

Living Like Judas
John 13:18-30

April 6, 2014
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Good morning. When I was in high school, we had a bit of a mini revival among the students. I grew up in a small town with 800 students in the school from grade 8-12. When I graduated, there were about 120 in my Grad class and about 30 of them were professing Christians. About a quarter of our grad class said that they believed in Jesus. It was amazing to have that many Christians in your grad class alone. However the truth is that many of them no longer follow their faith. There are a bunch of them that do not walk in their faith and who have decided to leave it all behind. There are a bunch who still are faithful and even others who have come to faith since then, but the unfortunate reality is that a bunch have fallen away from what they once professed.

Let me tell you about a gentleman I met back in 2001. His name was Jack. He was in his mid 60's when I met him. Jack shared that he grew up going to church, and became very involved in the church and was a treasurer in his church for a number of years. He was married and had kids and they all went to church. The problem was that Jack didn't have a relationship with Jesus. When his wife became ill and was in her last days, an evangelical pastor who was a friend of theirs came to visit her. He shared the gospel with her and she accepted Christ as her saviour. When Jack and her next spoke, she told him what this pastor had said and told Jack that there was more to Jesus than what they had known. Well Jack was furious. Furious that this pastor would tell his wife something untrue, just to give her peace on her deathbed. After she passed, Jack apparently went to the pastor to confront him and ended up hearing the Gospel and beginning a relationship with Jesus – at 60 something years old. For the first time ever, this man

who had grown up in the church realized that he needed a relationship with Jesus in order to go to heaven. That he needed to trust in Jesus's death on the cross and follow Jesus with everything. How do you go to church for so many years and not know that Jesus is the way to heaven? How does that happen?! But that's Jack's story. When I met Jack, he had given his entire life to follow Jesus and he had decided to do missions in his retirement.

Another story. When Andrea and I started dating, she took me to a wedding of one of her friends from when she worked at Camp Caroline. We didn't really know many people there but at the reception we sat at a table with old camp leaders that Andrea had worked with at camp. We all got our meal, Chicken Cordon-bleu and one of the guys asks the table if anyone wants his chicken. Another guy asks why he doesn't want it, and he replies that it was because of the ham. So this other guy says "What are you Jewish?" To which he replies "Yes, I am." It was a super awkward moment. It turns out that he renounced his faith in Jesus and converted to Judaism. This guy had been a camp leader, excited about Jesus, and then for some reason renounces Christ. How does that happen?

We've been hearing so much lately about this hemorrhaging faith study which studies young people after they graduate and what happens to their faith after high school. The study includes of course students who go to church because they have to, they know all the right things to say, and as soon as they graduate they are finished with the church. The study also includes students who say they love Jesus and come to church and are involved, but once they graduate they decide they don't want to keep living the same way.

Here's the reality. Jesus says in Matthew 7 ²¹ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" Many here today very well may be in this situation. Like Jack you came to church and you may even be very involved and helpful. But your faith is not a saving one. You won't go to heaven when you die. How is that possible? How is it possible to go to church and experience God's people and the work of God around you, and yet, you still don't believe? Yet it happens. It happened to Jesus' own disciples. In John 6, there are droves of people following Jesus. The Bible says they are his disciples. Not the 12 apostles, but disciples who follow after Jesus. And Jesus teaches this passage in John about how he is the bread of life. He teaches that in order to live forever they must eat his flesh and drink his blood. They say 'how can the even happen?' Jesus says that is exactly what they need to do. And the group starts to mutter and complain about this teaching. And Jesus says to the group in John chapter 6, there are some of you who do not believe. If you are here and you go to church it's like Jesus is addressing us as disciples and says there are some of you who do not believe. And John 6: verse 66 says 'at that time, many of his disciples turned and no longer followed him.' What?! Don't we imagine that if Jesus just appeared right now and walked among us, and he started doing miracles here, and then he even empowers others to do some of these things. It would be so incredible. We would call our friends and tell them to come and see. It would be incredible. How could it happen then, that a bunch of people who have seen these things, just don't believe. They were walking with Jesus, watching him heal people, and earlier in the

chapter, he just fed 5000 people. How can it be that people witness the power of God and choose to not follow him with everything they are.

- We have testimonies of people who come stand right here in this tank. And they share testimonies of how God has transformed their life.

And after hearing the stories we get to watch them grow and witness God continuing to transform their life. And yet for some it makes no difference at all. How does that happen? How do we witness the transforming power of God and not be impacted?

