



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Psalm 109:1-20

“Judas Iscariot”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] The Scripture reading for this morning is found in the 109th Psalm, Psalm 109. Since our subject for the day is Judas Iscariot I want to read this psalm which is really the Psalm of Judas.

Now we are going to begin reading with the 1st verse and read through the 20th verse which is slightly unorthodox because this is not really the proper division of the psalm but I will explain why I'm reading these verses. In the first five verses I want you to notice that the author of the psalm speaks of his adversaries in the plural. And then at the 6th verse a change occurs and then another change at the 20th verse. Beginning with the 1st verse,

“Hold not Thy peace, O God of my praise; for the mouth of the wicked and the mouth the deceitful are opened against me: they have spoken against me with a lying tongue. They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause. For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer. And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love. Set thou a wicked man over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand. When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few; and let another take his

office. 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. Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let the strangers spoil his labor. Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: neither let there be any to favor his fatherless children. Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out. Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the LORD; and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out. Let them be before the LORD continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth. Because that he remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart. As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him. As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones. Let it be unto him as the garment which covereth him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually. Let this be the reward of mine adversaries, (and you'll notice again the psalmist moves to the plural,) from the LORD, and of them that speak evil against my soul.”

May God bless this reading from his word. Let's bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Our gracious God and heavenly Father, we thank Thee Lord for all of Thy word. We thank Thee for those portions which stress for us the marvelous grace and loving kindness of our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ. We thank Thee also, Lord, for those which speak of judgment upon the adversaries of the Godhead. And we thank Thee for this imprecatory psalm which speaks so plainly of the fact that Thou dost judge the wicked. “There is no peace,” saith my God, “to the wicked.” And Lord we know that this truth, though very unpleasant to our ears in the 20th Century, is nevertheless one of the rocks and foundations of our universe. And we pray, oh God, that as we sit in this

auditorium and contemplate again the judgment of God that we may be drawn to Thee through fear.

We know, Lord, that there are many motives for turning to Thee and we know that the love and grace and mercy which Thou hast shown to us is surely one of the strongest pulls upon the hearts of men, but at the same time we remember the other side, the justice of our God. And we pray, oh God, that Thou wilt use the ministry of the word to, as Thou hast said, “Snatch some from the flames through fear.” And may, as we contemplate a man today who did that act of betrayal against our Lord Jesus, may our hearts be solemnized by the things that we hear and see in Thy word.

We thank Thee, Lord, for each one present and we pray Thy blessing upon them. And may, oh God, as we sit together and listen to the word that it have its beneficent influence in our lives, each one of us, for Lord for those who may be here without our Lord and savior Jesus Christ we pray, oh God, that his may be the day in which they turn to him and realize that there is a place for them in him as they put their trust in him. May his love, his wonderful love, come through and come through to our hearts. For those, Lord, who do know Thee we pray, oh Lord, that Thou wilt strengthen us for this week and enable us to represent this one who loved us so much in a way that will bring honor to his name.

We commit this assembly to Thee, we thank Thee, Lord, for what Thou hast done. We thank Thee for this past week that Thou hast enabled us to purchase this piece of property. And we acknowledge, Lord, that it has come from Thee. And we pray, oh God, that if it should be Thy will that Thou wilt enable us to erect a building upon that place which will enable us to carry on the ministry of the Lord Jesus in a more effective way. We realize, Lord, that buildings and property are really unimportant. The important thing is that we listen to Thy voice, acknowledge Jesus Christ as our head and walk with him. But we do feel, Lord, that Thou wouldst enlarge this testimony through the ministry

of that place. And so we look to Thee and give us patience, and give us, oh God, the desire to do Thy will above all else.

We thank Thee for those whom Thou hast brought into this testimony and we thank Thee, Lord, for their faithfulness and for the fact that they have come to hear Thy word in spite of the surroundings. And we thank Thee for the Spirit which is evident in our meetings which we know comes from Thee. And we thank Thee for the love that exists, one for another, and pray, oh God, that it may increase and grow in the days ahead. Bind us together, Lord, as a testimony in a way that the name of Jesus Christ may be honored through us. We thank Thee for him. We worship Thee for him. And we pray that he may be seen in us. We commit this meeting to Thee with anticipation. In his name and for his sake. Amen.

