

Treachery Exposed In Marvelous Love

By David Harrell

Bible Text: John 13:17-30
Preached on: Sunday, March 1, 2015

I would invite you to take your Bibles this morning and turn to John's Gospel, chapter 13 where we will resume our verse-by-verse study and this morning I've entitled my discourse to you "Treachery Exposed In Marvelous Love." The text we'll be looking at specifically begins in verse 17 through verse 30. Let me read this to you. Jesus says,

17 "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. 18 I do not speak of all of you. 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. 23 There was reclining on Jesus' breast one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. 24 Simon Peter therefore gestured to him, and said to him, "Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking." 25 He, leaning back thus on Jesus' breast, said to Him, "Lord, who is it?" 26 Jesus therefore answered, "That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him." So when He had dipped the morsel, He took and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. 27 After the morsel, Satan then entered him. Therefore Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly." 28 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. 30 So after receiving the morsel he went out immediately; and it was night.

We have before us a very fascinating scene. We have a picture of one of Jesus' disciples that loved him and one that hated him. If you were to meet both of these men, you would like both of them but one of them had a profound sense of indebtedness for the Lord's grace in his life and the other one resented Jesus because he wasn't meeting his expectations. One was a true disciple, one was a pretender; a man that was a counterfeit Christian; a man with a pretense of discipleship who wore a mask of devotion.

Folks, we can learn much from this scenario. Knowing the rivalry that was building among the 12 and knowing how they had been jockeying for position in the kingdom that they thought was about to be inaugurated and knowing the proclivity we all have to

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promote ourselves, the one who was most holy assumed the role of the lowest slave and washed the feet of those who are least holy, even the feet of Judas, knowing already that he had made arrangements to betray him. Here we have a stunning lesson of self-abasing love that prefers the interest of others over our own. In fact, in verse 17, Jesus says, "If you know these things, blessed," or in other words "happy are you if you do them." In other words, the man or the woman whose life is characterized by this kind of selfless love will be rewarded with unassailable happiness. This has nothing to do with earning salvation because the moment we are born again, we are declared righteous. We have been washed by the blood of the Lamb. A positional cleansing has taken place that never needs to be repeated as Jesus made clear. But the obedience Jesus asks of us has everything to do with the believer's need for an ongoing purification of the heart that accumulates the filth of the world and hinders us from having communion with God and enjoying him.

Pride is an amazing thing. Hypocrisy is a devastating thing. Self-will tends to blind us to who we really are. In fact, within a few hours of this scenario, Peter's pride would cause him to fall hard in his threefold denial of Jesus but we know he learned his lesson well because later he admonishes all the saints in 1 Peter 5:5 and says, "clothe yourselves," all of you, "with humility toward one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

Jesus' lesson on humility and selfless love is followed by a fascinating scene and in this scene, John paints some contrasts, contrasts between the hypocrisy and the diabolical malice of Judas contrasted with the sinless purity of Jesus. Here we see the wickedness of human treachery and how it is exposed in marvelous love. Here we see the most notorious of all hypocrites unmasked by the Son of God who knows the hearts of all men. I pray that we can grasp the magnitude of what the Holy Spirit has for us in this remarkable scene. Perhaps a simple outline will help. Three simple points. First we will see an announcement of predetermined treachery; secondly, we will examine an affirmation of love accepted; and finally, an act of love rejected. And I would submit to you that those of us who love Christ will love him all the more after what we examine here today.

Notice closely what Jesus says in verse 17, "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. I do not speak of all of you." Jesus knows of the vile heart of Judas. Jesus is saying, "There is an exception among you. Not all of you will be able to experience the joy of this kind of happiness." Then he says, "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.'" This is, number 1. An announcement of predetermined treachery. Here we can see that not all election pertains to salvation. Here Jesus refers to the choice of 12 men to be apostles, not the eternal salvation of their souls. Jesus' words in John 6:70 parallel this

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passage. There he says, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?"