- And more importantly, how do we avoid being a disciple that turns and no longer follows Jesus?
- How do we do it? We are told that as believers, we must test ourselves to see if we are in the faith.

Today we are looking at the character of Judas. Tom has been taking us through this journey of discipleship, what it means to be a disciple, and what it is going to cost us, and the leadership is looking at how we can weave the fiber of discipleship throughout the church. So what can we learn about discipleship from Judas. Most of you know about Judas. Anywhere you read his name it often pairs it with the phrase "the one who would betray Jesus". Here is one disciple who sees the miracles Jesus did, and we don't know specifically, because it doesn't mention specifically, but Jesus told his disciples to go and heal the sick and do miracles, empowered by the spirit. Judas was among them, I don't know if he did any miracles himself, but he saw all of these things happen. And then at the end he sells out Jesus.

In the New Testament, there are a few snippets about Judas, and we are going to look at John chapter 13 verses 18-30. This is the last Supper. He is with the twelve and Jesus says:

¹⁸I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled,^[a] 'He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.' ¹⁹I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he.

This is a reference to Psalm 41:9 and is basically saying that the one who will turn against me is going to be my friend.

Jesus is telling them all this to give them comfort when everything goes downhill. He knows confusion and fear is coming. The disciples at this point still think that Jesus is going to rescue them from the Romans. They don't realize that he is God who has come to rescue them from their sin. They still think he is going to be another earthly king. So Jesus is preparing them by talking about his death and the circumstances surrounding what is going to happen. He says "I'm telling you these things so that you know who I am. This is all part of the plan"

²⁰Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me."

²¹After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." ²²The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke.

Jesus just drops this like a bomb and then doesn't follow up. Until Simon Peter, who usually doesn't know when to be quiet, asks a disciple next to Jesus to ask for more information.

²³One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side,^[b] ²⁴so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus^[c] of whom he was speaking. ²⁵So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, "Lord, who is it?" ²⁶Jesus answered, (And nobody hears this part) "It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it." So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. ²⁷Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him.

Commentator D. A. Carson says that the host of a part (in this case Jesus) may well dip into a common bowl and pass a morsel of food to a guest as a mark of honor or friendship. It was a sign of great love. He says that it was like Judas took the food but rejected the love. Judas had rejected Christ's love one last time and then Satan entered him.

²⁷Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly." ²⁸Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. ²⁹Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor. ³⁰So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

So what went wrong? Why did Judas betray Jesus? Well we can't know for sure because we are not told explicitly. Some would guess that it was because of greed. It is mentioned elsewhere that Judas was greedy and that he had been stealing money from the disciples. And so while it is true that he sold out Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, greed couldn't have been the only factor. This is my own speculation because we are not told explicitly. One reason is that 30 pieces of silver is not a whole lot of money relatively. I could not find a consistent answer of how much that is worth today, but I read

anywhere from a few hundred, to 3-6000, to 100,000. Regardless it was enough to buy a piece of land in that day. But still that's not a ton of money to sell out a friend. His habitual sin of greed probably helped pave a way for other sin, but there were probably other reasons than greed mixed in. What we can tell though is that Judas didn't believe Jesus and he didn't trust him.

At one point, Judas trusts Jesus enough to follow him. Just like the others. And just like the others his mindset was probably the same- If Jesus is the messiah, he will liberate God's people from the rule of the Romans. However as they get further along into the last year of Jesus' ministry, Jesus still hasn't taken steps toward political power. And the doubts probably start to rise in his mind. Soon there is so much tension between Jesus and the religious leaders, and Jesus starts talking about how he is going to die and be raised to life. And Judas' actions reveal that he just doesn't trust that Jesus is going to do. He thinks he had potential, but he's blowing it. His actions reveal that he didn't trust Jesus, and he certainly didn't believe him. Instead of trusting that Jesus was going to do what he said, he trusted his own misguided expectations. It's the same as when we face a difficult situation, and we ask God for help, and we think he should come through for us a certain way, but God is really at work in a totally different way. Then we get upset because God didn't deliver the way we expected. And once Judas has completely rejected Jesus, Satan enters him to make sure that he finishes the betrayal.

