

## JOHN 13:18-3—BETRAYAL

**INTRO:** Have you ever had your trust violated? Have you ever been betrayed? Because that's essentially what betrayal is. Dictionary: **“to be unfaithful in guarding, maintaining, or fulfilling: to betray a trust; to disappoint the hopes or expectations of; be disloyal to: to betray one's friends.”**

- Why do I think of middle school or high school girls? Someone confides a secret about how much she likes someone, and the next day it's all over school. *Betrayal*.
- Probably the worst and most hurtful and damaging kind of betrayal is infidelity to one's spouse. I can think of 3 couples who we're friends or neighbors with where either the W. or the H. has betrayed the other, and they're still married. I can think of lots more cases in which betrayal led to divorce or the breakup of a
- But for everyone who is betrayed, there is a betrayer. Maybe you've betrayed someone. Jerry Kramer, the great right guard for the Packers during the Lombardi years (and who should be in the Hall of Fame) in his book *Distant Replay* talked about his childhood. **[READ KRAMER QUOTE]**
- Betrayal hurts—and it hurts in a way that most other injuries, sins, and failures do not. When kids go wrong (yes, they are “finding themselves” and all that), but in reality they are betraying their upbringing and betraying their parents—which is why parents grieve and worry so much. But, on the other hand, we parents who have not spent the time we should have with our kids, or did not properly train them up in the way they should go, or give them the love and acceptance they need, have betrayed them and the trust that was given to us when God gave them to us.
- Betrayal is something that we have all done, in one way or another; and it is something that we have all experienced, in one way or another; a responsibility we did not meet when someone was counting on us is an act of betrayal; every time we do not keep a promise we commit an act of betrayal; a confidence we did not keep betrays someone—the list is endless. In fact, the issue of betrayal is far deeper than we tend to think it is, as we will see. And it goes to the heart of everyone of us.

Today's passage of Scripture, **John 13:18-30**, speaks to this. It deals with what is probably the archetypal betrayal—Judas' betrayal of Jesus Christ. But it also points us to the new life that alone can heal us of the wounds we have suffered and inflicted by our own betrayals.

**[READ JOHN 13:18-30]**

**PROPOSITION:** What is this passage telling us? The context, of course, is Jesus' own betrayal by Judas. Therefore, we might miss the fact that this passage really is showing us that: **Jesus frees us from betrayal.** The grace and life that He alone is able to give us frees us whether we are betrayed or are betrayers.

**ORG. SENTENCE:** To show this is I want to 1<sup>st</sup> diagnose the problem. To do that we walk through the passage, and then will draw some conclusions regarding the nature of betrayal. Finally, we will see the solution to the problem of betrayal.

### **I. The context of today's passage:**

1. **13:1—Jesus knows he is about to die.** He is having his last meal with his closest friends: the 12 men he has taught, mentored, worked with, traveled with, lived with, prayed with, for the last 3 years. Particularly in the Middle East, where meals are vested with great significance, betrayal by one who is sharing bread is particularly heinous.

2. **This was not just any meal.** It is the Passover, which for Jews (as all of these men were) is the most important and sacred meal of the year. You normally ate it with your family. And most if not all of Jesus' disciples were married (**1 Cor 9:5**). Yet all of those men chose to eat it with Jesus instead, so close was the bond between them. And Jesus was about to transform the meaning of the Passover as the sign of the New Covenant that He was going to institute in His blood (**Luke 22:14-23**).

3. **What has Jesus just done? 13:5-17** He has just washed his disciples' feet—including the feet of Judas. That is something the lowest slave would do. Yet He, Jesus, who has all power and authority, has done that. This was not only an example to his followers. Jesus has just demonstrated to his followers in a very tangible way their supreme worth and value to Him, and the depth of His love for and commitment to them. As it says in **13:1**, **“having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.”** *But how will He be repaid?*

4. **13:18—Jesus quotes from Ps 41:9.** It is a psalm of David. The full quotation from **Ps 41:9** is: **“Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.”** Jesus could quote that as applying to Himself because He is David's true and greater son. He is the one to whom the covenant God made with David really pointed. When it says **“lifted up his heel against me,”** that can imply,

after all I've done for him and with him “he stomped on me” or “he walked out on me,” or both. The point here is that this betrayal was done by an *intimate friend*.

