

The Wounds of Betrayal

Opening Text: John 13:1-2 – *“Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. ² And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray Him”...*

Before the wounds of the cross, Jesus experienced the wounds of betrayal. Few things in this life are more painful than betrayal.

The devil is a destroyer of relationships.

As Lucifer, when iniquity was found in his heart, he was kicked out of heaven. He is the original ‘betrayed’. He then worked deceptively behind the scenes sowing seeds of discord, confusion and strife among the angels to the point that he managed to cause 1/3 of them to betray God.

After the angels, then satan went after Adam and Eve. They too betrayed God. Then we read how Cain betrayed Abel, Absalom betrayed David, and on and on the history of betrayal continues.

The devil turned Judas into a betrayer

Somehow the devil got a foothold into Judas’ life – he found a point of entry. Perhaps what happened before John 13, can provide us with some clues as to how the enemy found an entrance into Judas’s life.

John 12:4-6 - *⁴ But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, who would betray Him, said, ⁵ “Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” ⁶ This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.*

- a) His heart was not right to start with. His greed could have opened the door to the enemy. *“Keep your heart with all diligence”* (Prov.4:23)
- b) Perhaps he developed an offense after Jesus replied to him the way he did. Offense is a doorway for the enemy to inject all kinds of evil seeds, including betrayal. There is definitely a connection between offense and betrayal:

Matthew 24:10 - *And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.*

Our opening text says: *the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray Him.*

The expression “*put into the heart*” is the Greek word “*ballos*” which means to throw, to cast, to thrust, to inject immediately like a flash of lightning.

The moment offense came into Judas' heart, betrayal settled in. Instead of dealing with his wrong thoughts and taking them captive, Judas nurtured them and they took hold of him to the point that he betrayed Jesus.

The wounds of betrayal

Before the physical wounds of the cross, Jesus experienced the wounds of betrayal.

Zechariah prophesied about these wounds:

Zechariah 13:6 - *6 And one will say to him, 'What are these wounds between your arms?' Then he will answer, 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.'* - Those are the wounds of betrayal Jesus experienced.

John 18:1-6

V. 2 – *“and Judas who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples”*

How could Judas return to this very special place where they had met so many times before and experienced Jesus' touch and presence so intimately and come back - just to betray Him? Betrayal is probably one of the most devastating things that can happen to anyone. It is one of the most devastating weapons in satan's arsenal.

4 ways to deal with betrayal and abandonment

1. Remember where it comes from

From the beginning of time we see its origin: it is demonic. The devil started it. 1/3 of angels fell because of it. He even tried to get Jesus to betray the Father in the desert and he thrust 'betrayal' like an arrow into Judas' heart. Our fight is not against flesh or blood. If we fight people in the flesh we are coming against the wrong enemy.

2. Be careful that someone's betrayal doesn't become your offense

2 Timothy 4:16-17 - *16 At my first defence no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them. 17 But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also, I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.*

Forgiveness is how Paul dealt with the abandonment and betrayal of his own associates. They left him but not the Lord: *“but the Lord stood with me”* (verse 17).

3. God is unfailing but people are not.

Be full of faith and have great expectations about God but be conservative when it comes to human nature.

John 2:23-25 - *23 Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. 24 But Jesus did*

not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men,²⁵ and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.

Human nature is not something to be trusted in.

The betrayal of Judas was not a surprise to Jesus, neither the way these same crowds in Jerusalem turned against Him later on (*Crucify Him, crucify Him*).

Jeremiah 17:5 - *Thus says the Lord: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the Lord.*

Set your eyes on Jesus only!

Hebrews 12:2 - *² Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

4. Always make the decision to walk in love

John 13:1-2 - *Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.*

He loved them all, including Judas - to the end.

Hebrews 12:3 KJV- *³ For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*

What a contradiction! Jesus was rejected and was shown hostility by the very people He came to save. However, He still loved them and died for them. He still received Judas' kiss. The way of love is always the right way to go. Forgiveness will always lead to good things. Love will always lead you away from depression, into healing and joy!

John 15:9-11 - *⁹ As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you: continue in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹ These things have I spoken to you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy may be full.*

Concluding thoughts

As we prepare to celebrate Easter, let us remember and follow the example of Jesus. He has given us such wonderful keys to victory over offense and such great insights on what love really looks like – even though He experienced the wounds of betrayal, the hostility of sinners and eventually the wounds of the cross!