

Armagh Baptist Church – Sunday 14th March 2010

'Jesus Predicts Judas' Betrayal'

John ch.13:18-30

Introduction

Look at the first part of John 13 v.1:

'It was just before the Passover Feast.

Jesus knew that the time had come for him

to leave this world and go to the Father.'

It says very clearly that *'Jesus knew that the time had come for him.'*

The foreknowledge of Jesus was an amazing thing. He knew so much of what lay ahead of him, while he was in this world, and yet He still went ahead and faced it.

* He knew He was born to die on the cross.

* He knew one of His disciples was going to betray him.

* He knew one of his closest disciples was going to deny him.

* He knew many of the details of the things that were going to happen to him that weekend, but still he went through it all for you and me. That's amazing!

You and I couldn't cope with knowing what lies ahead of us in our future, that's why the Bible teaches us to live one day at a time, and not to worry about tomorrow, because we can't control it anyway.

But Jesus knew what lay ahead, He could have controlled it and changed it, but he didn't. He allowed things to unfold as they did, in order that the work that was necessary for our salvation would be accomplished.

Here in John ch.13:18-38 Jesus predicts two things.

He predicts that he was going to be betrayed by Judas, one of his disciples.

And He predicts that he was going to be denied by Peter, the leader of his band of disciples – and one of his closest friends.

How hurtful these two developments must have been to Jesus when they happened, but how much more hurtful it must have been to know before time that they were going to happen to him.

If we had known, we would have tried to change the future.

Jesus did know, he could have changed things before they happened, but he didn't. He allowed events to unfold knowing they would ultimately take him to the cross to die for each one of us.

Tonight we are going to think of Jesus' betrayal by Judas.

Next Sunday night, at the end of our church weekend when we will be thinking about the life of Peter under the theme: *'The ups and downs of Discipleship'*, we will conclude our studies, by looking at the remainder of this passage from vs.31-38, as Jesus predicts his denial by Peter.

But for tonight we're going to be thinking of Judas' betrayal of Jesus.

1. Jesus Chose his Apostles 3 years earlier (Luke 6:12-16)

Jesus had chosen Judas along with the rest of his Twelve Apostles back in Luke 6:12-16. He didn't do so lightly or rashly. In fact he had spent the previous night in prayer to his Father (v.12) before making his selection from a wider group of disciples. Their names are given to us in vs.14-16. Judas Iscariot is mentioned last, with the phrase 'who became a traitor' after him. But at that time these Twelve were designated, not just disciples of Jesus, but Apostles of Jesus. Judas was in a very privileged position, and Jesus had put him there for a reason, as part of the out-working of God's Plan of Salvation.

2. Jesus Ministered with his Apostles for those 3 years

Judas had shared 3 years of ministry with Jesus;

He had heard all his teaching; he had seen all of his miracles.

He had seen first-hand what Jesus himself was really like.

Judas had all the evidence he could ever have needed as to who Jesus was. But...

* Judas had already decided to betray Jesus back in Bethany (Matt.26:6-16).

* John reminds us of this fact at the beginning of this chapter (John 13:2).

* Jesus is aware of all of this as he washes the feet of **all** of his disciples including Judas (vs.10-11).

But he has never once hinted that he knew anything different about Judas up until now. He treated Judas the same as all the rest, with grace and love.

3. Now Jesus breaks the news that one of them is a Traitor!

He has known this all along, but now for the first time he begins to speak about this to his disciples. It must have come as a terrible shock to them. Having washed all their feet, and having taught them about loving one another as He had loved them, he then goes on to say in v.18 that he was not tarring them all with the same brush. Now he was going to make a distinction.

- He tells them that he knew those he had chosen. (v.18)

- But He had chosen one of them to fulfil a prophecy (See Psalm 41:9).

- Such evidence of foreknowledge should have been further proof to his disciples of who He was – God come in the flesh. (v.19) *'I am He!'*

(v.21) So now for the first time he tells his disciples he is going to be betrayed

- Notice how it troubles Jesus to speak about this.

- He took no delight in exposing Judas for what he was.

- He simply said, *'I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me.'*

(v.22) The disciples are utterly shocked that it could be one of them!