It's interesting where election to salvation is described in Scripture it is inevitably the work of the Father, whereas in the New Testament, the unique calling of individuals to some special work or some service is usually ascribed to the Lord Jesus. That question is this: why would Jesus choose Judas to be one of the 12 knowing all along that he would be a devil that would betray him? Well, Jesus answers this at the end of verse 18, "it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats my bread has lifted up his heel against Me.'" Jesus quotes Psalm 41:9 which says, "Even my close friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me." This phrase "lifted up his heel against me" carries the idea of some brutal, vicious force; one who has inflicted the most contemptible and painful rejection possible. Perhaps this is a reference to Ahitophel, David's close advisor who betrayed him and assisted his son Absalom in that rebellion. But whoever it was, it was someone close to him, someone he trusted, perhaps even a family member. According to near Eastern hospitality, betrayal by a guest sharing bread with you was exceptionally evil. If you've ever been betrayed, you know the pain of such unexpected malice. Judas hated Jesus so much that he wanted to stomp his head in the ground is the idea.

Now, it's very important for Jesus to bring up the subject of his betrayal in order to prepare his disciples for what lay ahead. He did not want them to think that he had made a mistake in choosing Judas once they saw what he would do nor did he want them to think his betrayal and his subsequent death caught him by surprise. Such misunderstanding might cause them to conclude that Jesus wasn't all that he claimed to be. So by appealing to Old Testament Scripture that predicted a close friend would betray him, he proved that he was indeed the Son of God who knows the end from the beginning, that none of this surprised him. It confirmed that all that was about to happen including Judas's treacherous betrayal was part of God's eternal sovereign plan of redemption.

So in verse 19, he says, "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." Literally, "So that you may believe that I Am." The word "he" you will notice is in italics in your Bibles. It's because it's not in the original language. I Am, you will recall, is the ineffable name of God, the name by which God revealed himself to Moses in Exodus 3. Jesus is simply saying, "I want you to know that I am God. I am the omniscient, omnipotent, sovereign God of the universe who not only knows the end from the beginning, I am the one who has decreed and predestined my plan from eternity past so don't be shocked by the coming betrayal." Jesus later will emphasize this very truth in his prayer to the Father in John 17:12 when he says of the disciples, "While I was with them, I kept them in Your name which You have given

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Me; I have guarded them and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction that the Scripture might be fulfilled."

Now, had Jesus not laid this important groundwork, imagine how difficult it would have been for the remaining 11 disciples to come to terms with not only the shocking betrayal done by one of their own brothers but also the cross. But because of his careful instruction, we know that they did not scatter in confusion and fear and desperation when Jesus was crucified. Yes, they were terribly shocked and concerned and they were afraid but they persevered until the resurrection which not only vindicated Christ but also revived their struggling faith. Once again, we witness the power of the word of God, don't we? The power of the word to equip and to edify and to encourage. In Psalm 55, we have another prediction of Judas's betrayal. Can't you just hear Jesus saying, "For it is not an enemy who taunts me," beginning in verse 12, "then I could bear it; it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me, then I could hide from him. But it is you, a man my equal, my companion, my familiar friend. We used to take sweet counsel together. Within God's house we walked in the throng." Verse 20, "My companion stretched out his hand against his friends. He violated his covenant. His speech was smooth as butter yet war was in his heart. His words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords." This proves the Lord Jesus had divine knowledge of what lay before him. None of it caught him by surprise as some would have us believe.

In Zechariah 11, beginning in verse 12, we have yet another prophecy that offers accurate details concerning the Messiah's betrayal, even the exact amount of money the traitor would receive for his treason. There we read, "Then I said to them, if it seems good to you, give me my wages, but if not, keep them. And they weighed out as my wages 30 pieces of silver. Then the Lord said to me, throw it to the potter, the lordly price at which I was priced by them. So I took the 30 pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord to the potter." This is exactly what Judas did after Christ's death. If you go to Matthew 27, you will read how that the 30 pieces of silver were picked up and then used to purchase a potter's field and so on. Prophecy is an amazing thing, isn't it? There is nothing, beloved, there is nothing that validates the divine origin of Scripture more than the precise, literal fulfillment of its prophecies.

