

KINGS NORTON BAPTIST CHURCH

Sunday 10th January 2021 10 am

Judas Iscariot (Guard your heart)

Welcome to all Corona advice

Opening Scripture

Hymn MP 20 All peoples that on earth do dwell

Scripture Psalm 5 (page 544)

Prayer

George Verwer 2021 video (<https://youtu.be/181DzhCTh3I>)

Notices

Prayer and Lord's prayer

Reading Matt 26:14-30, 47-54, 27:1-10 page 996

Hymn MP 788 & 792

Sermon Learning the lessons
from Judas Iscariot

Hymn MP 632 Thank you for the cross

Closing Prayer:

Close



Welcome and pray

- I was in my late twenties when my father's health started to fail. He has some mini strokes, some skin cancer and his good health gradually gave way. It was disheartening to see it. It is sad to watch someone deteriorate physically.

However sad that is, watching someone deteriorate physically - to see someone deteriorate spiritually is worse. That is what we have this morning.

Continuing in our series of 'People Jesus met' the time has come to look at Judas. Like you I wish it could be someone we could follow. But it is someone we can learn from.

And should learn from - Prominent in scripture he should not be overlooked.

We can learn as much from those who get it wrong as those who do right.

1a

Learning from a -ve's teaches us more forcefully. Keep to the path has less weight than 'do not trespass', or 'keep off the grass'.

The positive commandment is clarified and reinforced by the 'Do Not'

The happy man in Ps 1 is first told what not to do: Do not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. It is only then that he can do what he should which is '....'

So we come to Judas. The simple message of Judas for you and I this morning is to guard your heart, to watch over your heart.

Proverbs 4:23 **Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.**

Three sections this morning: Judas had chances, choices & consequences x2

First some Background

The name 'Judas' is the Hellenised / Graecianised form of 'Judah'. He was known as Judas Iscariot to distinguish him from the others Judas' in the NT. ISCARIOT indicates he came from Carioth or Kerioth, a city in Judah, Jos 15:25.

Like the rest he probably obeyed the call of Jesus, heard John the Baptist's preaching and had his Messianic hopes. Or was it later when Jesus returned through Judea with His followers as recorded in Joh 3:22. We don't know.

It is not how we start but how we finish that matters, the rest sentimentality.

Just as a couple whose marriage has ended in divorce look nostalgically back to that first meeting, those happy early days - which are no more!

Chances - Judas had plenty of chances

Judas was one of the apostles of our Lord, one of the 'Twelve'. He seems to have possessed the full confidence of his fellow apostles. Notice he is always placed last in the list because of his subsequent treachery.

As one of the band of men chosen by Christ to be with him he shared in the close fellowship of the group. He would have been privy to all the Lord's teaching, his care, his provision and his protection. He was in a very privileged place.

Judas would have witnessed the miracles, seen at close quarters Christ compassion towards the poor, seen his power to heal the sick and to remove the unclean spirits from the possessed. He was there when they feed the five thousand and one of those going to round collect up the remains.

1b

As the Twelve went from village to village to preach good news of the Kingdom Judas received the same powers to work miracles, to **heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons.** Mt 10:7-8

He appears to have had some business mindedness and entrusted with the common purse. Money used for both their keep and to give to the poor. Some women supported them in this ministry from their private means.

Like any group travelling together, or working together they got to know each other well. Everyone's character is brought out as **it would be, is, with us here.** There would be those who want to be first, the strong personalities, the weak, the quiet, the thoughtful, the proud, the humble. There's impetuous Peter, unsure Philip, skeptical Thomas, thoughtful John.

Eleven of the apostles went off to serve the Kingdom. Tradition has it that they suffered and all died as martyrs for Jesus their Lord and King.

So why not Judas? Was there something fundamentally different about him? Why did he go on to betray Jesus? Did Judas plan from the beginning to betray Jesus? to be a spy, a plant? Surely not, there is no hint of that.

So let's look at Judas' 'Choices' - his choices

Why did Judas go on to betray Jesus? Was it he didn't like having his greed exposed? Was it jealousy of Jesus or others? Or was it disappointment of not seeing Jesus as the national leader. We will come back to that.

One thing we do know is that he was greedy and took money out the purse. Jesus, who knows all men's hearts gave many warnings against the love of money. Was this with Judas in mind? To deter him, to call him back from making his fatal and final choice. Mt 13:22-23 Lu 16:11 Mr 10:25-26

Jesus had said **"But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal."** Mt 6:20

He seemed to disregard Jesus' warnings concerning greed and hypocrisy.

✚ To ignore warnings is to make you less able to listen to the next one.

- Warning signs are like sentries or guards to help protect us.