They are at a loss to know which of them Jesus meant. It certainly wasn't obvious up until now that any of them had been scheming or hatching a plan.

So in v.23-24 Peter motions to John (the disciples whom Jesus loved) to ask Jesus who exactly it was.

John knew, by what Jesus did next, that it was Judas (v.25-26).

That seemingly insignificant act fulfilled a prophecy of Scripture, as Jesus dipped a piece of bread into the dish in the middle of the table and then passed it to Judas Iscariot.

But what Jesus did at that moment could also have been interpreted as a sign to an honoured guest. That would normally have been the significance of that action. In Ethiopia for example people sit around a table with a large piece of thin bread in the middle of a plate called Injera. It looked like a large folded piece of chamois leather the first time I saw it! Then they tip out into the middle of this bread, a saucepan full of meat stew, and each person tucks in by breaking off a piece of the bread, and then they pick up some of the meat inside it and put it into their own mouth.

But if you want to show affection or appreciation to someone, especially if you want to show a guest that they are particularly welcome you pick up the piece of bread with meat inside it and you actually put it into their mouth with your hand! So if you're a guest, you have to be on stand-by and realise that you could get something stuffed into your mouth at any minute! That's part of the significance of what Jesus did here.

Imagine, even at this feast, Jesus was giving Judas the place of honour beside him, and has actually treated him like an honoured guest by offering him his bread. (There is no bitterness here as far as Jesus is concerned – there is certainly respect, perhaps tinged with a sense of pity as well).

(v.27) At that point, as Judas accepted the bread from the hand of Jesus, Satan entered into him. That was the point of no return. Jesus simply said, *'What you're going to do, get on with it, do it quickly.'*

But in v.28 we're told that no-one knew exactly what Jesus meant or what it was that Judas was going to do.

All they could guess at, as far as v.29 puts it, is that Judas was the treasurer of the disciples. So in a sense he was probably trusted by them all. They just thought that he was going to do some business. Maybe he was going to buy the food and everything else that was needed for them to eat the Passover meal together. Or maybe he was going to give something to the poor?

Only John would have known that Judas was leaving to betray Jesus into the hands of his enemies.

In v.30, we're told that as soon as Judas had taken the bread, he left.

"He went out - and it was night." (cf. John 12:35-36).

Judas stepped out into the darkness, out of the presence of the Lord, he stepped into the darkness of the night, out of the presence of the Light of the World, and what he was going to do was evil, but even Judas seems to have loved darkness more than light. In due course he would fall headlong into outer darkness, as he committed suicide.

4. Judas Betrays Jesus

In John 18:1-9 Judas betrays Jesus into the hands of his enemies. According to Matthew 26:47-50 Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss, even while Jesus was still referring to him as a 'friend!' Jesus is arrested and led away to be tried.

But according to Matt.27:3-5, later on Judas is filled with remorse, and he goes out and hangs himself, probably on the morning of Good Friday. So he was dead even before Jesus was!

Acts 1:15-26 makes it clear that Judas has gone to the place where 'he belongs'. This is probably a reference to Hell.

As Jesus said on another occasion,

"The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born!" (Matthew 26:24)

Judas had actually heard Jesus say that in the Upper Room, but still he went on ahead and chose to betray Jesus. He did it blatantly and he did it wilfully.

But sadly people today will also go to the place where Judas went, unless they repent of their sins (not just feel remorse for them) and trust in Jesus alone to save them from their sins, instead of trusting in their religious leaders.

N.B. It was to them that Judas turned seeking forgiveness, in Matt 27:3-5, not Jesus! But all they did was laugh in his face. They'd got what they wanted!

Salvation = Repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21) The question is: Have you done that? Have you repented? Have you exercised faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? That's how you get saved. The consequences of not doing that; hardly bear thinking about!

Conclusion

We treat Judas' betrayal of Jesus, as serious, and so it was. But the truth of the matter is that Jesus treats denial of him just as seriously (Luke 9:23-26).

Are you ashamed to be known as a disciple of Jesus?

There was no way back for Judas, but there is for you tonight, if you repent.