So Jesus chose Judas knowing full well the wickedness of his character and the diabolical choices he would make. But like the cross, this was all part of God's plan. You will recall in Acts 4:28, we read that he had predestined all of this to take place. In Acts 2:23, Jesus was delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God. However, it is very important for us to remember that even though God is sovereign even over the wicked acts that men perform, his sovereignty in no way excuses those acts. Judas was never coerced to do what he did. He acted freely and willingly. Of his own free will, he chose to reject and betray Christ and then God used Judas's treachery to accomplish his

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eternal purposes in redemption. What Judas meant for evil, God meant for good. Once again, we find ourselves confronted with the unfathomable mystery of the sovereignty of God and man's responsibility, an enigma that we cannot understand nor does God even try to explain knowing that we couldn't understand it but one which is perfectly compatible in his mind.

Think of it here in the case of Judas: Judas freely chose to follow Christ yet he would not have done so had Christ had not first chosen him. Though Judas's treachery was part of God's predetermined plan, we see he acted on his own volition. Jesus described this amazing synergy in Luke 22:22, there we read, "For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined," there is God's sovereignty, then the next part of the sentence says, "but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!" There is Judas's responsibility.

Moreover, the biblical record reveals that Jesus did not want Judas to live in hypocrisy to betray him. Jesus gave him every opportunity to repent from his sin, to place his faith in him. You remember in Matthew 26:24 he says, "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." Judas heard that. What an opportunity to fall on his face in broken repentance and be saved.

But despite all of his privileges, despite all of the warnings that Judas had, his heart only grew harder against the one who showed such love to him, the one who called him to repentant faith along with countless others. John MacArthur says, "Consider this: if God were responsible for making Judas what he was, Jesus would have pitied him rather than rebuking him. Judas Iscariot then, in accord with his own will, was the chosen instrument of God to betray Christ and thereby bring about his death. God in accord with his perfect will, his consummate righteousness and his inscrutable wisdom, used that horrific evil to accomplish an infinite good thus God turned Judas's wickedness and the devil's evil intentions on their head to the glory of his everlasting grace."

Now, notice the very intriguing statement Jesus makes after his announcements of this predetermined treachery in verse 20, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him," referring to the Father, "who sent Me." Here Jesus is anticipating the commission he is going to give them and give to all of the church in chapter 20, verse 21, where he says, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you." Jesus is basically saying this, "Guys, do not let the apostasy and treachery of Judas undermine your confidence to represent me in the world. Look away from the traitor. Look unto me, the Master. Yes, some will despise you and consider your message a great hoax when they consider one of your own was such a vile hypocrite but ignore them and remember this, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me." In other words,

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your mission and your message is anchored in the Gibraltar of the authority of God himself.

Now, this should be very encouraging to all of us because we have to deal with hypocrites in the church all the time and isn't it amazing how the world is hypervigilant to spot every scandal and to put it in all of the media to somehow make the Lord Jesus Christ look silly. Dear Christian, know this: there are always going to be hypocrites in the church, they are going to be in mission fields, they are going to be professors in seminaries, and the world is going to love to spotlight every scandal in an effort to demean the faith but we are to carry on knowing that God is bigger than all of this. There are always going to be tares amongst the wheat even like Judas who believed that Jesus was the Christ. Isn't that interesting? And yet he never embraced him and repented, heart felt faith. Therefore the lack of spiritual fruit in his life demonstrated that his faith was not a saving faith. This is true of so many people, so many people that attach themselves to the church. They can go undetected for years. Millions today like Judas call themselves Christians but they do not truly love and worship Christ. They have no fear of God; they just want to cash in on the kingdom, if you will. This is what makes the phony prosperity gospel so appealing. Millions follow Jesus not as their blessed Savior, not as their Lord and Master deserving of their utmost praise and worship and obedience, they follow him to use him to satisfy their earthly lusts for wealth and health and every other kind of pleasure that the world has to offer and there is no shortage of predators in pulpits to preach these deceptions. Wolves in sheep's clothing. In fact, Paul describes this in 2 Corinthians 11, beginning in verse 14. This is one of Satan's greatest and most effective strategies, "He disguises himself," Paul says, "as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their deeds."

Well, we're all going to have times when the world laughs at us, pointing to hypocrites within the church but, folks, this does not diminish the glory of God in the slightest. In fact, in 2 Corinthians 5:20 we read, "We are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We implore you on the half of Christ, be reconciled to God." So Jesus wanted his apostles, he wanted all of us as his ambassadors to know that we carry with us the full authority of the one true God so this should inspire and give great courage to each one of us.

