batting nine hundred and something which is pretty good in any kind of baseball league.” But our Lord did not blunder, as a matter of fact, it is specifically stated in Scripture that he prayed all night before he chose the twelve. So being of himself a perfect individual, sinless, impeccable, and praying all night, this was no mistake.

I say people have had difficulty with Judas and so they’ve sought to explain the situation away, Sholem Asch, the well-known Jewish author, in a very well-known book, *The Nazarene*, presents an interpretation of Judas and his action which illustrates the inability of unenlightened men to understand the word of God. To some extent based on this particular chapter Asch interprets Judas as the only one of the disciple who understood that in the purpose of God, Jesus had to die. And so our Lord chose Judas to accomplish his crucifixion by delivering him into the hands of his enemies because he understood and in that sense he was to be praised and our Lord chose him for that reason. Unfortunately, that does not measure up to the teaching of Scripture and particularly to that passage in the Old Testament in Psalm 109 and Psalm 69 as well, both of which are written concerning Judas. No, our Lord chose Judas because there is a magnificent lesson in Judas.

One of the lessons and perhaps not the most magnificent ones, but one of them is this that the powers of evil penetrate even to the inner circle of our Lord’s apostles, think of that. Now anyone who knows anything about Christianity knows that the powers of evil have penetrated professing Christianity. We have magazines, I take magazines, I take them on purpose, I like to know what my enemies are saying, magazines that are professedly Christian magazines, and so far as I can tell, the individuals do believe that they are true to Christianity, but they’re manifestly not true to Christianity if one considers Christianity to be what is set forth in the Scriptures. The powers of evil have penetrated the Christian church, and did early, in fact did in the days of our Lord among his

apostles. There are many ministers who stand behind a pulpit like this an open the Bible, preach with their notes, resting upon the word of God who actually judge the word of God rather than standing under the word of God themselves. You of course probably know of many of them.

And then of course when we speak of people who are in our congregation, there are many people in the congregation who have been in the congregation for years who listen to the word of God who have been around believers, true believers, but they themselves are really not true believers. They’re like Judas; the powers of evil penetrate even the Lord’s circle. And Paul said, “Of your own selves, there shall arise men speaking perverse things.” So we should not be surprised if that happens in Christian circles, we should rather be forewarned and anticipate that that is sure to happen where the Lord’s work is being done.

Well the significance of this prophetic suggestion to the apostles is of course designed by our Lord to prepare them for the time when he is gone and they will look back and they will say, “Judas was one of us and he actually betrayed the Lord, is it possible Jesus did not know about that?” And so our Lord anticipates that, he says, “I’m telling you this now in order that when it all comes to pass you will see that I told you about it before it did and you will know it did not surprise me.”

Well at this point, we read in the Johannine account, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified and more frankly now said, “Verily I say unto you that one of you will betray me.” He has said, “Not all of you are clean,” he has said in the first part of the 18th verse, “I’m not speaking of you all,” and then in the later part he said, “He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.” All of these are somewhat mysterious statements, but now in verse 21 he has said, “Verily verily I say unto you that one of you shall betray me.” This is like an Agatha Christie murder mystery in which everybody in the last chapter is gathered into the drawing room and the detective is there and he’s done all of his investigation, all of the people who are suspects are there. And then when it comes time for him to speak he says something like “the murderer is in this room.”

“One of you shall betray me.” You know I’ve been going to Chicago for now about three years and of course I have to listen to a different media presentation of the news. And I’ve learned

one thing there from the weather man in Chicago, well I’ve learned two things, they don’t know about the weather anymore than our weather men down here. But I learned a second thing, I noticed that when he made his prophesies, and that’s really what they are, they’re prophecies, he has some justification of course, but they’re prophecies essentially. Occasionally there would appear, sunny boomers. Now boomers, I had never heard any weather man talk about boomers. And he didn’t explain it, so there it was, technical term for weather men I’m sure, boomers. Kind of like infralapsarianism in theology, [Laughter] they never explain things, we never explain things. What is infralapsarianism? Won’t take time to talk about that today. Boomers though, and finally just by process of exegesis of a number of texts and a few clues, I realized that boomers were thunder storms. That’s what they call thunderstorms in Chicago.