[Message] The subject for this morning is Judas Iscariot, apostle of Jesus Christ and son of perdition. Judas is the supreme enigma of the New Testament: an apostle chosen by Jesus Christ; a devil, also a term applied to him by Jesus Christ. Apostle and devil, chosen by the savior, used by Satan. He obviously is an important man, much more is said of him in the New Testament than is said of many of the other of the apostles. And so the subject of Judas Iscariot is one to which we ought to pay the closest of attention.

Some years ago I was giving a series of messages over the radio on Wednesday mornings. It was a program entitled “The Musical Mornings in the Psalms.” And for a number of years I began in the psalms and just Wednesday after Wednesday expounded the psalms. When I reached the 109th psalm I remember the experience that I had because this happened to be only the second of the imprecatory psalms that I had reached and it was a psalm which was extremely different from the other imprecatory psalms.

I don't think that we have in the whole of the word of God anything that is more terrible than the words I read for Scripture reading this morning. And I can remember

when I first came to this psalm and I had just begun to expound the Bible I was very much disturbed by it because I really didn't know exactly what I could say on a psalm like this and I still remember what went on in my mind the first thing that I said was, “I don't know anything about this psalm and I don't know how to expound it. I do know that it is an imprecatory psalm and so I think the first thing that I ought to do is study the imprecatory psalms.” And so I remember that I spent the entire week and on Wednesday gave a message on the imprecatory psalms. And then I turned again to the psalm itself. Well it so happened that as I was studying this psalm I noticed that it was quoted in the New Testament and so I turned over to the New Testament and I read these words, in the 1st chapter of the Book of Acts and in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples and said, the number of names together were about one hundred and twenty,

“Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take.”

Well that startled me even more because I noticed that one of the passages quoted by Peter was the passage from the 109th psalm and he said that this had to do with Judas. Well I must confess I'd always thought of Judas as a kind of nice person who got caught or tangled in a web from which he could not extricate himself and I rather looked at him as one of the pathetic characters of the New Testament, a man who just was in some

circumstances from which he had difficulty in getting out of them and as a result of this he became the betrayer of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Well these words started me on another subject and so for the next Wednesday morning I still remember I decided I was going to give a message on Judas because I had studied this character, or this psalm, and now I still didn't understand the psalm which I found from Acts chapter 1 referred to Judas. So as a result of my study the following week I came to understand for the first time something of the things - some of the things that the Bible has to say about this man Judas. And I'm going to pass on to you this morning some of the things that I learned many years ago but which have been confirmed through the years. And also some things which I think I've discovered since that time about this man Judas Iscariot.

The story of Judas begins with his choice in the 6th chapter of the Gospel of Luke. Now for the sake of time today I'm not going to read all of the passages involved but refer to them and if you wish you can turn to them and notice them as we pass along. Judas was chosen by our Lord Jesus in the description in which Mark gives of the choice of the twelve he says that, “Jesus chose whom he wished.” And so Judas was not an accidental choice, he was not a person who just happened to be along and managed to get in among the twelve by mistake, but our Lord Jesus was the sinless Son of God and as a matter of fact, the text states in Luke chapter 6, “That he prayed all night before he chose his apostles.” I can only gather from this that our Lord Jesus chose Judas and Judas was the one that he intended to choose.

The choice of Judas was no mistake. He took his place among that illustrious company of men who are known as the apostles of our Lord Jesus, and Judas began as an apostle of Jesus Christ. Now we do not read much about Judas for a time. Two years later John tells us something about the man in the words of the Lord Jesus in the latter part of the 6th chapter of John, Judas's character is given a kind of vivid one word

description by the Lord Jesus. He says in the 70th verse of the 6th chapter of John, “Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?”

Now this is rather startling. Judas has not done anything, apparently, of a devilish character at this moment and yet our Lord Jesus has marked him out as a devil. Why is Judas a devil? Well I do notice this, that as far as the two years from the time of his choice is concerned we do not read of any text in the word of God in which Judas seeks truth. We never find this man standing up for that which is clearly of God, but all the time he is among the twelve.

