**Livin’ the Life**

**Love Betrayed**

**John 13:18-30**

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We are in our sermon series in the gospel of John, Livin’ the Life, looking at the life of Jesus and the life he promises. Today’s passage is found in John 13:18-30, Love Betrayed. Chapters 13 -17, four chapters, tell us what Jesus did, said and prayed on the night before his death. These chapters are significant because Jesus told his disciples what they needed to know in light of the coming crisis when he dies and to prepare them for life after Jesus’ earthly ministry. Today we are looking at one of the most heart wrenching experiences in Jesus earthly life, his betrayal.

**Jesus Prepares his Disciples for his Betrayal (18-20)**

Jesus is speaking to his twelve disciples in the room about following his example but he is not referring to all of them because one won’t and he knows it. He has already described the betrayer as not clean (13:10), that is, the betrayer does not have saving faith in Jesus. That Jesus chose a betrayer is not an oversight or sign of weakness on his part; Jesus chose him knowing he would betray him (6:70-71). Jesus had spent an entire night in prayer prior to choosing the twelve (Lk 6:12-16). Now John tells us that Jesus also chose Judas to fulfill Scripture (18). John quotes Psalm 41:9, which describes King David being betrayed by one of his friends. That incident pointed to a greater betrayal of a greater king, Jesus. This fulfillment confirms Jesus’ identity and mission as the Messiah. Now look at the next verse, I am telling you this now, before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe I am he (19). The verse reads literally, you may believe I am, Jesus making another I am statement, identifying himself with the God of the Old Testament, Yahweh. John told us this in the first chapter. In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God and the word became flesh and dwelt among us (1:1-4, 14). Jesus is telling them of this betrayal beforehand so that when it happens they will continue to believe (19). Jesus wants his disciples to understand that this betrayal and thus his death is God’s sovereign plan. The betrayal did not derail Jesus as the Messiah but demonstrates that he is the Messiah. This will become clear to them after his resurrection and the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. At his arrest the disciples become scared and then at his death, they are disillusioned because they think that Jesus failed. He wants them to understand that the betrayal actually advances Jesus’ mission. Jesus confirms this by telling them that they will be his representatives after he is gone (20). In the same way that the Father backed Jesus in his mission, the Father and the Son will back the disciples in their mission.

**Jesus Identifies His Betrayer (21-30)**

Now Jesus becomes more explicit. He is troubled in spirit. Troubled is the same word used to describe Jesus when he found out about Lazarus’ death (11:33) and when he considered his death on the cross (12:27). He is troubled because one of his closest companions is about to betray him (21). Notice the response of the disciples (23-26). The disciples are clueless, they are looking at one another in disbelief (22). John, described as the disciple whom Jesus loved, is reclining next to Jesus so Peter motions for him to ask Jesus who it is (23-24). John describes himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved not to say that Jesus loved him more or that he is Jesus’ favorite or that they had a homosexual relationship. He describes himself this way to say, it a stunning fact that God the Son loves me. So, in that sense John is like the rest of us. It is amazing that God loves any of us, his enemies, enough to die for us and reconcile us to himself, to make us his family. God’s love in the gospel is free, gracious, and nothing less than extravagant. Americans are surprised when someone doesn’t like us but the bible says it is amazing that God loves sinners.

The host of the Passover meal would sometimes put his hand in the common bowl and take a piece of bread or meat, dip it into some type of sauce, and hand it to a guest as a sign of friendship or even honor. John is on Jesus’ right side because he leans into Jesus so it appears that Judas is on Jesus’ left side, the place of honor. Jesus hands Judas a morsel of bread, indicating that he’s the betrayer. Jesus is extending Judas one last offer of love and friendship to Judas. Jesus tells us to love our enemies because he did but we have a hard enough time loving our friends, let alone our enemies.

None of them ever expected it to be Judas. But Judas knows, he has been thinking about it for a while now. Daily, Judas experienced Jesus’ love and grace and instead of it softening him, it hardened him. Instead of being drawn to Jesus, Judas’ heart is hardened and Satan entered him and Jesus told him, what you are about to do, do quickly (27). When Jesus said this to Judas, the disciples thought he was telling Judas to buy supplies for the feast of unleavened bread later that night or to give alms to the poor. Even in telling Judas to do his deed quickly, Jesus is making it clear that no one takes his life but he lays it down of his own accord (10:18).

Judas has been with Jesus three years. He has been an eyewitness to Jesus’ teaching, his miracles, and his extravagant love and grace. He heard the claims Jesus made as the Messiah, and in the end, he rejected that love. Judas is a warning for all of us. Following Jesus is not only having a past history with Jesus, but is also having a present history with Jesus and a future history with Jesus. The 17th century puritans called people like Judas, temporaries. They show evidence of a life of faith for some time but then they drift, become lukewarm, then cold and distant. They may profess faith in Christ but they are not actively following Christ, so they do not possess faith in Christ. In the end, Jesus is a faint memory of a season of life. Judas is a warning to us all.

Then Judas left and it was night. Night or darkness has a double meaning in John. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it (1:5). Or, this is the judgement: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil (3:19). Judas’ betrayal reflects the spiritual darkness in us all that blinds us to who Jesus is apart from God’s grace in our lives. Yet the darkest night in history brings the brightest dawn as he dies for our sin and is resurrected. His obedient life and his sacrificial life is what rescues us from the penalty of sin, the power of sin, and ultimately the presence of sin in our lives.

Life Group Questions:

1. Do you remember a time you were betrayed? Are you willing to share about it? How did you feel?
2. Why do you think Jesus is making the I am statement here?
3. How can Satan be involved in the betrayal and Judas still responsible for his actions?
4. How does the betrayal serve Gods sovereign plans and purposes for humanity?
5. How does Judas serve as a warning for us?
6. How do you fight against drifting?
7. Have you ever had a situation where you hated an enemy? Describe it for us.
8. Why is it so hard to love our enemies?
9. How does the gospel apply to loving our enemies?