

THE REAL JESUS: HIS CROSS

Week Three | September 2, 2018 | Betrayed (Part 1)

PREPARATION

GETTING READY

Before your group meets next time, spend some time alone in God's Word reading through this week's text, Luke 22:1–23. Pray that God, through His Spirit, would bring to life the truth of this text and how it applies to your life.

THIS WEEK

KEY BIBLICAL TRUTH

Betrayal first started with Satan and is part of his evil plan. But God used the betrayal Christ experienced to usher in great redemption.

THEOLOGY APPLIED

We have all felt the pain of betrayal. For healing, we can run to the One who was betrayed for us. We have all been betrayers of God. For forgiveness, we can run to the One who died for us.

MEDITATE

"For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!" (Luke 22:22).

GETTING STARTED

+ Use this section to prepare your heart and mind for the truths of this week. This section will help to introduce the focus of this week's lesson.

In an interview published by Rolling Stone several years ago, folk singer and songwriter Bob Dylan, recalled the time he was branded a “Judas” during an infamous concert in 1965. Why? Because Dylan exchanged his acoustic guitar for an electric one. His fans considered this move a selling-out of folk music for thirty pieces of rock-and-roll silver. During a quiet moment in the concert, one of his fans shouted out, “Judas!” The crowd broke out in laughter and applause. Dylan, furious, turned his back to the crowd and ordered the band to play louder. The concert has become part of rock-and-roll history.

Reflecting on the event years later, Dylan said, “Judas, the most hated name in human history! If you think you’ve been called a bad name, try to work your way out from under that.” Dylan is right; the name Judas has become synonymous with betrayal. For two thousand years, Judas has been reviled as the embodiment of evil and betrayal. Even if you aren’t very familiar with the Bible, you probably know what it means to be a “Judas.”

Regardless of cultural connotations, each of us has experienced the deep pain that comes from betrayal. It is one of the worst kinds of pain. Many people bear the scars of betrayal the rest of their lives. Why is betrayal so particularly painful and damaging? Thabiti Anyabwile explains it this way: “Betrayal depends on the exploitation of the best virtues. Where there isn’t love, trust, and hope, betrayal cannot be effective. If we are skeptical, critical, judgmental, or not trusting, it’s not easy for us to be betrayed. So, betrayal is one of those human experiences that takes the best of our humanity and exploits it in a way that produces pain.” Betrayal is doubly painful because your love is taken advantage of and what you believed to be true about the other and about your relationship is found to be a lie. That’s why betrayal is deeply damaging and takes a very long time to recover from.

In the times when you have experienced betrayal, have you thought about the fact that God Himself is familiar with this experience and the pain associated with it? Have you also thought about the fact that Jesus wasn’t only betrayed by Judas, but by you too?

Q: *If you are a person who opens their heart to others, you risk being betrayed. But, if you keep your heart closed off to others, you cauterize your own humanity and keep yourself from growing in virtue. Which kind of person do you tend to be like?*

Q: *How have you dealt with the pain of betrayal in the past?*

❏ UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

This week we will begin a two-part study of Jesus' betrayal. This week we will focus on His betrayal by Judas. Next week will learn that Jesus was not only betrayed by Judas, but by many others He loved as well. We will see the way Jesus responds to betrayal to bring about great redemption.

1. BETRAYAL IS SATANIC

2. JESUS' BETRAYAL PURCHASES A KINGDOM

GOING DEEPER

+ *This next section will help show what God's Word says about this week's particular focus. Read through the Scripture passages and connect the text to this week's biblical truth.*

BETRAYAL IS SATANIC

❏ LUKE 22:1-6

- ❏ *What is the context of this scene? What is going on culturally? What is going on with the religious leaders?*
- ❏ *Who does the text say prompted Judas to betray Jesus?*
- ❏ *What was the agreement between Judas and the chief priests and officers?*

The Passover celebration was approaching, which was a very special time for the Jewish people. During Passover, the Israelites remembered when they were enslaved by the Egyptians and God delivered them. He sent ten plagues, the last being an angel of death sent to kill all the firstborn. But God provided a shield from this judgment for the Israelites. They were to kill a lamb and spread its blood on their doorposts so the angel would see it and pass by their house, sparing their firstborn. Inside, they were to eat a ceremonial meal of bitter

herbs (symbolizing the bitterness of their slavery) and unleavened bread, or bread that hadn't been left to rise with yeast (symbolizing their hasty flight from Egypt once they were set free). During this time of year, the Israelites' minds are turned toward themes of judgment, redemption, and the blood of a spotless lamb. They would soon see the fullness of their meaning.