Moral warnings help us guard our heart against our natural tendency to evil.

Jesus warned him as he does you and I against hiding away sin in the heart, about pretense, about appearing to be a follower when inside you have no intention of doing so. That is hypocrisy, God hates hypocrisy. **Jesus spoke to**

2a

his disciples (Judas is there), **saying: "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known.** Lu 12:1-2 ... In other words "Watch out Judas, don't hide it, you can't hide it, be honest with yourself"

✚ What follows is Judas' slippery slope – and Christ's gracious appeals.

- Like a parent who sees bad habits developing in a child; like lying

John, whose selfless character was so opposite to Judas, delineates the successive stages in his fall. We start in John 6

After Jesus speaks of being the bread of life we have the first recorded hint given by Christ of his Judas' badness. Then, a year before the crucifixion: Jesus says **"Yet there are some of you who do not believe."** John then adds these words: **For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him."** Joh 6:64

John explains to the reader who this is **"He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, was later to betray him."** Joh 6:71. In other words Judas was already known to Jesus as being one in spirit with those who were turning back. Jesus' appeal to those who can hear, those who should believe and who should receive life in Him but don't. Many of his disciples desert Him. **"From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him."** Joh 6:66 . One of the saddest verses in the Bible.

But Judas didn't desert him – not then. Did he pick up the warning? Or did he in not hearing his name mentioned excuse his heart and say "no, not me?" Did he lull his fears of not being exposed and continue as if one of the faithful?

He was starting to live a double life. He was on the slippery slope. It starts with denying truth and believing something about yourself which is not true.

✚ *If I can paraphrase Jonathan Edwards who says: Some are unsteady. They may feel some convictions but it doesn't last. After a while, they will begin to make excuses, and give up their duty; that is their disciplines and say to themselves, "there's no hurt in such and such things; and continue to practise them without feeling any great guilt. This giving in to temptation, leads to more excuses, less conviction, and the result? a deeper hardening in sin.*

2b

Jesus sensing what is going on in Judas's heart is now direct: "**have I not chosen you the Twelve, Yet one of you x2 is a devil**" Jn 6:70. He doesn't say merely "demon," the Greek always for the evil spirit possessing a body, but "devil," used only of Satan to whom Judas was now yielding himself.

The next time is at the meal celebrating Lazarus being raised to life, In the shadow of Jesus' impending burial Mary pours out the expensive perfume. What deep love is expressed as she washes his feet with her hair. Did her love kindle a sympathetic spark in Judas? No. Rather her act of love towards her Lord which revealed her heart - at the same time exposed Judas' true heart. What did he do? He complained about the waste of money.

- When something is said or done that means your hard heart is 'shown up' how do you respond? Does it make you worse?

Judas rather than thinking "why don't I love Jesus like she does" says instead: "**Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages.**" £20,000,

John adds some useful insight into Judas **He did not say this because he cared about the poor - but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.**" Joh 12:6

Pretending to be zealous in the administration of the money, he appropriated the funds to his own use, hiding his greed as it were behind a cloak.

In his thinking he led himself into temptation...

all that waste – better the money is used – put it here into the purse.

He was treasurer, and was a thief. Satan knew his weakness, his covetousness and put it into his heart to betray the Lord for money.

- ✚ What is your weakness? Do you know it? Satan knows it. Be on your guard. Be careful if you handle money - especially other people's money.

His evil greed affects others, his complaining lead other disciples to join in. To which Jesus replies "**Leave her alone,**" Jesus replied. "**It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial.**" Joh 12:7

Burial! The Lord's mention of His "**burial**" meant suddenly Judas' hopes were dashed. If Jesus was going to die and leave them - gone too were his ambitious hopes of sharing in a Messianic kingdom of power and wealth.

Why hang around this lost cause! The Jewish leaders in wanting Jesus dead drove Judas to his last desperate shift to clutch at 30 pieces of silver, the paltry price of a slave, Ex 21:32 itself a prediction of the prophecy in Zec 11:12-13 and betray his Lord who came to be a slave. Php 2:7 and was treated as a slave.

Then lastly as Jesus washes the disciple's feet in the upper room he says: "**A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.**" For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean." Joh 13:10-11

John again shows us Jesus' loving warning to Judas "resist, resist this evil". As God did with Cain "**Sin is crouching at your door but you must master it**"

- ✚ Judas like Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden Judas was in the most privileged place. Jesus the Holy One of God, held out his hand to him.

Judas is like Gehazi the servant of Elisha 2Ki 5:26 expand

Coming to church, listening to Jesus' words being spoken, you are free to respond and yet are you doing so? Why not? Is there a hardening going on inside you

So with Judas' sad decline, he is not listening to Jesus' warnings, the spiritual gives way to the material, the eternal is sold for the here and now.