Now the word devil is a word here which I think is to be traced back to the context. Now the 6th chapter of the Gospel of John has recorded the feeding of the five thousand. And you remember that when this wonderful miracle was performed afterwards those who had seen the miracle said, “This is of a truth that prophet should come into the world.” And when Jesus saw that they wanted to come and make him a king he asked the apostles to move over to the other side of the lake. Now the striking thing is that in this passage in after the feeding of the five thousand the great - the multitude that was there was moved to take our Lord Jesus and make him king. Now, of course, they did not intend to make him a king in the sense that the Bible sets him forth as king, a king who assumes his throne by means of a cross. They wanted to make him the king, the messianic deliverer, who would deliver them from the thralldom of Rome. And so it is in that sense that they wished to make him king and our Lord Jesus, not wanting his disciples to catch the contagion of that false idea, sent them across the lake. And yet this is the chapter in which he calls Judas a devil.

I think that the only thing that we can say is that this chapter somewhere or other is the key to that statement. And if it is then Judas is undoubtedly a man of disappointed ambition he had attached himself to the twelve when the Lord Jesus chose him not because he loved our Lord Jesus Christ but because he thought, as he saw the miracles that this man performed, and as he looked at him and saw that he was not a man like

men, he probably thought that this is perhaps the deliverer for whom we have been looking. I would imagine that Judas must have been a very patriotic man and patriotism, so far as I know, is a very good thing providing that it is patriotism that is wise and in accordance with truth. But Judas was a man who had, apparently, great patriotic ambition for the people of Judaism in that day and he attached himself to the Lord Jesus for that reason. And I guess that that is the reason why Jesus referred to him as a devil; he saw that he did not have any real heart relationship with the Lord Jesus, but rather intended to make gain out of the apostleship.

The next thing that we read of Judas is also in the 12th chapter of the Gospel of John. Lazarus has just been raised from the dead and there is a little celebration in the house of Simon the leper, and there Mary of Bethany and the Lord Jesus and Lazarus are there to celebrate Lazarus's resurrection from the dead. In the midst of the meal Mary of Bethany goes into the back part of the house, or perhaps down the street somewhere, or in her pocketbook, and pulls out the pound of ointment of spikenard, very precious, and anointed our Lord Jesus.

Now the moment that Mary anointed the Lord Jesus, John said, “The whole house was filled with the odor of the ointment.” But then there arose another odor in that house and it was not a sweet smelling odor. Someone has said, “Hell's foulest vapors mingle with the incense of spikenard.” And Judas speaks up, and Judas says, “Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?” Now it is very striking that Judas is not only a religious man but he is a man who has socialistic ambitions and dreams. He is a man who is a reformer; I would suppose a man who really had honest -- on the surface -- honest desires for the betterment of humanity. Now I'm not going to call of our socialistic dreamers Judases today, but it is my impression from observation that many of those who desire to do so much for humanity have the same spirit of Judas Iscariot. And you will notice the spirit of Judas is that he would like

to take that which Mary had and give to the poor. It is something, of course, that does not cost him anything.

Now I'm going to resist the temptation to launch into something political this morning [Laughter] after I've given you the principle and you can take it as far as you wish, but please come back to the message. Some of you are off running down the field right now, I know, and I hope you make a touchdown. But still, at this point Judas speaks up and this is his opinion. Now why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor? I'm rather surprised that it is Judas who does this when -- I said I was -- when I first studied this. You know, it seems rather strange to me that Judas was the treasurer of the twelve anyway. After all, John says here, “That he had the bag and was bearing away what was put therein.” That is, he was pilfering it.

Now that, of course, came out years later after John knew the truth, he did not know it at this time. He said that Judas really wanted that three hundred pence for himself and there is a whole lot that we could say about that, too, politically but I'm not going to say anything about that. I want you to notice this, that Judas is the treasurer of the twelve and there's a great story in that.

