

## Betrayal, Love and Denial

Մատնել, Միբել եւ Ուրանալ

**John 13:18-38**

Has anyone ever betrayed you?

How about someone from your inner circle who betrayed you? You family, your friend?

Last Sunday we studied the act of Jesus as a servant-leader, the Messiah washing the feet of the twelve disciples, including the ones who would betray or deny him, or like Thomas who wanted to see some evidence to believe that Jesus was risen.

Jesus washed their feet, and also asked them to wash each other's feet. I left you with an assignment to ask yourself, "How do I wash feet of somebody in my church, or community, or my family?" I pray that you asked yourself those questions.

Let us go back to the upper room. Only a few hours remained before they arrest Jesus.

Three topics I see in this section:

### **Betrayal, Love and Denial.**

**"I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill this passage of Scripture: 'He who shared my bread has turned against me.'<sup>19</sup> "I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am who I am. <sup>20</sup>Very truly I tell you, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me."<sup>21</sup> After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me." (John 13:18-21 NIV11)**

Jesus said to his disciples that having a bath would make them clean – but not all of them. Jesus knew that one of them would betray him, namely Judas Iscariot. Please notice that this topic of betrayal is not appearing here suddenly. It came earlier, too.

**Yet there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. (John 6:64 NIV11)**

Then Jesus replied, "Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!" <sup>71</sup> (He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, was later to betray him.) (John 6:70-71 NIV11)

But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, <sup>5</sup> "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages." (John 12:4-5 NIV11)

The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. (John 13:2 NIV11)

Jesus knew his disciples very well. He chose them.

**"I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill this passage of Scripture."**

The theologian **Raymond Brown** translates this passage like this:

I know the kind of men I chose. But the purpose is to have the scripture fulfilled..."<sup>1</sup>

We see here God's Sovereign plan. And here is the scripture:

**Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me.** (Psalm 41:9 NIV11)

Eating bread together is a sign of friendship, intimacy.

### **Jesus was troubled in spirit**

Jesus soul was agitated, troubled, distressed...

This is third time we see Jesus is this condition.

Lazarus' tomb (11:33); at the vision of the cross (12:21); and predicting his betrayal (13:21)<sup>2</sup>

Brothers and sisters, there is war between light and darkness. In this context, one of his own will chose darkness. That is painful.

Even though Jesus knew everything that was going to happen, he was human. He experienced all the emotions that any human would feel.

### **Lord, who is it?**

<sup>22</sup> His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. <sup>23</sup> One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. <sup>24</sup> Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him which one he means."

<sup>25</sup> Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?"

<sup>26</sup> Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. <sup>27</sup> As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him.

**So Jesus told him, “What you are about to do, do quickly.”<sup>28</sup> But no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him.<sup>29</sup> Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the festival, or to give something to the poor.<sup>30</sup> As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night. (John 13:22-30 NIV11)**

The disciples are anxious. I can hear the murmur in the room, “Who is this one?” Who will speak first? Peter, of course. Peter asks the beloved one (John our author) who is reclining next to Jesus and is leaning his head towards Jesus. I am assuming next to Jesus (maybe on the left side) was Judas, because Jesus gave the piece of bread to him.

The title “whom Jesus loved” appears here for the first time. Later at the cross (19:26-27), then at the tomb (20:2-9), and at the resurrection in Galilee (21:1, 20-23), and the very end his authority will be “stamped” onto this Gospel (21:24-25)<sup>3</sup> At the closing of his gospel, John says **“this is the disciple who testifies to these things who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.”**

Coming back to Judas, until the last-minute Jesus shows respect to Judas. Washes his feet, eats the eucharist meal with him (Synoptic gospels), dips a piece of bread in the dish and puts the bread in his mouth (like the wedding cake you feed each other). Jesus shows respect and intimate love and care to the man who would betray him. In return Judas would kiss Jesus later as a sign of betrayal.

### **Satan’s role here is noticed.**

**As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him (27)**

Satan controls Judas now. How eerie is this.