Now, let's turn to what's going on in the upper room. Notice verse 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.'" This is obviously vivid in John's memory. Remember, he's thinking back some 50 years as he writes this under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. He spoke of this earlier in chapter 12, verse 27, where in anticipation of the cross, Jesus said, "My soul has become troubled." The term in the original language carries with

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it the idea of shaking, of trembling. It speaks of acute mental and spiritual anguish that causes a person to literally tremble. Maybe you've done that before. I have. I've seen it before. And we know from other passages that this was a chronic condition from which Jesus suffered. So John remembers seeing this and it's fascinating that he records these chilling words coming from the mouth of Jesus. Bear in mind that Jesus is trembling and his voice would be shaking as he says this, "Truly, truly I say to you that one of you will betray Me."

You know, whenever I meditate upon the Savior's visible anguish, whenever I think of the Savior's visceral convulsions like we see in this scene, it just moves me to a point of tears. Folks, this is a prelude to Gethsemane and all that would follow and here we see the Lord's humanity most vividly. Truly, he was a man of sorrows, wasn't he? Acquainted with grief and therefore we have a high priest who is able to sympathize with all of our weaknesses.

His spirit was troubled as he announced the fiendish treachery of one of his closest companions. The text doesn't say this but I believe the Lord could feel and perhaps even see the presence of Satan in the shadows because we know that he was there in the room. Certainly, the purity of his holiness was acutely aware of the presence of evil. The Lord is shaking because he knows that he is about to set into motion the horrifying ordeal of his suffering and crucifixion on our behalf. And he's probably also shaking because he knows that Judas remains unmoved after he has washed his feet. So his body shakes with fear and his voice quivers as he utters these words, "Truly, truly I say to you that one of you will betray Me." What a heartbreaking scene.

Verse 22, "The disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking." You would think that the next verse would say, "And Judas fell on his face in brokenness and cried out for forgiveness." But no, he remains unmoved. He stayed with the others, knowing full well that the Lord knew what he was up to. Because he loved his sins so much, he hated the only one that could save him from it. Judas didn't care what Jesus thought of him. Beloved, never underestimate the power of sin to deceive and to harden a person's heart. Jeremiah said it so well in chapter 17, verse 9, "The heart is more deceitful than all else and desperately sick, who can understand it?"

Judas had long since given himself over to the sins of self-will and self-promotion and avarice and now to hatred. He's moving towards murder. Though he enjoyed the same tender compassion with all of the other disciples, he was dominated by his sins and he concealed it all with his hypocrisy. Once again, isn't it amazing that none of the others suspected him? The greedy guy in charge of the money? Are you kidding me? Judas was so calloused in his hatred of Christ and so proficient in his hypocrisy that Matthew says that all of the disciples responded to the Lord's chilling announcement by saying, "Is it I,

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Lord?" And even Judas says, "Is it I, Rabbi?" Another ploy to keep up the ruse and appear to be like all of the others.

What an example too of the amazing patience of the Lord Jesus with the son of perdition and what an example of the insanity of sin. Solomon describe this perfectly when he says in Ecclesiastes 9:3, "The hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives." All of us as believers have witnessed the metastasizing corruption of sin. We've seen how it ultimately destroys those who reject Christ. The process can be heartbreaking, especially when it's someone in our own family. How often we've watched those we love make choices that directly oppose the will of God, resulting in every conceivable form of sorrow and misery. I experience this on a weekly basis as a pastor as I counsel people whose lives have been totally decimated either because of their sin or someone else's. Like the spiritual harlotry of ancient Israel that Hosea described in chapter 8, in helpless horror we watch people we love sow the wind only to reap the whirlwind. And yet in the drunken stupor of their sin, they experience no guilt, no shame, no desire for any remedy. The great Puritan theologian, John Owen, poignantly described the dreadful state of sin's deception and its power to make men its unwitting slaves and here's what he said, "Many there are in the world who find not this law in them, who whatever they have been taught in the word have not a spiritual sense and experience of the power of indwelling sin and that because they are wholly under the dominion of it. They find not that there is darkness and folly in their minds because they are darkness itself and darkness will discover nothing. They find not deadness and an indisposition in their hearts and wills to God because they are dead wholly in trespasses and sins. They are at peace with their lusts by being in bondage unto them and this is the state of most men in the world which makes them woefully despise all their eternal concerns."

