

Scripture: Matthew 26-14-25.

Sermon Topic: "Why Be a Traitor"?

Text: Matthew 26:16---"And from that moment on he sought an opportunity to betray him".

Proposition: It often is easier and more natural to betray Jesus than to be true to him, but in the long run betrayal ends in tragedy.

Sources: Commentary on section of Scripture in Interpreter's Bible, Vol.7, p. 571-574.

Other sources identified in notes.

Date written: April 3, 1965

Notes and places used:

4/4/65 - MONTROSE, COLO. 8³⁰ - 11⁰⁰ am

2-12-67 - DENVER & BLAINE, COLO.

4-26-70 - DENVER, COLO.

for Mar. 12, 1967

Cover page

Matthew 26:15-25

Common Topic: "Why He a Traitor?"

Text: Matthew 26:15-25 -- "And from that moment on he sought an opportunity to betray him."

Proposition: It often is easier and more natural to betray Jesus than to be true to him, but in the long run betrayal ends in tragedy.

Source: Commentary on section of Lectures in Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 7, p. 571-572.

Other sources identified in notes.

date written: April 3, 1965

pages and places used:

4/11/65 - Matthews, Vol. 7, p. 571-572
4-12-65 - Matthews, Vol. 7, p. 571-572
4-13-65 - Matthews, Vol. 7, p. 571-572

Introduction:

1. ~~(The Denver Post for April 3, 1965, had in its daily chuckle box on the front page this quip: Xxxxxx~~
"As a minister slipped on a banana peel he was heard to say, 'It's amazing how long-forgotten words come to mind'"

2. Our background of habits and outlook ~~does~~ often betray us into thoughts and actions which we think we have long since left behind. A person seldom knows what really makes him act and think the way he does, and constantly has to be on guard. We are complex persons.

3. I suspect that the infamous villain, Judas, who is the subject that brings up our train of thought today, was also a very complex person. Perhaps he did not understand ~~very~~ very well why he betrayed Jesus, yet was moved ~~almost~~ almost against his will to do it. As Paul said, "That which I would, I do not; and that which I would not, I do". The fact that Judas fled shame-facedly from the supper where Jesus identified him as the betrayer, the fact that a fter the crucifixion he hanged himself, would indicate that he was not sure of the rightness of

Introduction:

1. ~~The New York Post on April 2, 1965, has in its daily column~~

~~on the "comprehensive" trial of "Kiddie"~~

~~"As a minister slipped on a banana peel"~~

~~he was heard to say, "It's amazing"~~

~~how long-forgotten words come to mind"~~

2. Our background of habits and

outlook (see often) betray us into

thoughts and actions which we think

we have long since left behind. A

person seldom knows what really makes

him act and think the way he does,

and consequently he is to be an error,

we are complex persons.

3. I suspect that the infamous

villain, Judas, who is the subject

that drives up our train of thought

today, was also a very complex person.

Perhaps he did not understand very

well why he betrayed Jesus, yet was

moved almost against his will to do it.

As he said, "What would I would not

do for you; and that which I would not

I do." The fact that Judas fled

shamelessly from the supper where

Jesus identified him as the betrayer,

the fact that a fiercer conviction

he handed himself, would indicate that

he was not sure of the rightness of

what he had done; that he was a mixed-up person.

4. Some speculation on why Judas did betray Jesus, and how he betrayed his Lord, can perhaps point out to us ways in which we frequently do, or are tempted to, betray our Lord, and why we do so. ~~This speculation is timely for the traditional "Passion Sunday", today, in which we think about the suffering of Jesus Christ prior to his crucifixion, when we emphasize how mankind for whom Christ died was also responsible for his suffering.~~

I. Four words perhaps describe why Judas betrayed Christ, and why we do so. Other words might be added, but these four, at least, seem to stand out from the story as told by Matthew and the other gospel writers.

1. One is money. If you prefer to say greed, which made the offer of money attractive to Judas, that is what we're getting at. Mark tells it thus: "Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. And when they heard it they were glad, and promised to give him

what he had done; that he was a mixed-up person.

The long speculation on why Judas did betray Jesus, and how he betrayed him, can perhaps point out to us ways in which we frequently do or are tempted to betray our Lord, and why we do so. This speculation is timely for the traditional "Lenten season," for it is a time when we are reminded of our own sinfulness, and we are reminded of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, and we are reminded of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ.

1. Four words describe why Judas betrayed Christ, and why we do so. Other words might be added, but these four, at least, seem to stand out from the story as told by Matthew and the other Gospel writers.

