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 **Meeting Times**

 Sunday Bible Study-9:30 am Sunday Morning Worship-10:30 am Sunday Evening Worship-6:30 pm Wednesday Bible Study-7:00 pm

Tentative date for VBS is **August 3rd and 4th**
 Please check your schedule to see if there is a
 conflict

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**“The Judas In All of Us”**

Daniel Ruegg

Among the various conspirators who assassinated Julius Caesar in 44 B.C. was Marcus Brutus. To say they were close would be quite an understatement as Caesar had full trust in Brutus and loved him as a son. At first, Caesar tried to resist the onslaught of assassins who had conspired against him, but when he saw Brutus with his dagger ready to draw his blood, Caesar stopped struggling, pulled his robe over his face and asked, “You too, Brutus?” Over seventy years later, Jesus and His betrayer both hung dead, one on a cross, the other from a tree.

Of all the wounds others are capable of inflicting upon us, betrayal is by far the worst. While we normally have our guard up when in the presence of a feared enemy or distrusted stranger, friendship lowers and often melts away

all of these defenses to the point of complete vulnerability, making wounds inflicted by those closest to us the absolute worst to overcome and bear up under. “*For it is not an enemy who reproaches me, then I could bear it; nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me, then I could hide myself from him. But it is you, a man my equal, my companion and my familiar friend; we who had sweet fellowship together walked in the house of God in the throng,” (Ps. 55:12-14).* No wonder out of all the figures in the bible, the name of Judas is by far the most notorious, prompting the gospel narrators to unforgettably attach the description “*the betrayer”* to his name in every instance where a complete list of the Apostles’ names occurs (Mt. 10:4; Mk. 3:19; Lk. 6:16).

As much as we may not want to admit it, there may be a little bit of Judas in all of us, or at least the capability for allowing ourselves to succumb to the point of betrayal if we are not careful to notice the same pattern of behavior which led Judas to his downfall.

* Judas had a plan with no options.

“*From then on he began looking for a good opportunity to betray Jesus,”* (Mt. 26:16)

Judas had such an unwavering determination to follow through with the tempting thoughts Satan was planting in his mind (Jn. 13:2) that nothing Jesus said or did was able to sway him. From lovingly washing his feet (Jn. 13:4-11), His reminder at the supper of His willingness to shed His blood for His disciples (Mt. 26:27-29), to His plain statement revealing His full awareness of Judas’ intentions of selling Him out (Jn. 13:21-30), none of this was able to impact Judas enough to change his mind. How about you? Do you find yourself in moments of temptation so drawn in that no word of your Savior or reminder of how much Christ loves you and has done for you can deter you away from your sheer determination to fulfill a sinful desire? Beware...betrayal may be on the horizon.

* Judas had a question with no sincerity.

“*Surely it is not I, Rabbi?”* (Mt. 26:25)

Judas knew full well what he was intending to do, yet still actually asked the question. Jesus knew exactly what was hidden in the innermost secret depths of Judas’ heart and revealed He knew what Judas was going to do, and yet Judas still acted like he had no idea what Jesus was talking about. How about you? Have you ever been convicted by the word of the Lord concerning sins you are consumed in and felt it was addressing everyone else but you? Do you convincingly reply to yourself that it must be talking about somebody else? Watch out...the tempter may very well be leading you towards a betrayal.

* Judas had a kiss with no love.

“*Immediately Judas went to Jesus and said, ‘Hail, Rabbi!’ and kissed Him,”* (Mt. 26:49)

Judas was willing to use the familiar gesture of friendship with a kiss to signal to the soldiers who to take into custody. Jesus was so taken back by this callous act of hypocrisy that it prompted the incredulous response, “*Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”* (LK. 22:48). What about you? Do you often find yourself offering worship to God with no real emotion or genuine love behind it? Do you offer your friendship to the Lord with the signs of service yet lack the pure motivation of love at the root of it? Be careful...you just may be in the midst of a betrayal against the Christ!

What about you? What are the “30 pieces of silver” that so allure and draw you away so far that becomes too tempting to resist? Don’t make the mistake of Judas and commit “spiritual suicide” by becoming so hardened by excessive guilt that you remove yourself even further from the Savior. He is willing to forgive if you are willing to come back.