So Judas has spurned the Savior's love but John has humbly accepted it and what happens next highlights this contrast. In verse 23, "There was reclining on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. So Simon Peter gestured to him, and said to him, 'Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking.' He, leaning back thus on Jesus' bosom, said to Him, 'Lord, who is it?'" Here we have 2. An affirmation of love accepted. It's interesting, this is the first time John introduces himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved. Now, please understand, he is not suggesting that Jesus loved him more than the others but rather he is underscoring his sheer amazement that Jesus would love him at all.

I want you to go with me back to that upper room some 2,000 years ago. Imagine the scene: Jesus and the 12 are reclining on long, low couches adjacent to a table that's the same height. The group would be shaped basically in a "V" with Jesus as the host in the center. They would recline on their left sides. They'd prop themselves up on their left elbow and they would eat with their right hand. Next to the host, the highest place of honor was to the left, not to the right of the host. Verse 23 says that John was reclining on

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Jesus' bosom which would require him, therefore, to be to the right of Jesus, his head being very close to Jesus' heart. This helps us understand how he leaned back and on Jesus' bosom, the text says, to ask him, "Lord, who is it?" He would have been leaning like this and he would just lean back to Jesus and whisper that to him. Now, who was seated on the left of Jesus in the place of honor? The text doesn't tell us. We do know, however, it was not Peter, verses 24 and 26, to the consternation of many Catholics. But it very well could have been Judas. We do not know.

But I want you to notice what happens. Rather than asking Jesus to directly point out his betrayer, Peter looks across over to John and gestures to him in some way. He probably signals with his eyes and with a nod of his head. Some kind of a nonverbal thing. You know, we would do that. We know it was discreet because John asked him in private and Jesus responds in privacy as well. So Peter communicates to him, "Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking." Then we read that John leans back, he places his head on Jesus' bosom and he probably whispers, "Lord, who is it?"

Verse 26, "Jesus then answered," and again, we have to believe this was a whisper because we know from the other text that no one else knew what was going on. Jesus says, "'That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him.' So when He had dipped the morsel, He took and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot." Here beloved, we're going to see an act of love rejected. Let me explain. The morsel was a piece of unleavened bread that was used in the Passover feast. It was dipped into a dish that was made up of bitter herbs and vinegar, salt, mashed fruit. They would smash up dates and figs and raisins and put some water in it and blend it together in a paste. This would be considered, therefore, a formal demonstration of honor for the host to dip the morsel and then give it to a distinguished guest. Beloved, here we see Jesus' final gesture of supreme love for Judas and Judas would have had to have known that. But he remained unrepentant. He remained determined. In fact, Jesus' act of love only hardened his resolve.

What you also notice is that Jesus did not tell John the name of his betrayer. He did not whisper in John's ear, "It's Judas." He didn't say that. Rather he answered, "That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him." Now why? I believe there are 2 reasons: by giving Judas the morsel, Jesus underscored his love for Judas, a lesson that John and the others would need to learn. But then secondly, this final gesture of honor and love would signal to Judas the terrible, terrible, terrible nature of his treachery. "If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat. If he is thirsty, give him water to drink. For you will heap burning coals on his head." That's what's going on here.

Beloved, think of this once again: for 3 years Judas had witnessed this kind of love and now just a few minutes earlier, Jesus has washed his feet and yet he rejects the Savior's

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final act of tender loving kindness. Determined to carry out his treachery, he now fortifies himself in a fortress of avarice and ambition and apostasy, a stronghold that would become his eternal tomb, and with this Jesus gives him over to the consequences of his sin. The consequences of his evil choices. It's as though he now seals him up in his own sepulcher of self-will for eternity. And like so many people today, Judas was absolutely determined to keep Jesus out of his life. Now Jesus will not only grant that request, he will require it. Jesus is finished with Judas.