1. One is money. If you prefer to say greed, which made the offer of money attractive to Judas, that is what we're getting at. Mark tells it thus: "Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. And when they heard it they were glad, and promised to give him

money". (Mark 14:10-11a). John tells us that when Jesus recognized Judas as his betrayer he told him "What you are going to do, do quickly". He also tells us that "Some thought that because Judas had the money box, Jesus was telling him, 'Buy what we need for the feast'; or, that he should give something to the poor." (John 13:29). Judas was, evidently, the most practical-minded of the disciples, the one who handled what money Jesus and his band had. Perhaps he was disgusted with the way Jesus and the rest of the group valued such money as they had. Perhaps he had mishandled it and was determined to get rid of Jesus before he was ^{discovered} ~~destroyed~~. Perhaps he was aware of the opposition of the chief priests to Jesus, and saw in the chance to lead them to Jesus, at a time and place where he could be easily captured, an opportunity to enrich himself. The amount ~~which~~ that he received was actually about what a slave sold for in those days. Anyway, one of the traditional reasons that has been held as cause of Judas' betrayal of Christ has been ~~held to be~~ his love of money.

Is money one of the reasons we

money". (Mark 11:10-11a). John tells us that when Jesus recognized Judas as his betrayer he told him "What you are going to do, do quickly". He also tells us that "Some thought that because Judas had the money box, Jesus was telling him, 'Buy what we need for the feast'; or, that he should give something to the poor." (John 13:29). Judas was, evidently, the most exacting of the disciples, the one who handled what money Jesus and his band had. Perhaps he was distressed with the way Jesus and the rest of the group valued such money as they had. Perhaps he had mishandled it and was determined to get rid of Jesus before he was betrayed. Perhaps he was aware of the opposition of the chief priests to Jesus, and saw in the chance to lead them to Jesus at a time and place where he could be easily captured, an opportunity to enrich himself. The amount XXXXX that he received was actually about what a slave sold for in those days. Anyway, one of the traditional reasons that has been held as cause of Judas' betrayal of Christ has been his love for his love of money.

Is money one of the reasons we

betray Jesus? It has been said that "every man has his price", indicating that if the price is high enough a person will do anything. To get temporary gains are we willing to sacrifice the welfare of folks in the future? The discipleship of Jesus, to which professed christians are pledged, includes ministering to the welfare of others. We must be aware of the needs of others, and do our best to do what is right for the most people that we can. This can cost us money, for it certainly does not encourage the motto "charge what the traffic can bear". ~~xxxxxx~~ There are many areas in which we ~~xxx~~ yield to the temptation to do something that is not right because it is profitable in money. Be honest with yourself, and think about how you have let yourself betray Jesus because of money.

2. Another reason Judas betrayed Jesus, perhaps, was because of power. In this case, perhaps he was disappointed because Jesus refused to be a king of Israel and lead a revolt against the Romans. Perhaps Judas had thought of himself as the chief financial officer of a powerful, world-ruling empire. Since he

betray Jesus? It has been said that
 "every man has his price", indicating
 that if the price is high enough a
 person will do anything. To set
 temporary rates are we willing to
 sacrifice the welfare of folks in the
 future? The disciples of Jesus,
 to which professed christians are
 obliged, includes ministers to the
 welfare of others. We must be aware
 of the needs of others, and do our
 best to do what is right for the most
 people that we can. This means we
 must, for it certainly does not
 encourage the motto "charge what the
 traffic can bear". xxxxxx There are
 many areas in which we xxx yield to
 the temptation to do something that
 is not right because it is profitable
 in money. Be honest with yourself,
 and think about how you have let
 yourself betray Jesus because of money

2. Another reason Judas betrayed
 Jesus, perhaps, was because of power.
 In this case, perhaps he was disap-
 pointed because Jesus refused to be
 a king of Israel and lead a revolt
 against the Romans. Perhaps Judas
 had thought of himself as the chief
 financial officer of a powerful
 world-wide empire. Since he

saw few signs that this was coming about, perhaps he reasoned that if Jesus were arrested he would have to display his inherent might as the messiah and savior. He was forcing the hand of Christ to display power, perhaps he thought. It didn't work, of course, and maybe that's why in complete disillusionment and anguish he went out and hanged himself.

Power is a peculiar temptation. A church that I once served was spoken of often as "the leading church of the town. We might like to use that term here. When we do such, we usually mean it has the so-called "better" people, the power structure of the town in it. Power and prestige are temptations of the church, and when we yield to them we betray the very purposes for which the church exists---that of offering the gospel of Christ to people of all areas of life, and of nourishing those who need to grow in Christian grace. As individuals, the temptation to power is with us too. Even in the ministry we too often think of the size of the church, its position in the conference, and the prestige of the ministers serving the larger ones.

... say few things that this was coming
about, perhaps he reasoned that if
these were arrested how I believe
to display his inherent might as the
messiah and savior. He was forcing
the hand of Christ to display power,
perhaps he thought. It didn't work
of course, and maybe that's why in
complete disillusionment and anguish
he went out and hanged himself.