5. We know what Judas did. And we naturally dislike him. Yet Judas wasn't the only one who betrayed Jesus. That very night, when Jesus was arrested Mark tells us, “**they all left him and fled**” (Mark 14:52), and Peter, the leader of the group, denied 3X that he even knew Jesus. That's betrayal.

6. That's why this passage is so paradigmatic for US. WHY? That night, at the Last Supper, when Jesus said in 13:21 that “**one of you will betray me,**” no one was pointing at Judas and saying, “I bet it's him.” 13:22 tells us “**the disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking.**” Those disciples are just like us. We know that b/c in their accounts of the Last Supper Matthew and Mark report that all of the disciples started questioning Jesus about his statement that one of them would betray him. But they didn't say “**Is it I? Am I the one?**” No. Both Matthew and Mark tell us that all of the disciples were saying “**Surely NOT I?**” And Peter said, “**Even though all the others fall away, I will not!**” And Luke tells us in his account of the Last Supper that right after this “**there arose also a dispute among them as to which of them was regarded to be the greatest.**” (Luke 22:24) *Can you imagine?* The greatest and most wonderful person in the history of the world has just said that He is going to be betrayed by one of the people sitting in that very room, and they all say, “*Well it's not me—and which of us is the greatest anyway?*” Absolutely amazing. Which is one reason we know this is true. Because no one writing about this event would have included those details that just skewer themselves if it hadn't actually have happened.

7. This passage highlights both the dual nature of Christ (i.e., that He is both fully God and fully Man), and the mysterious interplay between divine sovereignty and human responsibility.

- 13:19 points out Christ's divine nature (*Jesus Christ is fully God come to earth*)—it shows His foreknowledge of these events. He was telling them “**so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am He.**” In other words: “I am the Messiah, the anointed One from God.” Back in John 10:17-18 Jesus had said “**I lay down my life . . . No one has taken it away from me, but I lay it down on my own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.**” *That should encourage us:* even in the greatest betrayal in history, Jesus is Lord over that. And he will use that betrayal to bring about the defeat of the devil, the forgiveness of sins, and giving new life—eternal life—to all those who come to Him. *He was truly victimized*, but was not a helpless pawn. On the other hand, 13:21 points out that Christ is also fully human. So even though he was laying down his life, He “**became troubled in spirit.**” Betrayal goes right to our spirit.
- *This whole drama was part of a preordained plan of God.* Jesus indicates that in 13:18-19. That is made clear in Acts 2:23; 4:27-28, which say that explicitly. And yet, Judas was NOT a puppet or robot, doing something against his will. He was responsible for his actions—*as are we for ours.* When Jesus publicly told his disciples, “one of you is going to betray me,” Judas had a choice. He knew that Jesus knew, and that his treachery would be exposed. He could have renounced his evil and begged for forgiveness. And he would have been forgiven. But he did not. And so, Luke's account of the Last Supper reports that Jesus said (Luke 22:23), “**Indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined; but woe to the man by whom He is betrayed!**”

8. Finally, this passage highlights the great contrast between how Christ loves us “to the end,” and the utter darkness of our refusal to be connected with and follow Him in our lives. In 13:26-27 where it talks about dipping the morsel and giving it to Judas, in that culture the host of the feast, as Jesus was here, sometimes would dip a particularly tasty piece into the common bowl and pass it to a guest as a mark of honor or friendship. One commentator points out, “*That Jesus could pass it so easily suggests Judas was close by, possibly on his left, the place of honor*” (Carson, *John*, 474). Even right at the end, Jesus is *honoring* Judas. It's as if He is saying: “**Judas, think about what you are doing. Don't do this. Come back from the brink.**” But Judas chose to do it. He did not come back from the brink. When 13:27 says “**Satan then entered into him**” that suggests total possession of Judas by Satan. And see how poignantly 13:30 concludes this: “**So after receiving the morsel he went out immediately; and—it—was—night.**” Back in John 3:19 Jesus had said, “**This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.**” And just before this, in John 12:46. Jesus said, “**I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness.**” When John says “**and it was night,**” he wasn't talking about the time of day so much as he was making a profound *theological* point. That is particularly so b/c Passover always begins during the first *full moon* of Spring. So *physically* it was light out, but John is saying, “*Now the powers of darkness have been given full reign.*” Now here, in that room, the final act of love and affection and honor by Jesus precipitates the final surrender to the power of evil and darkness by Judas.

