

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

The Betrayer Part Two John 13:23-30

We are presently studying John 13. How did this chapter begin? It began with John's account of the foot washing which then transitioned into an expose of a betrayer. We have divided this expose into three different parts.

We considered the first part last week, the betrayer predicted (John 13:18-22). Let me read this passage for you. **"I do not speak of all of you [in respect to the blessedness of the assurance that comes from knowing you are one of my disciples]. I know the ones I have chosen; but it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled, "He who eats My bread has lifted up his heel against Me." (19) From now on I am telling you before it comes to pass, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am He. (20) Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.' (21) When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me.' (22) The disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking."**

Why did they not know? They did not know because it was not obvious. Why was it not obvious? It was not obvious because Judas was very good at checking off boxes like many people today are good at checking off boxes. But the truth was that Judas was never fully devoted to Christ. The truth was that when push came to shove, the life of Judas was all about Judas rather than about Christ.

Did Judas have the opportunity when he was with Christ to see himself clearly? Absolutely! But when the light of Christ's life was shined on Judas, rather than falling down before Jesus confessing and forsaking his sin, he would simply slink away. Why would he do this? He would do this because he hated the light. He hated the light because his deeds were evil.

Hopefully this does not describe us. Hopefully when we are exposed to the light of Christ through the word of Christ we will not slink away from the light but will rather enthusiastically embrace the light by confessing and forsaking our sin, and in doing this manifest to ourselves and others that we truly are a devoted follower of Christ and that our deeds have in fact been wrought in God.

Tragically, right up to the very end his life, Judas continually failed to respond to the light in this way. And we will see this displayed for us very dramatically this weekend as we now move in our text from "the betrayer predicted" to "the betrayer identified (John 13:23-26),

Before we jump into what John records for us next in **John 13** about the betrayer, we need to consider some information that was supplied for us by another Gospel writer that was not supplied to us by John.

The last thing that John told us after Jesus told His disciples that one of them would betray Him was the fact that they looked at one another at a loss to know who among them might be that traitor. But this was not all that happened in response to that prediction.

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

Let me share with you something that Matthew tells us in Matthew 26:22. Matthew 26:22 makes it clear that after Jesus indicated that one of His disciples would in fact be His betrayer, each of them sought to be publicly *exonerated* by Christ. How did they do this? They sought to be publicly exonerated by Christ by making the following statement to Him, "**Surely not I, Lord.**"

And how did Christ respond to their attempt to be publicly exonerated? Christ responded to their attempt to be publicly exonerated by giving the betrayer a *warning* in Matthew 26:24.

Let me read this warning for you. "**The Son of Man is to go, just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.**" Jesus was in effect once again shining the light of His life upon Judas in expressing to Judas this warning.

Did this warning flush Judas out from beneath his rock. No! Rather than bringing him to repentance it only prompted him to continue his charade. And how did Judas do this? He did this by following the lead of the other disciples.

He followed their lead by saying to Jesus something very similar but not identical to what they had said. And what was it that they had said? They had said, "**Surely not I, Lord.**" And what did Judas say? Judas said, "**Surely, it is not I, Rabbi?**" You can see the subtle but very important difference between the expression of Judas and the rest of disciples. And what was that difference? Judas, in contrast to the rest of the disciples, addressed Him as "Rabbi" rather than as "Lord." Perhaps this difference might not have caught the attention of the disciples at that particular moment in time but for us it certainly would seem to be significant. And how did Jesus respond to Judas? Jesus said to Judas, "**You have said it yourself.**"

Judas, seeking to deceitfully mimic the other disciples quest for public exoneration, was *identified* by Christ in Matthew 26:25 as the betrayer. Jesus again was shining the light of His life on Judas. But again Judas did what he always did. He fled from that light by remaining silent.

Did any of the other disciples overhear what Jesus had said to Judas? No! We know that Jesus did not identify Judas as the betrayer to anyone else but Judas in Matthew 26:25 based on what John tells us in John 13:23-30. So, we are now in this morning's text.