Instead of fixing their minds on this important time meant to focus everyone's minds on God's promise of redemption, the religious leaders "were looking for a way to put [Jesus] to death" (v. 2). They cared more about their own power than God's redemption. Their hatred for Jesus was at the forefront of their minds. But these religious leaders who were power-hungry had a serious Achilles heel. The text says they were afraid of the people. The people loved Jesus. If the religious leaders wanted to harm Him, they would have been strategic about it to avoid the fury of the people. They needed a way to take Him out secretly. Instead of fearing God and loving mankind, they hated God and feared mankind. Their hearts were twisted.

The text lets us know that there was another character, Satan, at play here. In Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14, we learn that Satan was the first betrayer of God. He was created as an angel to serve and worship God. But he decided he wanted to be God rather than submit to Him and led an uprising against God, with one-third of the angels joining him. God threw him and the rebellious angels out of heaven and created hell for these betrayers. Satan hates Jesus and seeks to tarnish His glory in whatever way he can. He uses his influence, schemes, and cunning deception to convince image-bearers to hate Jesus as well. Sometimes this hate may look more like "indifference." We see a lot of that. But in this account, this hate is an active quest to destroy Him.

In verse 3, we read that Judas was under Satan's influence as he decided to betray Jesus. The devil didn't make him do it. All he can do is tempt us and seek to persuade us. In the temptation of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3, Satan spoke lies to them, seeking to convince them to disobey God. He didn't force them to eat the fruit. They made that decision because they "saw the fruit was good for food and pleasing to the eye" (Genesis 3:6). Their affections were captured by the idea of living life away from God's authority. Jeremiah 17:9 says our hearts are deceitful desperately wicked. Satan doesn't put sin in our hearts; it is already there. James 1:13–18 tells us temptation and sin are not the same things. Sin is acting upon temptation. It ultimately comes from ungodly desires within, not simply pressure from without.

In Shakespeare's play, *Julius Caesar*, which tells the story of the assassination of Julius Caesar by Cassius and Brutus, Cassius says, "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves, that we are underlings." In other words, you can't blame forces outside of your control for your own sin. Temptation is a real thing, but it doesn't make you sin. You make you sin. Interestingly, in Dante's famous literary work, *The Inferno*, he gives a "map" of hell. Of course, Dante is not writing a systematic theology of hell that suggests there actually are different layers of hell for different kinds of sinners. Instead, he is presenting a commentary on the nature of sin. At the very center of hell, right next to Satan himself, reside the three iconic figures of betrayal: Brutus,

Cassius, and Judas. What Dante is communicating through his literary work is the seriousness of the sin of betrayal, especially the betrayal of God!

As much as we dog Judas, the truth is we are all betrayers of God. R.C. Sproul writes,

“Sin is cosmic treason. Sin is treason against a perfectly pure Sovereign. It is an act of supreme ingratitude toward the One to whom we owe everything, to the One who has given us life itself. Have you ever considered the deeper implications of the slightest sin, of the most minute peccadillo? What are we saying to our Creator when we disobey Him at the slightest point? We are saying no to the righteousness of God. We are saying, ‘God, Your law is not good. My judgment is better than Yours. Your authority does not apply to me. I am above and beyond Your jurisdiction. I have the right to do what I want to do, not what You command me to do.’”

Think about your own posture toward God. In what ways have you usurped His rule? In what ways have you rebelled against His authority? In what ways have you exchanged His truth for a lie, as Paul says in Romans 1:25? In what ways have you sold out Jesus for your own idol?

We are at war against our flesh on the inside and temptation on the outside. Christians are never called to engage in head-to-head combat with Satan in this spiritual battle. Only Jesus does that. But we are called to resist Him (1 Peter 5:9). We do so by being alert and watchful, knowing that he comes to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). We are to be aware that he is a liar (John 8:44) and poses as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:13–15). We must always remember that what He is tempting us to believe is not true and what he is tempting us to want is not good. We know he will seek to lead us astray “from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:3). We know he tries to keep us from the Word (Romans 10:17) and tries to prevent it from taking root in our hearts (Mark 4:1–9).

But we know he can be resisted. Revelation 12:11 says, “They have conquered [Satan] **by the blood of the Lamb** and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.” This passage reminds us, once again, of the importance of the blood of the Lamb as our protection, just like the Israelites were remembering during Passover. We resist Satan by rooting ourselves in the truth of the gospel, by finding our identity in the blood of the Lamb, by hearing His voice above all others, by proclaiming the gospel through our words and our lives. By counting all else as lost compared to knowing Christ, we will overcome Satan’s schemes.