Now, you know, when we select church officers we look around for men whom we would like to have as church officers as those to take leadership in the things of God, we ordinarily look, first of all, for spiritual men. This must be so. Now I know this is not done today, ordinarily in our churches we look for responsible citizens and if they are responsible citizens then, of course, they can be officers in the church. My father for many years, well he is still an elder in the First Presbyterian Church in Charleston, South Carolina, and for many years he refused to become an elder. I said, “Why do you refuse to become an elder?” He said, “Because it seems to me that we choose our elders contrary to the word of God.” He said, “We look out over the city and select men who have money and position and status and then we make them an elder.” And he said, “As long as that's true I don't think I want to be an elder.” I notice he has become an elder,

of course, some years ago. But this is the way we choose elders today, that is wrong. That is utterly wrong. The first thing that we ought to do is to see if the man has the spiritual qualifications. Then, of course, he should be recognized for the fact that he has the qualifications and performs the work. This is the way in which men should be chosen in the assembly here. We should look for men who have qualifications and who exhibit these qualifications. That is, that God has appointed them to office. And they should be regarded as this for their works sake. Not because we lay hands upon them. Not because we vote for them, this is utterly contrary to the word of God.

Now once we have said that, though we have not said all of the truth because most of us would say all things being equal if we have spiritual men and if a task requires certain duties that the man has natural leadership for that if they are too spiritual men of whom we are thinking for this task we surely would think about the man who is not only the spiritual man but has the natural qualifications for leadership in that sphere. So Judas, I would gather, the fact that Judas is chosen as the treasurer attests to something quite different for, you see, there was another man who was used to handling money, Matthew the apostle, was used to handling large sums of money. As a matter of fact, in his gospel he uses terms for money that are not found in any of the other gospels. Large sums were common to Matthew, but why is Judas chosen over Matthew? Well the answer, I think, must have been simply this; that the apostles highly respected this man Judas.

In other words, Matthew who is spiritual and qualified was passed by for a man who was, they thought, very qualified but whose spirituality they did not have the perception and the discernment to see. So Judas then is not a leering, sneering, sinister, satanic looking Metastopholes, as we have often thought him to be. Judas was a man who was highly respected by the people of that day. And furthermore, he was a man who was highly respected by the eleven. Peter thought an awful lot of Judas. John thought an awful lot of Judas. James thought an awful lot of Judas. Now this, I think, is very, very striking and it is a kind of insight that we get into the character of this man

Judas which is important for us to discerning the characters of men. Because, you see, the fact that a man could come in among the twelve tells us immediately that someone might come in among the hundred and fifty to two hundred and surely in a noble assembly like this we can expect sooner or later for some Judas to appear. It always happens. If we are doing anything for God we can be sure that sooner or later Satan is going to do his best to upset us and it might surprise you. It's not going to come, in my opinion, I'm not a prophet, it's not going to come from someone who wanders in the door who is a stranger in our midst, it's going to come from someone who is already here as the apostle Paul spoke to the elders at Ephesus. He said, “Of your own selves there shall arise grievous wolves.” In other words, men shall come in leadership, from leadership, apparent leadership and these shall be the men who shall obstruct the work of God.

Now the next step in the story of Judas is the compact that he makes with the Jews. When the Lord Jesus speaks to Judas in this incident here and says to Judas, “Judas, let this woman alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this, for the poor always ye have with you.” That's a verse for Lyndon. But, “Me, ye have not always.” This, of course, was a terrible, a terrible, blow to Judas because in the presence of all of the eleven the Lord Jesus has rebuked this man who was the treasurer of the apostles.

Now if you turn to Matthew chapter 26, and read the account there you will notice that this apparently triggered Judas's desire to go ahead and betray our Lord Jesus at this time. For after telling the story Matthew says in the 14th verse of Matthew chapter 26, “Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.”

So the compact with the Jews flows out of the rebuke that Jesus gave Judas in the house of Simon the leper. And as a result for thirty pieces of silver, an apostle betrays our Lord Jesus Christ. Later on Matthew says that, “For men to be bribed to deny the

resurrection of the Lord Jesus takes a large sum of money, but for an apostle to be a betrayer of the Lord Jesus takes only thirty pieces of silver.”