They had spent at least three years working together. The fact that he was the group’s treasurer (13:29) no doubt tells us that he held a place of trust and esteem.

What was it like for Jesus to wash this man’s feet? What was it like for Judas? Even Jesus’ gesture of giving Judas a piece of bread? It is mark of honor or friendship.

*Like in communion, we take the bread-the body of Jesus.*

What happened to him when he took the bread?

When God is doing His work, Satan wants to interfere and do his work.

Judas could not stand there anymore. “There is too much light”.

**As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.(30)**

One more time I see the struggle between light and darkness. Between truth and falsehood, between God and Satan. Judas became a vessel of God's opponents. We see again Judas leaves, and the author says, "it was night."

One more time let us read John 1:5

**The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

Again and again, we see one of his own chooses the darkness even though he was exposed to the light. This can happen to us today.

Later we see Peter will deny Jesus.

In Luke's account of the Last Supper Jesus says to Peter:

"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. <sup>32</sup> But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." <sup>33</sup> But he replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death." (Luke 22:31-32 NIV11)

Satan can attack, but God is at work in our lives.

How tragically the life of Judas ends.

In Judas, we see the tension between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Jesus loved Judas until the end. But Judas chose to reject the love of God. He chose Satan.

D. A. Carson writes, "not even evil takes place outside of his (God's) sovereignty, yet the evil is not chargeable to him: it is always chargeable to secondary agents, to secondary causes."<sup>4</sup>

Same can happen to us. Power and greed can lead us to choose wrong sides.

### **Love One another**

<sup>31</sup> When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. <sup>32</sup> If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.

<sup>33</sup> "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.

<sup>34</sup> "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:31-35 NIV11)

Now Jesus is talking to the eleven disciples. Jesus is addressing his own.

### **Those words will be Jesus' farewell discourses.**

When people are leaving this world, they will often share their final words. Jacob said last words in Genesis 49. Moses spoke farewell words in Deuteronomy 31-34. Jesus obeyed God, and his life glorifies the Father. And since God the Father is glorified His son Jesus is glorified as well.

-Jesus encourages and comforts them (Next week John 14),

-He also urges them to be obedient to Jesus and pass His love. (13:34, 15:2)

-He promises the Holy Spirit to indwell and empower them after his departure (14: 17,26; 15:26; 16:3,13)

-The phrase "**new commandment**" is used only here in John, but it occurs three other times, in 1 and 2 John. The phrase "**love one another**" occurs 13 times in the NT, four times in the upper room discourse.

Jesus says, '**new commandment**'. What is this new commandment?

Love, of course, is central in many parts of the Old Testament. The book Leviticus (19.18) commanded the Israelites to love their neighbors as themselves. But the newness isn't so much a matter of never having heard words like this before. It's a matter of **the mode of this love, the depth and type of this love.**<sup>5</sup>

Note how this command follows immediately after the **footwashing**.

What is the new command?

#### **Love one another. As I have loved you (34)**

His love is the source of love which helps us love one another. **We wash feet, because He washed us first.**

This is New Covenant, this is new Messianic age. This is the kingdom of God where we love one another.

Question: do we love only the inner circle? The church? The believers?

this love starts from the inner circle of disciples (the community), to the world.

Carson puts it well:

"At the risk of confounding logic, it is not so much that Christians are to love the world less, as that they are to love one another more. Better put, their love for each other ought to be a reflection of their new status and experience as the children of God, reflecting the mutual love of the Father and the Son and imitating the love that has been shown them; their love for the world is the love of compassion, forbearance, evangelism, empathy -- since all true Christians recognize they can never be more than mere beggars telling others where there is bread. "<sup>6</sup>

The theme of community love, while not compromising our commitments to the world, matches another perspective in John concerning the world.

### **Peter will Deny Jesus**

<sup>36</sup> Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going?"

Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later."

<sup>37</sup> Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you."

<sup>38</sup> Then Jesus answered, "Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times! (John 13:36-38 NIV11)

Do you realize Peter does not hear what Jesus has said about new commandment?