... over a peculiar sensation.
A church that I once served was
spoken of often as "the Jewish church"
of the town. It might like to use
that term here, when we do reach, we
usually mean it has the so-called
"Jewish" people, the power structure
of the town in it. Power and prestige
are legions of the church, and
when we yield to them we carry the
very purposes for which the church
exists---that of offering the gospel
of Christ to people of all areas of
life, and of nurturing those who
need to grow in Christian grace.
As individuals, the temptation to
power is with us too. Even in the
ministry we too often think of the
size of the church, its position in
the conference, and the prestige of
the ministers serving the flocks.

In our community life, in the life of state and nation, and in international affairs, so often we put the emphasis on power instead of on righteousness. By this means, you and I and all of us together betray the Lord of meekness.

3. A third reason, perhaps, why Judas betrayed Jesus was to protect him. He may well have been aware that there were plans afoot to assassinate Jesus. Perhaps by putting him under arrest, in protective custody as it were, he could prevent this. No one can say, but it is a possibility.

I'm not real sure how we might or do act to protect Jesus. I think that some of our vehemenance to proclaim the Bible as true "word for word", to preserve "the old-time religion", to keep the worship of Jesus safely within our church rituals and walls, to keep our ministers and other sincere christians from becoming involved publicly in demonstrations on racial matters or other items of social justice, are perhaps efforts at protecting Jesus which in reality betray him.

In our community life, in the life of state and nation, and in international affairs, so often we put the emphasis on power instead of on righteousness. By this means you and I and all of us together betray the Lord of weakness.

3. A third reason, perhaps, why Jesus betrayed Jesus was to protect him. He may well have been aware that there were plans afoot to assassinate Jesus. Perhaps by putting him under arrest, in protective custody as it were, he could prevent this. No one can say, but it is a possibility.

I'm not real sure how we might expect to protect Jesus. I think that some of our vehemence to proclaim the Bible as true "word for word", to preserve "the old-time religion", to keep the worship of Jesus safely within our church rituals and walls, to keep our ministers and other sincere Christians from becoming involved publicly in demonstrations on racial matters or other items of social justice, are perhaps efforts at protecting Jesus which in reality betray him.

4. Another motive for Judas' betrayal may have been fear. Fear of death for himself, we mean, when the temple authorities turned against Jesus. Judas may have been intent to save his own skin. When Jesus ~~was~~ arrested, you remember, all the other disciples were afraid, too, and ran away, one even leaving his clothing (robe) in the clutches of one of the arresting posse, or soldiers. By being the one who pointed out where Jesus could be found, by identifying Jesus, Judas could be pretty sure that he would not be arrested himself as one of the loyal followers of this person who was to be branded a traitor.

Fear often causes us to do things we would not otherwise do, too. This is so often the reason why persons caught in a mob will do things they never would otherwise. This is why when threats of loss of job or business come up, we frequently will yield to the necessity of doing things we know to be wrong. This is why when in torture and threat of death, we may lie, kill, cheat or do anything to save our skins. And such actions are betrayal of Christ.

In another motive for Judas' betrayal may have been fear, "for of death for himself, we mean, when the temple authorities turned against Jesus, Judas may have been inclined to save his own skin. When Jesus was arrested, you remember, all the other disciples were afraid, too, and ran away, one even leaving his clothing (robe) in the clutches of one of the arresting party, or soldiers. By doing the one who betrayed out where Jesus could be found, by identifying Jesus, Judas could be pretty sure that he would not be arrested himself as one of the loyal followers of this person who was to be branded a traitor.

But other motives as to a further we would not otherwise do, too, this is so often the reason why persons caught in a trap will do things they never would otherwise. This is why when threats of loss of job or business come up, we frequently will yield to the necessity of doing things we know to be wrong. This is why when in a desperate and threat of death, we may lie, kill, cheat or do anything to save our skins. And such a thing as a betrayal of Christ.

II. Whatever the reasons, betrayal of Christ always brings tragedy.

1. In the case of Judas, it brought quick remorse, so strong that he went out and hanged himself. One of the gospel accounts tells that he tried to return the money he had received in order to get Jesus released. When this was refused, he threw the pieces of silver down in the temple, departed and went and hanged himself". (Matthew 27:3-10). Money did not satisfy, in the face of what he had done. His own destruction was the result.

2. Neither does power satisfy. Jesus did not assume the kind of power that perhaps Judas expected. That kind of power has been assumed thousands of times by various figures of history and time and again ends in assassination, or other removal from office. Or, perhaps even living out ones days in positions of power is not too satisfying. Most often such folks find themselves fearfully sacrificing the privacy of an individual so that they might be guarded in their positions. Power-mad rulers have repeatedly plunged the world into destructive wars, as power-hungry executives can

11. However, the reasons, however, of this always brings thereby.

1. In the case of Japan, it proved quick removal, so strong that he went out and handed himself. One of the special accounts tells that he tried to return the money he had received. In order to get loans released, this was refused, he threw the stacks of silver down in the temple, departed and went and handed himself. (Latter 27:3-10). Money did not satisfy, in the case of what he had seen, his own destination was the result.