Many years ago I was in business in Alabama before I came to Theological Seminary and I went down to hear a man preach, Herbert Lockyer and during the course of the series of meetings he preached on Judas. And he entitled his message Selling Christ for a Suit of Clothes. And he went on to point out that in that day the thirty pieces of silver was about the equivalent of twenty dollars. Now I don't know whether he's right or not, I've never bothered to figure this out. I always just accepted what he had to say. Thirty pieces of silver, the price of a suit of clothes. But now, of course, that was in ancient times. A price of the suit of clothes, not twenty dollars any more by a long shot, that can tell you how long ago I heard that message. But at any rate it was a very vivid thing to me, selling Christ for a suit of clothes.

I wonder if I were to ask you a question this morning, what is your price upon Jesus Christ? What is the price that you put upon him? Ambition, social status, status for your family, education: you know, there are many prices that men put upon Jesus Christ and whatever it is that prevents him first in your life is your price that you have put on Jesus Christ. Judas is a man who preferred money to the master. He preferred sin to salvation. He preferred the present to the future. He preferred riches to rewards. He preferred heaven to hell. And he preferred darkness to the eternal day.

Now the next incident to the life of Judas is the last chance that Jesus gives him. The stories found in the 13th chapter of the gospel of John. You remember it is the incident in which Jesus washes the disciples' feet. And in the midst of it he has a word for Judas. Have you ever been or listened to a play or have you seen a movie which is a detective story, a thriller, a mystery. And have you ever noticed how so often in our mysteries after the action has proceeded for a long time finally the detective has come, he now has the solution. He gathers everybody into the room, usually the living room, and there with all of the suspects, every one of them looking guilty to you, the man who is

the inspector or the detective says, “The murderer is in this room.” And you can sense the drama and the solemnity of it. The murderer is in this room.

The twelve apostles were with our Lord Jesus in the upper room, they were reclining around the table. A table that was shaped something like a horseshoe, with John on one end of the horseshoe and Peter on the other. Now I think that Peter was on the other, that was the lowest because they had been having a little discussion before they came about who should be greatest. And Jesus, remember, had said, “That he that is first shall be last, and last first.” And Peter, desiring to be first went to the bottom of the table [Laughter]. And so he was sitting across the end of the horseshoe and John was right across from Peter. And they were reclining upon their left shoulders, upon the floor with cushions under their arms. Jesus was next and John, you see, would be leaning up against the breast of Jesus. And then beyond him, third on the horseshoe, was Judas. Now I think it would be nice if we had something that we could draw a picture on up here. In the building we hope to do it, by the way. But anyway, I’m drawing it before your imagination. And Judas is next, and Jesus is on the breast of Judas. And as they are gathered there Jesus says, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, one of you shall betray me.” The murderer is in this room. And the disciples were utterly startled, they didn’t look around and say, “Ah, I thought it was Judas all the time, I see now it’s Judas, can’t you see that look on his face, do you know that Judas is the one?” Those apostles were apparently so closely knit together that they were utterly startled and doubted of whom Jesus was speaking. And Peter, across the table, beckoned to John and he said, “John, ask him who it is, of whom he speaks.” And John leans back upon Jesus’ breast and he speaks to the Lord and he said, “Who is it?”

Now before this, actually the apostles had said, round the table, one by one, “Lord, is it I?” Peter, let’s start over here, “Lord, is it I?” Nathaniel, “Lord, is it I?” And so on around the table, “Lord, is it I?” “Lord, is it I?” Until finally we come to Judas and Judas says, “Master, is it I?” Paul later tells us that no man can call Jesus Lord except by

the Spirit. It seems very, very significant to me that Judas could not even get out that name, Lord. Though of course a man can use the term, but Judas couldn't get it out, “Master, is it I?”