Verse 27, it's as though we can hear the vault's door shut and the eternal chains secure it as his doom is sealed. Notice verse 27, "After the morsel," after this gesture of honor and love that was spurned, the final act, "Satan then entered into him. Therefore Jesus said to him, 'What you do, do quickly.'" Now, bear in mind, according to verse 2 of chapter 13, the devil had already put into the heart of Judas to betray him and like a fool who has no fear of God, all Judas could see is an immediate payoff because he was so disillusioned with Jesus. He was hoping to somehow have a prominent place in the kingdom and to cash in in some great way and he sees that this isn't going to happen so now he sees an opportunity, "Maybe I can make some money here. Maybe I might even be a hero among the Jews. And certainly, I'll be able to get some revenge against Jesus that has let me down so miserably."

Having fully rejected Jesus, Satan immediately takes full possession of his soul. Verse 28, "Now no one of those reclining at the table knew for what purpose He had said this to him." You see, only John and Peter knew the truth. Obviously, they didn't tell anyone, at least not yet. Verse 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." The feast here doesn't refer to the Passover but to the Feast of Unleavened Bread that lasted 7 days after the Passover. So it would seem appropriate for Jesus to ask the treasurer to go out and purchase provisions for this period of time. Also, we know according to history, that on the night of the Passover, the temple gates were left open until midnight so that the poor could come and congregate there and receive alms from the people on that special occasion. So naturally, the 11 would think that perhaps Judas was going out at the Lord's request to give alms to the poor.

Verse 30, "So after receiving the morsel he went out immediately; and it was night." I find that interesting. Judas obeys Jesus quickly. Immediately. To be sure, sovereign omnipotence is at work here. Even in this scene, we see that no one took Jesus' life from him, he laid it down voluntarily. Every detail of his passion, even the timing, was under his control. And I can't help but think that the phrase "and it was night" is one that is filled with symbolism. To be sure, Judas loved darkness rather than light because his deeds were evil and now under the full control of the prince of darkness, he leaves the presence of the light of the world and he goes out into the kingdom of darkness, a

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preview of the outer darkness that will soon be his permanent abode. That place where he will blaspheme God forever in physical torment and solitary confinement. Folks, that's what hell is all about because God is far more holy than we can imagine and our sin is far more wretched than we can imagine.

But it was also night for Jesus as he faced the dark terrors of Gethsemane, as he faced the horrors of the cross, an event that was so exceedingly black that the Scriptures tell us that darkness covered the whole land from noon to 3 PM.

Dear friends, Judas stands as the greatest of all pretenders. He pretended to be a disciple of Christ. He pretended to love his companions. He pretended to have concern for the poor. He pretended to love Christ even when he kissed him in an act of betrayal. But sadly, he became a victim of his own hypocrisy because, dear friends, hypocrisy sears the conscience and predisposes the soul against heartfelt repentance.

So Judas perished in his sin. What about you? Are you making the most of every opportunity that God has given you to embrace Christ in saving faith? I hope so. Or are you perhaps like Judas a pretender? Perhaps you've even fooled yourself into believing your own lies but down deep you really don't love Christ. Dear friend, if that is true of you, you may have others fooled, you may even fool yourself but you will never fool the penetrating eye of divine omniscience. Truth and time walk hand-in-hand. Man looks on the outside, God looks upon the heart. And frankly for all of us as believers, we've got to guard ourselves against hypocrisy. We are all prone to this in various ways but I pray that as we leave here today we will also leave thinking about the amazing love of the Lord Jesus. Folks, to once again get lost in the wonder of his marvelous love even in the face of such treachery and may we all rejoice in the glory of his everlasting grace, knowing that he loved us even while we were yet sinners.

Let's pray together.

Father, we celebrate your everlasting love. We rejoice in your saving grace through faith in your beloved Son. May the truths that we have pondered today bring us all to a deeper hatred of that which you hate and a higher love for that which you love. Lord, help us to guard our hearts against hypocrisy. May we love without hypocrisy knowing that we are no longer slaves to sin but by your power we can have victory over it, that in all things you might have the preeminence. I ask in the precious name of Jesus our Savior and for his sake. Amen.

We pray you have been edified by this presentation. You have been listening to Pastor, Bible Teacher and Author, Dr. David Harrell. For more information or for other messages from Dr. Harrell, please visit the Olive Tree Christian Resources website at otcr.org.

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