

Remnant Life Church
040723
Good Friday
“Will We See Judas in Heaven?”
John 13:18-30

I would ask that you consider what might be a bit of an unusual question for this particular service...

- Will you see people in heaven that will surprise you?
 - Someone who might provoke the thought, “How did they get in?!”
- Well, there is one man in particular I would ask you to look at with a fresh perspective who played a pivotal role in the steps that would lead to the death of Jesus Christ
 - Could he possibly be in heaven in spite of what he did?
 - I believe that question can be answered and we are going to consider that tonight

READ – John 13:21-30

Now if you are like most people, you long ago made up your mind regarding Judas who, based on his plans and actions in the Garden of Gethsemane that Thursday night, was lost for all eternity

- The name Judas has become synonymous with treason and betrayal
 - There are probably not many new parents naming their son Judas
- In the 3 lists of the disciple’s names found in **Matthew**, **Mark** and **Luke**, Judas’ name is there but it is always listed last
 - And always with the post-text, “...who betrayed Him”
- Early church fathers and extra-biblical texts also all describe and paint Judas in the same light
- With the only exception being The Gnostic Gospel of Judas
 - This writing was and has been rejected as not being divinely inspired and it is not a part of the canonical Scripture
 - But it was only that writing that suggests Judas was, in fact, operating on the direct orders of Jesus and was therefore the only one of the 12 who understood His true mission
 - That however is not supported by the Gospel accounts and should not to be taken as truth
 - But was Judas automatically condemned to hell by his actions or was there hope, even for him, in his final hours?

Perhaps a good question to ask first however is why would Judas have betrayed Jesus in the first place?

- The Bible does not tell us this, but we can certainly speculate based on what we do know of him
 - Some believe that Judas may have struggled with Jesus’ apparent indifference to the law
 - Others think that Jesus’ constant association with sinners and the undesirables of their society may have been the reason

- It honestly does not seem that money would have been the motivation.
 - We already know that as the treasurer, Judas had access to the funds of the group
 - Besides, 30 pieces of silver – which was the price of a slave - was a relatively small amount for so important an arrangement
- Still others, and I count myself in this group, believe that Judas thought by his apparent action of betrayal he would force Jesus into asserting His true powers and overthrow the Romans
 - IOW Judas thought he could kickstart the revolution

I think that Judas may perhaps have always a bit of an outsider as he was the only disciple not born in Galilee

- A Judean by birth, he was from the town of Kerioth
 - It is from that place that his last name is derived, Iscariot
- The Bible does not give background information regarding Judas' life so it is difficult to know if anything of his past might have brought him to the place of being able to betray Jesus
 - What we must remember, however, is that Jesus selected Judas to be one of the 12
 - And this was in spite of knowing what would happen
 - Therefore, might it be said that it was for that betrayal that Judas was among them?
 - Can that be reconciled in our minds and hearts?
 - Because that just doesn't make sense!
 - But you see we must have the faith in this, and in the things of our own lives that do not make sense, that God is beyond our ability to rationalize and understand – and His ways are always perfect
- What we do know is that based on his actions Judas has forever been known as and called “The Betrayer”
 - Notice that he is never called a betrayer of Jesus but The Betrayer
 - Singled out, solitary, alone, the only one
 - But is that true?
 - Were there others who might also be called betrayers of Jesus?
 - What about Peter?
 - Peter had declared to Jesus that he was ready to go to prison or even give his life for Him ([John 13:37](#))
 - Yet just a few hours later Peter is adamantly denying he even knows Him let alone being one of His followers
 - He does this not once but three times in response to three different people
 - Yet we do not put that on the same level as Judas' actions
 - Was that because Peter was forgiven by Jesus and reinstated to his position of leadership among the disciples? ([John 21:15-19](#))
 - You see Judas never got that opportunity
 - He was already dead by his own doing before the resurrection

- And what about the other 10 disciples?
 - They had just fellowshiped with Jesus at the Passover meal
 - He had washed their feet in an act of humility as an example for them, and for us, to follow
 - And they had been with Jesus in prayer in the Garden though their focus was certainly less than perfect
 - And all this after spending 3 years with Him 24 hrs a day 7 days a week
 - But when the soldiers came, and it was apparent that Jesus was going to be arrested and taken away, every one of them fled into the night
- And even later...
 - The crucifixion was a very public event
 - The grounds surrounding Golgotha would have likely been filled with those who had heard of Jesus, listened to Him teach, witnessed His miracles, in addition to the soldiers, and the curious
 - Hiding among the throngs of people would have been easy enough for the disciples
 - Yet none of the Gospels record that they were there – with one exception, John
 - And none of the Gospels calls any of them betrayers
- But back to Judas
 - What do we see of his actions coupled with the ministry of Jesus that might give hope that Judas was forgiven?
 - You see I believe that Judas went to sleep that Thursday night confident that his plan had succeeded
 - Surely Jesus would now reveal who He truly was – the Jewish people would once again be free – perhaps even that very day
 - Yet when he awoke on Friday morning, he was confronted with a very different reality
 - Jesus was still in custody
 - And through the course of the night he had been tried and convicted
 - Wait a minute, Judas may have thought...that's not possible...Jesus would not allow that to happen...besides, night trials are illegal according to Jewish law...surely the officials present representing the chief priests and Pharisees would not permit that they would, or course, follow the law
 - But when Judas realized what was happening and that he was the one who had turned Jesus over to them, the Bible says he was seized or consumed with guilt ([Matt 27:3](#))
 - While the NIV, NAS, and NLT and other more recent translations and versions of the Bible use those words to describe Judas' reaction the KJV uses a different word - repented
 - And ITOL that word translates as to repent of one's actions or behavior
 - But did Judas' subsequent actions reflect a repentant heart?

- The very first person saved because of the death of Jesus on the cross was a criminal
 - Notice that there was no confession or remorse for his actions but only His spoken belief in Jesus as the Son of God
 - Peter did not ask Jesus to forgive him following the resurrection – yet he was forgiven.
 - Judas is not recorded as having asked God to forgive Him, but I believe his actions and words indicate he knew his sin and was repentant
- The speculation that Judas has escaped damnation runs the risk of focusing on Judas rather than on the One whom Judas betrayed
 - What Judas did is not beyond the forgiveness provided by the crucifixion
 - But Judas’ betrayal cannot be the final word on his life or even of our own
 - The times of our sinful actions, our selfishness, envy, anger, or deceit
 - Should those be the last words about your life?
 - No - the last word about Judas or any of us is not ours to determine
 - Because the last word has been given...by Jesus Christ as he hung on the cross to save us from our sins
 - The challenge is not whether Jesus’ forgiveness is good or sufficient but whether any of us, Judas included, can come to the place of recognizing our barren hearts and souls without His presence and forgiveness
- What does it take to be forgiven of your sins?
 - Only that moment of realization that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of God, our risen Savior and your desperate need to be forgiven of your sins and make Him the Lord of your life.

This is why it is never too late

- Is that thief in heaven even though he lived a life apart from God right up until his final hour?
- Yes! But do you know the time you have?
 - None of us do and once you draw your final breath your destiny for all eternity has been sealed
 - If you are a child of God you will be with Him in heaven but if you are not, you will be eternally separated from the love, the light, and the comfort of His presence
- It is also never too late for your family and friends who do not know Him
 - And because of that we must never give up or stop praying for them
- Your prayers may be what God will use to bring them to the place of that moment of confession
 - Never stop praying!
- God’s love and forgiveness, through the death of His Son on the cross, are greater than the darkest of our sins to save us
- And yes, to save even Judas