Finally John leans back and said, “Lord, who is it?” Of course, Jesus had said to Judas, “Thou hast said.” Now Peter must have been across the table because he apparently didn't hear it, if he had heard it Judas wouldn't have left that place alive. And so Jesus spoke to John and he said, “John, it is to whom I take the sop and give it.” And so Jesus reached into the common pot, he took a little piece of bread, he took that bread, he dipped it down into the common pot, and took a nice piece of the Passover lamb that was there and he gave it to Judas. Now this was - the custom was this, it was ordinarily the custom for the host and Jesus was the host, he was the pater familias, the Father of the twelve, and he spoke as such and acted as host. It was the custom for them, the one who was the host, to give this to the guest of honor. And so as Jesus took that sop and handed it to Judas it was as if he were saying to him, “Judas, here is one last chance for you, you are the guest of honor at this table, are you sure that you want to betray me?” Dipped the sop and handed it to him.

Years ago, about fifteen to be exact, this young man on the front row here is kind of smiling, he's not too happy about the fact that I've pointed to him [Laughter]. About fifteen years ago I was preaching in a schoolhouse, you might expect a schoolhouse in Greenhill School, and on the first row was a young boy just about the age of these youngsters who are here and I did this and I reached over and handed the sop like this and he jumped up and said, “Don't give it to me, don't give it to me!” [Laughter] So I didn't know what to expect when I handed it over to you.

Now when Jesus gave this to Judas he said, “That which thou doest, do quickly.” The apostles, apparently, heard this and they thought, “Well apparently Judas is to go out and buy something.” And so even after Judas has received the sop, after John has had the information about him they still do not realize that Judas is the one who betrays the Lord

Jesus. Now I think this is one of the most startling things in all of the word of God. That they just seem to be unable to get it into their heads that Judas was the betrayer. And so, therefore, it seems that we have confirmation here of the fact that Judas was a man who had great respect among the apostles, a man whom they highly regarded, a man whom they could not possibly think could be the betrayer. And even then, as Judas left, they still did not know that it was he. That's why, I think, that when we look for a Judas we should not look for the ordinary man who sits in the pew, we should rather look for an elder. We should rather look for a deacon. We should rather look for this kind of man who deep down in his heart has no relationship to Jesus Christ. Who has all of the respectability and all of the religion, and all of the respect of others.

Now I do not know of any Judas in Believers Chapel, please do not think that Mr. Prier is the one that I am speaking about this morning [Laughter], or Mr. Dean, or Dr. Mims [ph37:48] but I am just as a servant of God trying to impress upon you the fact that when you look for a man who is an enemy of Jesus Christ be sure to not look necessarily at those who are blatantly opposed to him. We don't have any problem from a Bishop Pike, we know exactly where he stands, he doesn't stand within the Christian faith, that is obvious. He marks himself out very definitely as that kind of a man. The man who does most damage to the church of Jesus Christ is not a man like Pike, he shows us the difference between that which is real and that which is unreal. We can be kind of thankful for him and the things that he says. He divides the sheep from the goats, very easily. It's the man, however, who speaks sweet sounds who gives sweet messages, who talks in a compromising expedient way, that man is the real enemy of the cross of Jesus Christ and the enemy of the church of God. That man who deep in his heart does not know Christ but who speaks as if he does and misleads the sheep who go off after the false shepherd. That is the dangerous man.

Now the text states that when Judas left the band that morning it was night. Now John did not say those words without reason. John is the man who is the mystic, the

lover, the spiritual man, and as he sees Judas leaving the light of that upper room and going out into the darkness of that night he sees this as a vivid picture of men when they leave the presence of the light of the world, Jesus Christ. It was night and when a man leaves Jesus Christ and goes out into the darkness he is going out into the darkness of everlasting doom. And Judas goes out and you can see him retreating. “He went out,” the text says. He was not forced out, this was voluntary, self-excommunication. There are no mitigating circumstances whatsoever. This man Judas has denied Jesus Christ and has gone out to betray him and is ultimately responsible among and with others for the death of the Son of God.