"Lord where are going? Why can't we come with you?" Typical of Peter. we will elaborate further next week what Jesus said about where he is going...(John 14)

There is time for everything, Peter. First, Jesus should die and rise. Then your turn comes to take the cross and follow Jesus.

According to tradition, Peter was crucified upside down.

But Jesus challenges Peter saying that: Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times, Peter....

And we all know that he did.

There was a major difference between Judas and Peter. Judas had a choice to repent. He chose not to. Peter did repent, and he was on fire after Pentecost as the faithful disciple of Jesus.

### **Application:**

- 1.How can I continue to love my community? Who needs love? How about out of my circle?**
- 2. Chose light. Fight against darkness, against evil, resist evil.**

This week we will commemorate Vartanantz.

Here is a quote from Vartan's speech to his soldiers as recoded by Yeghishe (the 5<sup>th</sup> Century historian):

He who thought that we put on Christianity like a garment has now discovered that, as man cannot change the color of the skin, so he cannot and

will never succeed in altering our minds, because the foundations [of Christianity] are firmly set on an immovable rock.<sup>6</sup>

1570 years ago, our ancestors did not deny their faith. It was costly, and until today it is costly for Armenia. We lost the war 2020, but we did not lose our faith. The same challenge we in the US face, too. Let us keep our eyes on Jesus who is our rock and salvation.

Let us approach the table of the LORD.

1. Raymond Brown, *John* (2) P.459
2. Gary M. Bruce, *NIV Application Commentary* p372
3. *ibid* p373
4. D. A. Carson, *How Long, O Lord?* P 189
5. N.T. Wright, *John For Everyone (volume2)*. P 55
6. D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* P 485

Additional notes from NIV Commentary

Here we have a man who stood closer to the revelation of God than many. Judas heard Jesus teach and witnessed his miracles. While Peter expresses doubts about Jesus' announced crucifixion and Thomas later doubts the resurrection, we have no description of Judas that shows him as anything but faithful. In the Upper Room, Peter refuses to have his feet washed. But Judas (apparently) complies, accepting the humble role of Jesus. Something happens to intervene in this man's pilgrimage. He changes sides. To use John's language, he flirts with the darkness to such a degree that he becomes one of its own. (P384)

Is this betrayal a possibility that pertains not simply to the circle of Jesus' immediate followers, but to his followers today as well? The setting of the Upper Room was a spiritual turning point in which Jesus was doing profound spiritual work. But at the same time, where God is most deeply at work, Satan's attack is that much more acute. It is significant that in Luke's version of the Lord's Supper, at this point Jesus tells Simon Peter that Satan wanted him as well (Luke 22:31–32). This is stunning. Satan's desire to sabotage the followers of Jesus reached more levels than we realize. Are those most intimately connected with Christ's life and work today similarly vulnerable?

Judas is a parable and a warning. We read his story as "insiders," thinking it depicts someone else. But Judas is a more disturbing figure than Pilate or Caiaphas or any of the Jewish leaders. He saw the light and understood it, but chose the darkness anyway. "Judas is the reminder that every day is judgment day and that on any day some faithful follower, like Judas—or like you and me—might turn tail on the light and stumble out into the darkness, caught up in evil or caught up by evil's prince."<sup>48</sup>

We too, then, are in danger—in danger of misunderstanding Jesus and of being seduced by our own dreams and visions for life. In doing this work, we betray Jesus. Paul is brutally honest with the threat of this possibility. He warns about those who may "follow Satan" (1 Tim. 5:15) and who may be snared by the devil "to do his will" (2 Tim. 2:26). John's own pastoral experience made him face Christians who knew the faith well but corrupted it and stood against Christ. He named such people "antichrists" (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 1:7).

Is this a description of famous theological heretics? Is it a profile of people like John G. Bennett, who stole over eighty million dollars from evangelical organizations in a fraudulent investment scheme?<sup>49</sup> Is it believers who leave the community of Christ and then do irreparable harm to the

church? In different degrees, it is all of these things. The “betrayal” is someone who “hands over” Christ to his enemies and who (unwittingly or not) serves the forces of darkness rather than the light. (P 385)