Q: *Look back at the quote from R.C. Sproul and ask yourself the questions he lists.*

- Q: *Discuss the common phrase, “The devil made me do it.” Looking back at James 1, what role does temptation play in sin and what are its limits?*
- Q: *What are some of Satan’s lies that you find yourself easily believing? How can you actively resist him?*

JESUS’ BETRAYAL PURCHASES A KINGDOM

☒ LUKE 22:7–23

- Q: *What did Jesus tell the disciples to do to prepare for their Passover celebration? In what ways was their experience following Jesus’ instructions similar to their experience with the colt?*
- Q: *What did each element of the supper represent?*

Jesus was rather cryptic with His disciples as He told them to prepare the place for them to celebrate the Passover. Kent Hughes explains the reason behind it. “The counterintelligence-like secrecy was due to the fact that Jesus was quite aware of Judas’ intention to betray him at the time when he and the disciples were isolated. If Jesus had let it be known where the rendezvous and meal would occur, Judas would have informed on them, the meal would never have taken place, and the institution of the Lord’s Supper would never have been given to the Church. So Jesus himself had prearranged the place and the secret signs by which Peter and John would find it.” Once again, Jesus called His disciples to simple obedience and trust. There was much more going on than they realized at the time, and they responded by following His orders without question.

Everything had been arranged perfectly and the plan worked like clockwork. When they got to the place, it was all ready for their Passover meal. Once again, we are reminded that Jesus is in control. He is not the victim of a satanic plot, He stands above the satanic plot and willingly submits Himself to it for a broader purpose. God's plan of redemption will not fail.

In verses 14–16, Jesus expresses His heart to the disciples. He had longed to share this meal with them. It was a very meaningful moment, a sacred time. Through the meal, He would teach them the deepest truths of the gospel. He would give them a picture of what would happen on the cross. And He would give them a taste of the kingdom that would be won through the cross. He told them with joy that the next time He would eat this meal with them would be at the marriage supper of the Lamb, when death has been completely destroyed and the Church has been brought home to glory! The joy they would experience was at the forefront of His mind as He was about to face great suffering. This is what Hebrews 12:2 is talking about when it speaks of the *joy* that was before Him, leading Him to endure the cross.

In verses 19–20, Jesus highlights the elements of the supper, the bread and the wine. The unleavened bread always symbolized the Israelites' hasty flight from slavery. But, here Jesus gives it an even greater meaning. It signifies His body that is broken for them, purchasing their freedom. Likewise, the cup represents the shed blood of Jesus, the blood of the Lamb that protects those hidden beneath it from the wrath of God and the power of the devil. He commands them to celebrate this meal in remembrance of Him. It is another way of reminding themselves of the gospel and rooting themselves in its truth. This meal also reminds them that Christ paid it all. Our salvation is completely dependent on Christ, who poured out His blood for us.

But right after He speaks of His sacrifice that will win a Kingdom, He reveals that someone at the table is a betrayer. At such an intimate moment, this announcement must have been a shock. Yet, this turn in the dialogue is a perfect illustration of the truth Joseph proclaimed in Genesis 50:20: "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today." Jesus' betrayal was not the ruin of Him. God worked His redemptive plan through it.

❖: *How can the practice of taking the Lord's Supper fortify your faith and help you stand firm against Satan's lies?*

❖: *How can setting your gaze on glory sustain you in your present suffering like it did for Jesus? Can you think of Scripture verses that communicate this same truth?*

NEXT STEPS

+ *Connect the truths from God's Word to your daily life. Process how what you've learned this week will impact the way you live beyond today and into the future.*

- ♀: *Do you see Jesus as your protection from God's rightful judgment against you? In what way does this picture of Jesus stand in opposition to the counterfeit Jesuses we have been discussing in this series?*
- ♀: *Have you experienced redemption even through betrayal?*
- ♀: *Consider how Jesus responds to His betrayer. How similar or different have your responses been?*
- ♀: *How has Jesus responded to you when you have betrayed Him?*
- ♀: *Read Psalm 27 and let it remind you of God's help and redemption when you experience betrayal.*

PRAY

+ *Use these prayer points to connect your time in prayer to this week's focus.*

- *Father, thank You that You work all things for good for those who love You. Thank You that Your plan is far greater than my imagination can handle.*
- *Jesus, thank You for the gift of celebrating the Lord's Supper as a reminder of who we are thanks to what You have done for us. Thank You for Your broken body and Your shed blood. Thank You for allowing Yourself to be betrayed to save me, a betrayer.*

- Holy Spirit, help me discern the schemes of the enemy. Help me actively resist him and cling to Christ.

COMMENTARY

LUKE 22:3 Satan cannot “enter” a Christian because Christians have the Spirit of God living within them. Judas was not regenerate. He was not a child of God, but still a child of wrath. John 12:6 gives an account of a pattern of dishonest behavior as evidence for his lack of regeneration. Christians can be tempted by Satan and he can gain a “foothold” in their lives (Ephesians 4:27) through persistent sin, but he cannot occupy or possess them.

LUKE 22:10 A man carrying a jar would have been a conspicuous sight because, in that culture, getting water was a job only women did. They would have easily spotted the man who would then take them to the secret room already prepared for them.

**All exegetical content and commentary resourcing for this lesson was provided by the ESV Study Bible Commentary Notes, the Christ Centered Exposition (Luke), and Preaching the Word (Luke).*