2. Whether does power satisfy, some did not assume the kind of power that perhaps they expected. That kind of power has been assumed thousands of times by various figures of history and time and again ends in assault, nation, or other removal from office, or perhaps even living out one's days in positions of power is not too satisfying. Many often such folks the theory is hardly satisfying. The priority of an individual so that they might be awarded in their position. Forward rulers have separate divisions of the world into different etc, a power-hungry executive can

lead a company into bankruptcy or other destruction.

3. The urge to protect that which we have can lead to doom, ~~too~~. Such a spirit of extreme conservatism indicates almost a self-worship, or an ancestry worship, or a large degree of selfishness. Jesus once reminded his listeners of Lot's wife, who hated to leave Sodom, ^{who} looked back and was destroyed. From this he drew the lesson: "Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it". (Luke 17:33) In other words, be venturesome, and not too overly-protective. Particularly if you're a christian, or a group of christians--the church. Over-protection of the status-quo of our religion can destroy it.

4. Certainly, fear is a destructive attitude. It immobilizes you just when you need to be most active, either to run away or to fight. There is no reason to be fearful of Christ in our lives. Even those early disciples who ran away lived to rejoice in his resurrection.

lead a company into bankruptcy or other destruction.

3. The urge to protect that which we have can lead to doom, for a spirit of extreme conservatism indicates almost a self-worship, or an ancestry worship, or a large course of selfishness. Jesus once reminded his listeners of Job's wife, who hated to leave Job, looked back and was destroyed. From this he drew the lesson: "Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it" (Luke 17:33). In other words, be venturesome, and not too overly-protective. Particular if you're a Christian, or a group of Christians--the church. Over-protection of the status quo of our religion can destroy it.

4. Certainly, fear is a destructive attitude. It immobilizes you just when you need to be bold, active, able to run away or to fight. There is no reason to be fearful of Christ in our lives. Even those early disciples who ran away lived to rejoice in his resurrection.

Conclusion:

1. From the traditional story of the betrayal of Jesus by Judas, we have thought of four possible reasons why Judas betrayed him: for money, for power, for fear, ~~to~~ protect Jesus and/or himself. We have considered the possibility that such are reasons why we, too, betray Jesus frequently. There are many other ways and reasons ^{WHICH} by we let him down, I'm sure. The fact that we as christians do betray him is sure. We feel uncomfortable in the presence of "religious talk"; we don't treat our closest loved ones with consideration and respect; we give only token amounts of money and service and other support to our church which represents Christ's work on earth; we tell people one thing to their faces and tell others just the opposite about them, as Judas did with Jesus; we profess allegiance to Christ, but don't let that make any difference in our everyday work and social living; ^{we don't make real efforts to forgive} ~~and~~ We could go on and on, listing ways we betray Jesus, ~~and through others how we betray him.~~

2. We've pointed out that as Judas' betrayal resulted in tragedy, so does our betrayal.

Conclusion:

1. From the traditional story of the betrayal of Jesus by Judas, we have thought of four possible reasons why Judas betrayed him: for money, for power, for fear, to protect Jesus and/or himself. We have considered the possibility that such are reasons why we, too, betray Jesus frequently. There are many other ways and reasons why we let him down. I'm sure the fact that we as Christians do betray him is sure. We feel uncomfortable in the presence of "betrayal talk"; we don't treat our closest loved ones with consideration and respect; we give only token amounts of money and service and other support to our church which represents Christ's work on earth; we tell people one thing to their faces and tell others just the opposite about them, as Judas did with Jesus; we profess allegiance to Christ, but don't let that make any difference in our everyday work and we don't make real efforts to love and social living; we could go on and on listing ways we betray Jesus.

2. We've pointed out that as Judas' betrayal resulted in tragedy, so does our betrayal.

3. It was written of Judas, "and from that moment on he sought an opportunity to betray him". It would be wonderful if we could ammend that statement as it applies to us, so that it could be written "from this moment on we sought to love and serve him". As ~~we~~ we seek such love and service, the keys are in our hands to a full, worthwhile and meaningful life now, and ~~to~~ ^{through} eternity.

3. It was written of Jesus,
 "and from that moment on he sought an
 opportunity to betray him". It would
 be wonderful if we could command that
 statement as it applies to us, so that
 it could be written "from this moment
 on we sought to love and serve him".
 As you seek such love and service,
 the keys are in our hands to a full,
 victorious and meaningful life now,
 and eternally.