So what can you do to make sure that you don't end up like Judas? Simply, we must test ourselves. In 2 Corinthians Paul is writing it a church full of sin and struggle and he challenges them in his final words to examine themselves. He says in 13:5 ["Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this](#)

[about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!"](#)

If you want to be sure about your salvation then test yourself. And I'm not talking about all this to raise unnecessary doubts in you, but to put you in a situation where you have assurance of your faith.

Here are 6 quick ways you can examine yourself. There are more than these, but these will be a good place to start.

First thing to remember is that knowledge and good deeds are not what save you. Knowing and believing that Jesus is God is not enough. James says even the Demons believe that Jesus is God. That doesn't save you. Also going to church regularly, doing good deeds, and avoiding the Ten Commandments doesn't save you. Just because you can look like a Christian doesn't mean you are one. Ephesians 2:8-9 says ["For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."](#) Not by works. God gets the credit, not us. We are saved by faith. Our faith is evidenced by repentance and obedience.

So first is **Do you renounce sin and put faith in Christ?** Are you striving to overcome the darkness in your life and move towards light? But have you repented of your sin and are you letting God do His work in your life? Do you have faith that He will accomplish all that He has said in His word?

Second is **Do you love?** The two greatest commandments – Love God and love others. Just after Judas leaves the room, Jesus begins to teach the disciples more. In verse 35 he says ["By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."](#) This is not just talking about love for your family. It's love for one another in

the church. It's seeking to help and serve others, not looking for ways to trap or harm them. And as for loving God, the biggest way that we see evidence of that is obedience to His Word. Tom preached about this recently in 1 John 2:3 it says "And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments." If you are unsure where to start in being obedient, simply start a dialogue with God. Dialogue mean two way communication: talking and listening. Talking to God is prayer. We need to pray. As for listening, we have the word of God at our fingertips. The Bible contains the message of what God wants to tell us. It's his word to us. We must listen to it.

Third, **Do you trust?** Do you trust God's plan for you? – not His plan for your life path, but His plan of salvation. God's will and God's plan for you is that you would be united into a new relationship with him, through faith and trust in Jesus' death on the cross, that you would share it with others, and that you would grow into the likeness of Jesus Christ. So when God's word says to forgive – do you trust Him? When God's word says to love your enemy – do you trust Him? When God's word says to give sacrificially – do you trust Him? When he says to be deeply involved with and committed to the local body of believers – do you get involved? For some it's baptism. Whatever it is for you – put your trust into the one who is worthy of it.

Fourth is **How do you deal with doubts?** Everyone doubts. Sometimes it's something big, and sometimes it's in the small things. Doubts can be very good or very bad. It depends on what you do with them. I believe that if you have doubts, you must seek truth. And if you seek truth you will find Jesus. Because God has a corner on truth. Where most people stumble when dealing with doubts, is that they stop searching because they have landed on what they want to hear or they don't want to invest in God the amount that He requires. If

God is real the implications are huge. If you find yourself doubting, search for truth, don't just search for justification for your doubt. And search as long as it takes for you to find what is true.

Fifth is **Do you trial well?** When times get tough, how do you react? What kind of person are you? Who do you rely on? Trials will reveal faith and true character. Think about this the next time a trial comes your way. Big or small. And I don't mean just your initial gut reactions, after all we all still sin, but what choices do you make through that trial?

And last, **Are you being transformed?** Are you growing? Being sanctified? Do you desire for the Holy Spirit to do his transforming work in your life? Are you more like Jesus now than you were before? This is a great evidence of the work of God in your life. Because we are far from perfect, but true disciples are growing, being stretched, and transformed.

Those are six ways that you can test yourself. Some of you will pass with flying colors, some will be far from passing, and others somewhere in the middle. If you are not certain that you are a true disciple, then do not resign to not knowing. Don't hesitate and wait on making a stand for Christ. What is holding you back? What is the reason that you don't find yourself fully devoted? For some there may be certain areas that you feel uncertain with. You may go through a trial and mess things up. React the wrong way or make a poor choice. Or maybe you struggle with loving others well. Ask yourself where is the trend? Everyone messes up. If your heart is on Christ you will find yourself striving to follow Him. Think about Peter following Christ after he was arrested. Peter denies Jesus three times. But he was still

following Christ. You are not defined by mistakes, but by your heart and where it lies. This is grace.

And when we test ourselves to see that we are in the faith and not living like Judas, then that assurance will give us courage and conviction to follow Christ with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength. And then we can reach out to others who are struggling with faith and we can find rest for our souls in a God who is full of Grace and full of truth.

Let's Pray