## II. What conclusions can we draw concerning the nature of betrayal?

As I see it, betrayal is at the heart of what sin is. C.S. Lewis identified *pride* as the essential sin behind

all other sins. Charles Finney identified *selfishness* or *self-centeredness* as the most basic sin. Luther identified *unbelief* as the root of all sin, because unbelief amounts to believing in someone or something else more than you believe in God at the point of your sin. On the other hand, I think one could make a case that the essence of all sin is *betrayal*. WHY?

1. The essence of all sin as betrayal goes all the way back to our nature as *created beings* who have been given responsibility as God's stewards over all of creation. [READ GEN 1:26-28]

- *That is the language of stewardship.* A steward is someone who has been given authority to manage someone else's property, business affairs, even one's household. In other words, a steward receives someone else's things *in trust* to use for the benefit of the owner.
- *The thing about stewardship is this: the master, not the steward, is the ultimate owner of everything; the master gets to set the rules; and the steward is required to give account of his stewardship to the master.* God owns everything, b/c He's the creator. He owns the world he made and He owns us. The Bible makes that clear as a bell.
- *So look at the very first sin:* Adam and Eve betrayed their stewardship responsibility to God, who was also the owner of the Garden. There was *one rule*: "Don't eat from that one tree"—but they did. They betrayed the trust they had been given and betrayed their relationship with God. Or even before that, Satan, a created being of great subtlety and power, rebels against God. That's betrayal.

2. We are stewards over literally EVERYTHING over which we have any influence, both material and immaterial: our money and things; our environment; our time; our relationships; our bodies; what we put into our minds—EVERYTHING. Everything we have, and every aspect of our lives *we have received in trust from God*, to be managed for HIS ultimate glory. And, as His stewards, we will give an account to Him for how we managed our stewardship. So the Bible says, **"it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment"** and **"what is done in secret will be shouted from the rooftops."**

3. What does this mean? It means that everyone of us is in far worse shape than we think. It's only because we do not look deeply enough inside ourselves that we all tend to focus on when we've been betrayed and hurt by others, rather than how we have hurt and betrayed others, especially how we have lived lives in constant betrayal of Jesus Christ.

4. Most people I know would never associate themselves with Judas. We would positively deny that we are walking the road of Judas. Yet we are living lives of continual betrayal of the One who made us, is the source of our life, sustains us every moment that we are alive, and loves us. HOW?

- *First, there are those who reject Jesus as their Lord.* That is exactly like Judas himself. It's kind of like a kid whose mother has raised, sacrificed and done everything for, and the kid then says, "I have no need of you; I have done this all myself; I will live my life in my own way in disregard of you." That is a life of betrayal.
- *But what of us who say Jesus IS our Lord?* The Bible makes clear that genuine belief is more than just mental assent—it is a change of allegiance from the mastery of sin to the Lordship of Jesus. Yet all sin amounts to betraying the lordship of Christ and returning to the mastery of sin. Each sin betrays the stewardship trust that we have been given by God: *Each lust* betrays the stewardship trust of our mind; *poisoning our bodies* with the way we eat betrays the stewardship trust of our bodies; we betray the *stewardship trust of our money* both by how we waste it and how we hoard it; we betray the *stewardship trust of our relationships* by how we treat other people—and that directly betrays God b/c all people have been made in the image of God; how we treat His image shows what we really think of Him.
- *King David realized that, after he had committed adultery with Bathsheba and then had Bathsheba's husband Uriah killed.* Clearly he had betrayed both Bathsheba and Uriah. Yet at a deeper level, his betrayals of those people amounted to a betrayal of God. And so, in **Ps 51**, concerning his sin with Bathsheba, he cried out to God: **"Against You, You only, I have sinned, and done what is evil in Your sight."**
- *We don't think this way, but every self-centered, prideful, unbelieving thought, word, and deed ultimately is a betrayal of Jesus just as much as Judas' overt betrayal of Jesus.* Rebecca Pippert illustrates this in her book *Hope Has Its Reasons* [READ PIPPERT EXCERPT]
- *You see, there are only 2 roads or ways of life:* the way of Judas; and the way of Jesus. There is no 3<sup>rd</sup> alternative. That may be why betrayal hurts so much: every time we are betrayed we experience just a little of what Jesus experienced; and every time we betray we do just a little of what Judas did.