Well you know this must have struck them like thunder when the Lord said, “One of you shall betray me.” The disciples interestingly, don’t look at a particular one, they don’t all turn on Judas and say, “I knew it was Judas.” Or they don’t say, “Did not James and John have a debate over who was going to be first, it must be one of them.” Or “the Lord is always jumping on Peter isn’t he, it must be Peter.” Striking thing about the apostles is instead of looking at others, they looked to themselves. They wondered is it really possible that it is I? There was such a closeness among them and such an appreciation evidently of one another, and they were kind of against the world identified with our Lord and also knowing something of the weakness of the human heart, they looked at themselves. And they went around in their little circle; remember they were saying, “Is it I Lord?” “Is it I Lord?” “Is it I Lord?” “Is it I Lord?” Until of course they came to Judas and he said, “Is it I Master?” And I remember when Paul said, “No man can call Jesus Lord except by the Holy Spirit.” In other words, efficacious grace is the only way by which we can come to the acknowledgement of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Of course we can say the word, but to mean it when we say it, “Jesus is Lord,” that revelation comes only to those who are the recipients of efficacious grace. It’s important to realize that we’re sinners and cannot be saved unless we have that.

Now when I came in this morning I received a very nice letter from a very dear friend of mine who’s preached here for us a number of times. This young man however I have not had the privilege of knowing yet, and so he wrote me a letter.

“Dear Dr. S. Lewis Johnson Jr. My Father says it’s important for me to meet great men. (Where he got that you will find out.) Therefore, please accept this letter of introduction. I am an ambitious young man who would like to be the first to reserve a seat in your theology classes around two thousand and five A.D. This will give me sufficient time to conclude my basic studies, go to college and be a three time All-American. I do think you should know that presently I am unable to be a student of yours, I have been advised by my parents that I’m in a state of sin and rebellion. They tell me in order to be one of your students I must be regenerated. As a result of my situation I am requesting that you would pray for me to that end. I would very much like to be one of your students and to hear your exegesis and your lectures on Augustine, Calvin, Luther, Warfield and others. I’m looking forward to meeting you personally and shaking your hand, I am including a recent photo so that you will recognize me when we meet. Sincerely, C. Campbell Black. P.S. My dad wrote this for me; I haven’t learned my letters yet.”

So here is the picture of C. Campbell Black taken in the hospital room, and it looks like there’s a number down underneath it there which may be prophetic Mike, but I’m not sure. [Laughter] Anyway, I thought it was kind of interesting thought that he at least understands that no man can call Jesus Lord except by the Holy Spirit. Well that was a very cute kind of a letter that one would expect Mike Black to be responsible for. [Laughter]

Well, Peter expresses some curiosity when our Lord says one of you is going to betray me, he’s sitting across the low lying table and he beckons to John who’s leaning on Jesus’ breast and he says, “John, ask him who it is.” Might expect Peter to do that, there’s some unhappy tension in the room now, and Peter acts characteristically and speaks up. So isn’t interesting by the way that the

future pope approaches the Lord Jesus through John? [Laughter] I find that rather interesting. He approaches the Lord through John. Well the person lying on Jesus’ breast, John, turns and looks to the Lord and says, “Lord who is it?” And he says, “He it is to whom I shall give the sop when I have dipped it.” And when he dipped the sop he gave it to Judas. It’s surprising that John evidently still did not believe that it was Judas. Just couldn’t believe that Judas would be the one. Now no one would believe this and it’s not true, but if suppose we had a man as respected in our congregation as Howard Prier, and it were to be said that he was unfaithful in the gospel, we couldn’t believe it. Evidently Judas had tremendously high reputation among the eleven. They could hardly believe it even after our Lord has spelled it out for John it doesn’t seem that he had fully grasped it. They had made him the treasurer when Matthew was the one who was used to handling money. They appreciated him.

Well we read here that when he took the sop and he ate the lamb that Satan entered into him at that point and then the Lord Jesus spoke a sharp word to him. He said, “Judas that which you do, do quickly.” Judas is a man who instead of the Savior he has received Satan. He has preferred money to the Master, for he was stealing remember. He was stealing things out of the common treasury. He prefers sin to salvation, he prefers Hell to Heaven and he goes out to perform his dastardly deed and now we’re beginning to understand how David the Psalmist can speak about his adversary in those terms of imprecation.

The comment of the Lord is interesting. “That thou doest, do quickly.” In other words, Judas, finish your work that I may finish my work. One of the great commentators and preachers has said that’s the voice of despairing love abandoning the conflict. Judas’ destiny is now settled. “Judas what you’re doing, do quickly.” It’s the voice of strangely blended majesty and humiliation. The victim commands the victor to do his work. Isn’t that interesting? His foes accomplish his purposes. He’s in control of things though it appears outwardly as if they’re in control of things. Every Judas is the servant of the one whom he betrays.