Now the next story, the next part of Judas’s story, is contained in the 18th chapter of John and the 26th chapter of Matthew. Judas goes out, he gets the band together, and the band comes back into the Garden of Gethsemane and there in the Garden of Gethsemane, at the appointed signal which is a kiss, Judas marks out Jesus for the Roman soldiers to take and to crucify. And so he comes up to him, he says ahead of time that the signal will be, “The man who I kiss, that is Jesus of Nazareth.” Now that would have been very unsuspecting in those days, it was the custom, you see, for a disciple to go up to the rabbi who was his teacher, to go up to him and put both hands upon his shoulder like this and to give him a kiss on the cheek. And so when Judas came into that garden, walked over to Jesus, and said, “Hail master,” one of the commentators says, “You can almost hear the hiss of the serpent in those words.” “Hail master,” and he puts his hands upon the shoulders of our Lord Jesus and leans over and kisses him. As we might say, the most unkindness cut off all, isn’t that our expression? That’s what it was. Judas betrayed him with a kiss.

The Book of Proverbs has something to say about the kisses of an enemy, they are deceitful. Have you ever seen that kind of person? They are numerous in the church of Jesus Christ. They’re all sugar and spice and everything nice, but just wait until you turn your back and then they will plunge the dagger in, that’s a Judas kind of person. We are

full of them. We have lots of them. Oh for the frankness, and oh for the straightforwardness of the man of the Spirit of God, the rebukes of a friend, they are valuable. The kisses of an enemy are deceitful. The sheep be discernment.

So Judas is the tool in the hands of the betrayal. The last thing that John says about him, “Judas stood with them.” Where do you stand this morning? Do you stand with Jesus Christ, really? Or do you stand with the opponents of Christ? Well that’s not the final incident in Judas’s life. In the 27th chapter of Matthew we have the last little incident in which Judas’s suicide is described. Was he saved at last? Oh I wish I could get to heaven and see Judas. I wish I could get to heaven and see anybody who has genuinely accepted Jesus Christ. I don’t think I shall see Judas in heaven. Now I know you say, “Well didn’t you say that he repented himself?” Yes he did. Finally he couldn’t stand the thirty pieces of silver, he came to the leaders and he gave them the thirty pieces of silver and he says, “I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.” The text also says that he repented himself, repented himself. Unfortunately the Greek text says he regretted. There’s a great deal of difference between repentance and regret. Judas had pain of mind, but not change of mind. Judas had a change of purpose, but not a change of heart. Judas had regret for the results that were coming to him now because of the decision that he made but he didn’t have repentance for the wrongdoing. He did not go to our Lord Jesus and ask for forgiveness.

I think the same feeling that Judas had is in small measure the feeling of a little child when it is caught in doing something wrong. I believe very much in that old maxim, “Spare the rod and spoil the child.” “I believe that we learn most,” as someone has said humorously, “when the board of education is applied to the seed of learning.” And I think that’s what we need to do to all of our children from time to time. And when they reach their age of adulthood they’ll thank us for it; and you will then, you’ll thank us for it.

I can still remember when I was big enough to spank my child. I am no longer big enough. But I can still remember that when we would take Sammy in and Mary would say to me, “He’s done something and he ought to be punished,” and I would say, “Alright son, come on over now and let’s go into your little room and we’re going to have a little session.” So I would get the brush and I could still remember bending him over my knees and first of all I’d give him a little talk and explain to him why I was doing this. I believe in explanations too. And so I would bend him over and then I would begin to spank him, and I can still hear those words that came out, “I’m sorry daddy, I’m sorry.” But he wasn’t sorry, he wasn’t sorry for what he had done, he was sorry for what was happening to him at that time [Laughter].

Now that is exactly the feeling that Judas has. He doesn’t really repent of the wrongdoing that he has done to our Lord Jesus Christ, he regrets the fact that deep down in his heart now there has come into the heart of this man who knew Jesus Christ so intimately, there has come into his heart the blackness of the darkness of eternal damnation which soon will be forever. That’s what he’s feeling. And the striking thing about this is that the power of Satan himself is not sufficient to prevent his own servant from confessing the moral glory of Jesus Christ. “I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.” And this man who did this dastardly deed confesses the innocence of Christ.