Years ago in London we were in my friend's Mini, I was driving when I nearly hit a car that came at me from the side at a junction. It was in Clerkenwell, I can remember it vividly now. Why did it happen?? Because I had jumped the lights. Why did I jump the lights? Because I had become an amber gambler and gradually gradually I ended up taking more risks - till the result - bang.

This hardening of heart surfaces in action, it always does. as a cork bobs up

The betrayal

At the last supper Jesus is with his disciples and troubled in spirit at Judas' presence, There's is a huge amount one could say as what went on here, it concludes with Jesus **dipping the piece of bread, he then gave it to Judas Iscariot. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him.** "**What you are about to do, do quickly,**" Jesus told him, Joh 13:26,27

At which point Judas departs and "it was night" when darkness reigns

Dipping a morsel of unleavened bread in the soup of bitter herbs and handing it to Judas, is a final act of love as to a friend. Would Judas be moved to relent, soften his heart?? No it was too late, he had sold his soul to evil. It only stirred up his own hatred. How it must have hurt the Lord -

Ps 55 says **"If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were raising himself against me, I could hide from him. But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend, with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship as we walked with the throng at the house of God."** Ps 55:12-14

Again PS 109 **"In return for my friendship they accuse me, but I am a man of prayer. They repay me evil for good, and hatred for my friendship."** Ps 109:4-5
Satan took possession of him to ensure the success of the betrayal.

In the garden with the detachment of soldiers Judas **"Going at once to Jesus, said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him."** Mt 26:49 to which Jesus replied: **"Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"** Lu 22:48 Terrible – "I would never do that" I hear you say. Those who profess faith but resist Christ's Lordship in their lives do just the same it's Judas' hypocrisy.

So lastly the consequences

Jesus the Son of God was betrayed, arrested, condemned and crucified. When Judas saw the result of his actions a terrible remorse took possession of him. He tries to put things right by handing the money back, not possible, they won't have it. He casts down before them the price of Christ's blood, crosses the gloomy valley of Hinnom, and hangs himself, Mt 27:3-10.

Luke, in Ac 1:18, adds that he fell headlong and his guts spilled out, probably by the breaking of the rope or branch. The steep hillside south of the valley of Hinnom might well be the scene of such a twofold death.

If that was a dreadful consequence; what of Jesus' words: **"The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."** Mt 26:24

✚ **Eternal punishment in hell - that's a dreadful consequence.**

Those 'little' ' ' rebellions thoughts proud thoughts early on have now become fully grown and born their hideous fruit.

No-one would question his guilt. - But he is also the one destined to destruction. **None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled."** Joh 17:12 Or as the AV "the son of perdition,"

The same wording is used in 2nd Thess of the one **doomed to destruction**. In other words the one facing utter destruction, eternal misery in hell.

God works out his sovereign plan by handing people over to what they want, want to live for self? Then it's his plan that you bear the responsibility

The potter's clay, the emblem of God's sovereignty turned out to be the potter's field spoken of in Zec 11:12-13. See also Jer19:11.

Like Gehazi mentioned earlier Judas had planned good things for himself - but the only possession he purchased was a bloody burial place.

Judas' name connects him with Judah who sold his brother Joseph into slavery. Joseph for his part is a type of the Holy descendant of Judah, Jesus Christ who gave up his life for his brothers and whose spotless innocence was testified to in Judas' confession: **"I have betrayed innocent blood"** Mt 27:4

The message of Judas is the message of the slippery slope the creeping sin.

Like automatic cars that creep forward if your foot is not on the break.

■ Or like the 'kick the can' game where as you turn away those opposing you creep up behind you.

✚ **Who here has still to learn the lessons of Judas Iscariot?**

The gradual slippery slope, not a physical deterioration but the hardening, a sickness of the soul, all the gracious chances held out to you, the appeals, the choices, - will lead to consequences, eternal consequences.

Don't waste your one life, don't mess it up through neglect. Don't let 'little' compromises turn into big ones. Deal with things early, respond to prompts, listen to your conscience. What a solemn warning Judas is for us against the creep of greed, of hypocrisy, and of all unfaithfulness, Mt 26:34 Joh 17:12 Ac 1:25.

Jesus warns you and I: **What profit a man to gain the world and lose his soul**

Your soul and its eternal destiny is far more important than your qualification, who you will marry, what you will do, where you will live.

Pr 4:23 **Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.** Your heart is a key part of the body, symbolic of your very life, **Above all else.** Have you? Will you? Or is it too late? Will you pray with me now... Lord **Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight. Turn my heart towards your statutes and not towards selfish gain. Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word."** Ps 119:35-37

AMEN

end