One wonders how the apostles, after all they were just ordinary people, they weren't even in our society they weren't the wise and intelligent of the society, they were just the common people, they were the fishermen, the ordinary people. How is it possible that they were able to put together this combination of utter loneliness and transcendent loftiness? If you had given to the masters of literature and history, if you were to give them the task of combining in a figure, utter loneliness and transcendent loftiness and put that into a believable figure in a story, they could never do it, though they were Shakespeare or Aeschylus or any of the other great dramatists of the thousands of years previous. How is it that these individuals were able in the presentations of the gospels picture a man who is utterly humble and humiliated in humiliation in his circumstances and yet at the same time possesses majestic sovereignty and elevation above all circumstances? How could they do it? There is only one explanation. They did not manufacture anything, what they did was to report what they had seen and what they had experienced, that's all. The gospels are the products of reporters who told the story that they had seen and heard and experienced. They didn't manufacture anything. That's one of the great testimonies to the truthfulness of the word of God.

It is also the voice of willing sacrifice, “Judas, what you are doing do quickly.” “Bind the sacrifice with cords to the altar,” the Lord Jesus says. Now of course we could talk forever about what this means because it refers to the fact that his sacrifice is a penal sacrifice, his sacrifice is substitutionary, his sacrifice is voluntary, that's the great thing that is stressed here. “Judas, what you do, do quickly.” And so Judas is going to be the tool by which the all atoning sacrifice is accomplished, the blood is shed for those for whom Jesus died and those for whom Jesus died have had their penalty paid and therefore, Heaven cannot exact any further payment of them. As Toplady said, “payment God cannot twice demand first from my bleeding Surety's hand, and then again at mine.” That's why I believe among many things that Jesus died for his sheep.

Now we read that Judas went out, “Having received the sop, he went immediately out” and John adds, “It was night.” It was night outside; it was night in the soul of Judas. Augustine says, *erat aut him nox et epse qui ex ewet era nox*. It was however night and he himself who went out was night.”

How could Judas desert Jesus Christ? Well, how could Adam desert God? That’s a bigger problem. How could Judas desert Christ? Well if one understands the wickedness of the human heart it’s not hard.

Judas’ story after this is the story of a man who becomes the victim of remorse, despair that leads to death. He never repented, repentance leads to faith and salvation, remorse leads to despair and death. And Judas came to regret what he had done, but not to repent over what he had done, and finally went out and hanged himself. He had pain of mind but not change of mind, a change of purpose but not a change of heart. Regret for the results that were happening to him, but no repentance for the wrong that he had done. Peter went out and wept bitterly; Judas went out and hung himself. He did say, “I have sinned,” he acknowledged that. A. B Bruce said, “He was bad enough to do the deed of infamy and good enough to be able to bear the burden of guilt.” And what is striking about it to me is, as my old New Testament professor Everett Aaronson used to say, “The power of Satan is not sufficient to prevent his own servant from confessing the moral glory of the Son of God.” “I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.”

Judas is a pathetic figure, very pathetic figure, separating himself from Christ, he separated himself from all true society of men. Sometimes people say, “Well I know that I may be going to Hell, but at least I’ll be with my friends.” Unfortunately, you won’t, there is no fellowship in Hell. Hell is the blackness of darkness forever. The Bible describes it in terms which make it very plain that there is no fellowship in Hell. But I think the thing that stands out in Judas more than anything else; Judas is a message for insiders. Judas is a message for people who attend church; Judas is a message for Believers Chapel attendants. Those who sit in the meetings and hear the exposition, the faithful exposition of the word of God by many people, but who never yet have come to a relationship to him that may be described as faith in Christ. So the message is for us. The message is for us in this room, for all believers professing believers who meet with believers in evangelical churches where the word of God, the word of Jesus Christ is proclaimed.



Emmanuel Tremellius was a Jewish man who was very troubled over spiritual things, and particularly troubled over the fact that the nation rejected the Lord Jesus and when Pilate asked the nation, “Who do you wish for me to release to you?” The nation said, “Not Jesus but Barabbas.” And Barabbas was released and Jesus was crucified. He troubled himself over this for a long time, he was an intellectual, and finally near the end of his life he cried out, “Not Barabbas, but Jesus.” He had come by the grace of God through the work of the Holy Spirit to confess that Jesus was Lord. That I think is the lesson, “Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.” That’s our Lord’s sop which he gives to Judas’s. “All that the Father giveth to me shall come to me and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” Come, come to Christ. The given will come, oh may it be the decretive counsel of the Sovereign God that you come. Come to Christ, believe in him. If you want a universal invitation, “Look unto me all the ends of the earth and be saved for I am God and there is none else.” Come to the Lord Jesus Christ, we invite you to come to him, believe in him, receive as a free gift everlasting life. But you must come of yourself; no one can do it for you.

[Prayer] Father we are grateful to Thee for these admonitions that we so often need. Oh God, if there should be someone here who has never believed in Christ, give them no rest nor peace until they rest in him. May at this very moment they lift their hearts to Thee and say, “I know that I’m a sinner, I know that Christ died for sinners and offers eternal life ...

**[AUDIO ENDS ABRUPTLY]**