

Friend, Where Have You Come From?

Matthew 26:47-50, Mark 14:43-46, Luke 22:47-48,

John 18:3-8, Lent Evening II

February 28, 2007

Beloved of the Lord....When a person is betrayed, the deepest stroke that pierces, the wound that cuts deep, is the sudden knowledge that the friend you love, has made themselves your enemy. Where there is betrayal, there is deep hatred. God felt such betrayal when Adam and Eve fell into sin in the Garden of Eden. Though God was their friend who spoke to them on a daily bases and gave them paradise, and each other, they defied God and rebelled against Him just like the evil angels. In the Garden of Gethsemane it was the same. The greed that had corrupted Judas, now mushroomed into the sin of hatred and betrayal. Satan now ruled the heart of Judas. Satan was the master of Judas. Like the serpent which slithered up to Adam and Eve, now Judas in the Garden of Gethsemane slithers up to Jesus and says, "Hail master!" With a forked tongue he feigns his love for Jesus. He kisses him as if he still loves Jesus! But in his heart there is only darkness and a loathing for the righteous Christ. "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."

But in the Garden of Eden and in the Garden of Gethsemane, there is Someone else. After Adam and Eve betrayed their Lord the Bible says there was, "The voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day." The Voice of the Lord walking in the garden is Christ. With infinite love, Christ seeks out those who betray Him. His Gospel promise goes out to Adam and Eve. The "Seed of the Woman" would crush the head of the serpent. Adam and Eve believed this promise. Years later in another garden, Christ seeks out a similar sinner named Judas. Though Judas had done the unthinkable, he had betrayed innocent blood with a kiss, Jesus reaches out to Judas with the simple word FRIEND. "Friend, where have you come from?" This evening let us be reminded of the great Friend we have in our Lord Jesus. Truly He was a friend of Judas, and He is our friend too.

I. Jesus, a Friend of Judas! When we consider Judas, we must remember that sin always starts out seemingly small, though it never really is small. Judas started out just being a little bit greedy. He

just took a little money off the top to begin with. His conscience bothered him a little. But what did that matter? Hadn't he earned this money? Didn't he forsake all to follow Christ? And so we see how easily sin is excused and ignored in our own mind. Instead of seeing how horrible it was to steal from his neighbor and God, he made excuses for his crime. His sin grew. When we ignore our own sin, or when we despise God's Word and look the other way, sin continually increases its hold upon us. If we do not fight sin, but just give in, soon it is a giant that we are helpless to fight against. The sin which started out small, was truly great. Ultimately it led to one of the greatest sins in history, the betrayal and murder of our Lord Jesus.

Consider Cain's jealousy of Abel. God warned Cain saying, "if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee *shall be* his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." But Cain didn't heed God's warning. His hatred grew until he murdered Abel. It was the same with Judas. His greed grew unchecked to the point of betraying and murdering his own master and Savior. The same thing can happen to us if we let sin grow within and do not fight against it by repentance and faith.

Judas was not a victim of evil, but the perpetrator of it. Though Jesus often warned him of sin, Judas didn't listen. When Peter confessed that Jesus was the Son of God in John 6, Jesus said, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" Judas knew that Jesus knew, but he still didn't repent. Just a few hours before Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss, they all at the Passover together. Jesus said to His disciples, "One of you shall betray Me." The disciples were thrown into sorrow and turmoil. In sincerity they asked, "Lord, is it I?" Jesus said, "The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I?" Judas did not say this in sincerity. He only wanted to appear innocent. Jesus then said quietly to Judas, "Thou hast said." In this quiet way Jesus did not let the other disciples know of Judas' sin, yet also in a quiet way Judas was admonished and he should've repented right then and there. But He didn't. Judas would serve Satan instead, and his sin grew even more.

And now it is Thursday evening after the Passover. Satan has entered into the heart of Judas,

and he quietly slips out and tells the chief priests now is the time to capture Jesus! Judas leads the multitude of Roman soldiers to the Garden of Gethsemane. In the darkness of the night, a kiss will be a sign. "With him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people." Satan is also there, in that Garden of Gethsemane, just as he was in the Garden of Eden, that old serpent! Satan reigned in the hearts of the unbelieving Jews, the chief priests, the elders, the Roman soldiers, and most of all Judas. Satan was the real master of Judas, not Jesus.

And now it is the hour of the power of darkness! Satan has all his pawns in place. The son of Satan leads the pack and approaches a little ahead of the multitude! Judas expects to find Jesus and the disciples sleeping, but they are all awake! Nevertheless, the deed must be done! With a false love Judas says "Hail Master!" He kisses Jesus! Judas Iscariot betrays the Son of God with a kiss!

Truly it was a dreadful night of betrayal in that Garden of Gethsemane. And it is all too easy to look at all the powers and forces of evil at work there in that Garden. Truly Satan had all his pawns lined up in order. He had, so he thought, worked out ever last detail. But when the powers of darkness seem to be at their greatest, we must remember that Christ is still King! He is the real Champion on the board! Just as He was there in the Garden of Eden to bring Adam and Eve back to repentance, so He was there reaching out to the lost soul of Judas! Even when Judas kisses Jesus, the most hypocritical sign of love this world has ever seen, Jesus reaches out to Judas and calls him FRIEND! "Friend, where have you come from?" What have you done? Will you not confess to me your sin, friend? With the one simple word of FRIEND, Jesus is holding out his hand to Judas, beckoning him to return to the flock before the fires of hell consume him! Could there be a greater love than this? Could God's mercy be any greater than this moment that Jesus calls Judas friend?

II. Jesus is our Friend too! Jesus was truly a friend of Judas, for Jesus is a Friend of sinners! When the Gospel Word goes forth from God's mouth, when God calls you His friend for the sake of Jesus Christ, God means what He says. His compassions and mercies are new every morning! Each and every day is another day in His grace! Yet all the world doesn't know this do they? Not all believe the Gospel of

Jesus Christ, which is well able to save the soul! And think how there are millions out there today, tonight in the hour and power of darkness. Many are still living as Judas once lived, without repentance, without faith, without hope! Yet Christ died for them, just as much as He died for you and me. Christ died for Judas, and Christ died for all. Will we repent of our sins and receive Christ by faith? When Christ reaches out His hand of friendship to us, will we hide our sin or deny our sin or will we believe? Will we believe "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."

Dear friends.....we are no better than Adam and Eve in that Garden of Eden! We are no better than Judas, or the Jews, or the priests, or the Romans soldiers, in the Garden of Gethsemane. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." But as He did with Judas, so He does with us, Jesus calls us Friend. With infinite love He seeks us out, though we are the ones who have rebelled and made ourselves enemies with Him. He is the one who grants us peace, though we prefer war. He is the one who on the cross paid for ever last sin that our bodies will commit in this world before we die! He is the one who tells us God is at peace with us, He is a Friend of sinners, won't we please be at peace with Him? And if you worry and you wonder, can God forgive my great sins? Is He really powerful enough to cleanse me and make me whole? Remember what happened when Jesus told the soldiers "I am He". His very name caused the soldiers to fall backward away from Christ. Truly His name carries all the power and force of heaven behind it. And so He gave His name into death in order to deliver you from your sins, have no fear, God has forgiven you for the sake of Christ. Truly you are God's friend. "Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you His kingdom." Believe in Him and trust in Him. For He is the best friend you will ever have. He is the only friend you really need. Amen.