### III. The Solution of the problem of betrayal.

As the story by Pippert shows us, the only full and lasting solution to the problem of betrayal is found in Jesus Himself. In fact, Jesus indicated that very thing in today's passage: [READ 13:20]

That is the answer: *being united with Jesus*. One commentator puts it like this: **“This verse powerfully ties the disciples to Jesus, and therefore serves as a foil for the failure of Judas Iscariot. The mission of Jesus is here assigned the highest theological significance, the most absolute binding authority—the authority of God himself. Failure to close with Christ is failure to know God. And because his disciples represent him to the world, their mission, their ministry, takes on precisely the same absolute significance.”** (Carson, *John*, 471)

1. The betrayal of Jesus led to the cross. Yet it was only through shedding His blood and dying on the cross that Christ—in the plan of God—died for us. He paid the price God demanded to atone for our sins—a price we could never pay ourselves, b/c we are at heart still betrayers. His resurrection from the dead demonstrates that the Father accepted Christ's sacrifice. Christ says that, just as He rose from the dead, He will raise us as well. If we are in Him, He and He alone gives us forgiveness, a new heart, a new spirit, a new life. Rebecca Pippert puts it this way [Pippert #2]

2. Close with Jesus. If He is your 1<sup>st</sup> and greatest and ultimate frame of reference, then everything else—every betrayal you have committed or suffered—will fall into its proper perspective. Just as Christ's own betrayal by Judas was part of a vast overall plan, so you will see your own betrayals as part of the great tapestry or mosaic that God is making of YOUR life. B/c He IS fashioning your life

3. The reason why we betray, or become unhinged when someone else betrays us, is b/c in one way or another, we are betrayers of Christ—we want to fashion our own lives w/o regard for the one who made us, who sustains us every moment of our lives, and to whom we are accountable. We take the morsels of life from Jesus hand and then lift up our heels against Him by paying Him no regard whatsoever. But with HIM, that *guilt* we can't seem to forgive in ourselves can be forgiven (just like in Pippert's example). And with HIM we also are able to forgive the *hurt* of the betrayals we have suffered, b/c we know how profoundly we ourselves have been forgiven.

4. Only by recognizing that we really are “worse than we think we are,” can we be cleansed and healed. In Christ we have someone who will never, ever betray us, even when we betray Him. And we can be freed to live a new life out of gratitude and grace—instead of continually struggling and failing to forgive ourselves for our betrayals or forgive others for their betrayals. It's not through self-help. We've all tried that, and we will always fail. Christ is the ONLY WAY we will have *new life*, and KNOW that we have new life; we will *have hope* and KNOW that we have hope; and we will *have the power to forgive*, and KNOW we have the power to forgive.

- *Perfect example is from right here in this church: Sally Buss.* (She's not here right now, so I can say nice things about her). As many of you know, Sally was betrayed and tx'd terribly by 2 husbands for years. But today, in Christ, she is radiant. She is not trapped or shackled by her past. She is an inspiration to me. And when she returns she is someone, I think, who could minister to and encourage you if you are dealing with issues relating to betrayal.
- B/c remember: We are not alone—we have the power and spirit of Christ, who is alive; but we also have His body, each other, the church, to help us. Through the help of people like pastor Wade and Sally, we can see what new life in Christ looks like. And we will no longer be betrayers of others like Judas, but by His grace, and power, and spirit, will be forgivers of others like Jesus.