Let us begin by reading **John 13:23**. And what does the verse say? "**There was reclining on Jesus' breast one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.**" So, what do we learn from this verse? We learn that at the Passover feast, the disciple whom Jesus loved was reclining on His chest. So, how could this disciple actually do this?

Christ and His disciples were most likely reclining on couches, divans or mattresses arranged around the *outside* of a low U-shaped table.

This would mean that they would be laying on their left side and leaning on their left arm, in order to keep the right arm and hand free to handle the food. This was why the disciple on the right of Jesus could lay his head on the breast or chest of Jesus.

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

The picture that is being conveyed to us here in this verse might seem odd to us but we need to remember that we are not talking here about twenty-first century America, but rather we are talking about first century Palestine, and this kind of public display of affection among people of the same sex was common and accepted.

Would any other of Christ's disciples have done what this disciple was doing? Perhaps, but certainly they would not have been as likely to express their affection in this way as this particular disciple had done. Why? They most likely would have been less inclined to express their affection in this way because this disciple was described by John as the "**the disciple whom Jesus loved.**" He obviously had a very close relationship with Christ that was not necessarily enjoyed by the other disciples.

And who was this disciple? The disciple that John refers to as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" is almost universally accepted to be *John* himself.

What is this based on? It is based on an extrapolation of all that we know about this disciple from John 19:26-27; John 20:2-9; John 21:1,20-23 and finally John 21:24-25. In other words, when we combine all the information we know about this disciple from the Gospel of John, the only disciple that reasonably could fit all the facts that are provided for us would be the Apostle John.

So, what happens next in our text? Let us now read **John 13:24**. "**Simon Peter therefore gestured to him, and said to him, 'Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking.'**"

What does this inquiry by Peter tell us? Peter's inquiry to John tells us that Peter believed that John might have *known* the identity of the betrayer (John 13:24). Why might Peter believe this? He would have believed this because if there were a disciple that Jesus might have chosen to confide some special information it would have been the disciple whom Jesus loved, or in other words, John.

So, how did John respond to this enquiry by Peter? Did he point to Judas? No! John, just like Peter and the rest of Christ's disciples, had no clue as to the identity of the betrayer.

But how could this be? How could they not know the identity of the betrayer since we know from **Matthew 26:25** that Jesus earlier in the evening, in responding to Judas' statement, "**Surely it is not I, rabbi?**" said to him, "**You have said it yourself.**" So again we ask the question, how could the disciples, in light of Christ's earlier statement to Judas, not know the identify of the betrayer?

The answer is quite simple. It goes back to how Christ and His disciples were eating this Passover meal. And how was that? As I shared with you, Christ and His disciples were most likely reclining on couches, divans or mattresses arranged around the outside of a low U-shaped table. This not only made it possible for John, who was seated at the right of Christ, to lay his head on Christ's chest, but it also would have made it possible for Christ to very discreetly lean His head on the chest of the person to His left, which I believe in this case was Judas. This would have made it very possible for Christ to communicate to Judas what Matthew tells us that He communicated to Judas in **Matthew 26:25** without any of the other disciples hearing a single word.

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

So, therefore, since John did not know the identity of the betrayer and being just as curious as Peter and in a position to ask Jesus, he once again leaned on Jesus chest and asked Jesus, according to **John 13:25, "Lord, who is it?"**

So, what will Jesus do? Will He reveal the traitor to John? And the answer is yes! Jesus indicated to John that He would identify the traitor by giving the traitor a morsel that He had dipped (John 13:26). Let me read the first part of the verse for you. **"Jesus therefore answered, 'That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him.'"**

The morsel that Jesus dipped was most likely a piece of unleavened bread from one of the flat cakes lying on the table.

The sauce that Jesus dipped the morsel into most likely consisted of mashed fruit, water and vinegar.

So, you can imagine the tension that existed in John as Jesus prepared the morsel. Who would Jesus give it too? Let us continue to read **verse 26. "So when He had dipped the morsel, He took and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot."** John had to be in shock in respect to what he had just witnessed. And it is important to know that at this point it was John, and only John, who knew that the betrayer was in fact Judas.