He went out and hanged himself. Suicide is an act of defiance. It always is an act of defiance. It is the supreme expression of despairing unbelief. Now I know some Christians who have committed suicide. I do not feel sorry for the man who commits suicide. I cannot feel sorry for the man who commits suicide. I cannot feel sorry for the suicide; I may feel sorry for the man. Suicide is an act of rebellion. It says, in effect, I do not like what life has for me. I feel sorry for the state that produces that. Who wouldn’t? It’s very pathetic, and we can sense a tug at the heart when Judas commits suicide but we cannot be sorry for the suicide itself. It was an act of rebellion. And so separating

himself from Christ he separated himself from all true society of men and he commits suicide.

There are people who have the nerve to say today, “Well life has been very bad for me, I think I’ll just go to hell. I don’t care for Jesus Christ, I’ll just go to hell, but I’ll be there with those who feel as I do.” There is not fellowship in hell. The word of God gives us no assurance that there is fellowship in hell.

My time is up. Judas is the Greek name for Judah. Judah means praise. That was his name, Mr. Praise. Mr. Praise from Iscariot, a man from Kerioth, the only Judean among the Galileans. Judas is a warning of the neglect of Jesus Christ. Judas is occasion for the unbelief of his heart; was the love of money and the love of position. Our occasion may be something else. Ours may be lust of a sexual kind. Ours may be simply indifference. Ours may even be religion. God does not expect us to give up our sins and then accept Christ. He knows we cannot give up our sins; he wants us to recognize our sins for what they are and be willing to be delivered. To take Jesus Christ as savior and he will deliver us from that sin that besets us. Yours may not be the love of money, there is nothing wrong with having money. There is a great deal wrong with putting money before Jesus Christ. There is nothing wrong with desiring to be a happy, useful citizen in the community, that’s what we all should be; testimony to Christ. But if this takes first place in our lives it has separated us from Jesus Christ. He is a warning to us. We have greater privileges than Judas ever had. We have Bibles, we have Bible teachers, we have friendly governments, oh the terrible judgment of the man who rejects Jesus Christ today.

George Bernard Shaw in his work Saint Joan has described a chaplain who in his work is responsible for the death of Joan of Arc. And after, finally, he has committed his deed and has been instrumental in having Joan burned at the stake he then is torn with remorse and finally comes back to the Duke of Warwick and speaks about that which has happened to him. And finally falls on his knees and he says, “Oh God, take away this

sight from me, oh Christ, deliver me from this fire that is consuming me. She cried to Thee in the midst of it, ‘Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.’ She is in Thy bosom; I am in hell forever more.” And Shaw has caught Christian, though he was not, he has caught the fact that the man who has rejected Jesus Christ already has hell in his heart. Already is on his way to eternal judgment. Already is perishing and only remains to be buried. Judas is a terrible warning to us. A man who was bad enough to do this great deed of crucifying Christ but who was so good that he couldn’t bear the sense of guilt. What about you this morning? Respectable, religious, spiritual, have you accepted Christ? Have you turned to him in your heart and have you said, as you look off to that great expression of love, the cross of Christ, and knowing that the Lord Jesus is here, have you said, and if you haven’t will you, “Thank you, Lord Jesus, for dying for me. I take you as my personal savior. I don’t understand much about it but I want to be saved. I want to be delivered from this awful separation in hell that’s in my heart because I do not have Jesus Christ.” May God speak to your heart and may you put your faith and trust in him. Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out Jesus sin.

As long as there is life there is hope and the dirtiest and blackest of sinners may come to Christ. And the cleanest and most respectable may too. May God help you to see yourself as you really are and to flee to Christ. Shall we stand for the benediction?

[Prayer] Our gracious God and heavenly Father, we feel so inadequate, Lord, to express the solemnity that touches us when we think of this man, Judas Iscariot. A man with so great opportunity but who turned from the light of the world and went off into the blackness of darkness forever. And oh Father, we pray for every individual in this auditorium. May there be no one to follow him. May they turn to Christ, who loved them and gave himself for them. And in inacknowledgement of their sin and rebellion come to him and receive forgiveness. For those of us who know Thee, oh God, may throughout this week we represent this loving one who has given himself for us. And

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now may his grace, and his mercy, and his peace, which he gives to those who have believed, be our portion throughout these days. For his names' sake. Amen.