So, let me now ask you a question. Why didn't Jesus just simply whisper to John that it was Judas that would betray Him? Why would He choose rather to do it by passing a morsel dipped in a bowl of sauce?

I believe that Jesus passed the morsel dipped in a bowl of sauce to the betrayer in order to highlight the figurative fulfillment of Psalm 41:9. What Jesus had said earlier to Judas in **Matthew 26:25** by His words, "You have said it yourself," has now been reinforced by His action when He extended to Judas this dipped morsel. The disciples other than John sitting at the table would have seen this as an expression of affection and of tribute.

But for Judas, the pain of the light of Christ being focused on him in this way caused him to flee once again into the darkness, but unfortunately for Judas, this time as he fled from the light of Christ, he fled into the embrace of Satan. Let us read the first part of **John 13:27. "And after the morsel, Satan then entered into him."**

When it says that Satan entered him, it does not mean that Satan possessed him physically. Rather it meant that he was spiritually possessed and had reached a point of no return.

Can this happen to other professing disciples of Christ? Can this happen to other so-called disciples of Christ who simply are checking off boxes but who at their very core are all about themselves rather than about Christ? Absolutely! What does 1 Peter 5:8 tell us? **"Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."**

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

Satan is attacking every professing disciple of Christ whether they are true disciples or false disciples. Those who are true will not be devoured, but the same thing cannot be said for those who are false. There will be some of them, such as Judas, who will eventually be fully and completely consumed by Satan himself, rendered unsalvageable. Not because Jesus could not save them if they in fact would truly come to Him, but because Satan has so fully consumed them that they will never come to Christ. They have been so fully consumed by Satan that they will never be able to respond to the light of Christ.

This brings us to the third part of what John shares with us about the betrayer. We have seen the betrayer predicted (John 13:18-22), the betrayer identified (John 13:23-26), and now the betrayer dismissed (John 13:27-30).

Let me read for you the last part of **verse 27**. "**And after the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Jesus therefore said to him, ‘What you do, do quickly.’**" There was nothing more that Jesus could do for Judas. Jesus had loved His disciples to the end, including Judas, but Judas had given himself up to Satan, and Satan had taken control of his life and there was now no turning back for Judas, so Jesus dismissed him by saying, "**What you do, do quickly.**"

Jesus, in dismissing Judas from the Passover feast with the words, "What you do, do quickly," was orchestrating the timing of all the events that shortly would be unfolding. Judas responded to the encouragement of Christ and did exactly what Jesus had told him to do.

And what was the response of the disciples to this? Let me read for you **John 13:28-30**. "**Now no one of those reclining at the table knew for what purpose He had said this to him. (29) For some were supposing, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus was saying to him, ‘Buy the things we have need of for the feast’; or else, that he should give something to the poor.**"

Obviously the disciples were confused about exactly what Christ meant when He told Judas, "**What you do, do quickly.**" But how can we explain why John would not have understood? I believe that John did not understand why Judas had left because John was unable to quickly process the dismissal of Judas in John 13:27 with the symbolic action of identification in John 13:26. On the surface this might seem hard to imagine but you have to understand that John was most likely in a state of shock.

In **John 13:18-30** we have seen the betrayer predicted, identified and dismissed. This was certainly for Judas a horrific night. His fleshly impulses had finally led to the point of no return. He had in a very real sense, for thirty pieces of silver, sold his soul to the devil. And what is the final image that John leaves with us of Judas in our text.

Let us read **John 13:30**. "**And so after receiving the morsel he went out immediately; and it was night.**" Judas went out into the night, or in other words, Judas went out into the darkness. What an appropriate picture of the life of Judas. This is how he had lived his entire life. He may have lived with Christ for three years but he continually fled from the light of Christ.

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

This is not how I want to live my life. I would hope that this would not be how you would want to live your life.

May God give us the grace *each* day to walk in the light so that our deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.