

John 13:18-38**“One of You Will Betray Me”**

Imago Dei Church | 2/3/19 | 3 Services

INTRODUCTION

Let me start by asking you to consider: have you ever been betrayed? Most of us have, in one way or another. Many of us have even been the one doing the betrayal. Betrayal is a hurtful trial we experience in life.

Life has all kinds of difficulties, defeats, and opposition. But betrayal has a special sting, doesn't it? Because the idea behind betrayal is that the one hurting us was supposed to be *with* us.

(ILL) You can imagine our trials in life like two armies standing across a battle field. If you see the opposing army adding to their number, that's certainly no encouraging. But if you see your own people leave your side to join the other—that's a different kind of sting.

In the text we're looking at today, we see that the Lord Jesus is no stranger to betrayal. He was betrayed by one of his closest followers.

But he was not caught off guard. This was part of his plan all along.

Our text develops in two scenes this morning, and I'd like to take them one at a time.

The thing that unites the two scenes is the sovereign plan of God to save his people through the death of his betrayed Son.

Main Idea: God's sovereign plan invites us to receive Jesus' savings work and reflect Jesus' sacrificial love.

SCENE 1: BELIEF & BETRAYAL

(13:18-30)

Verse 18 picks up in the same breath as last week's passage left off. Jesus has called his disciples to follow in his footsteps by washing one another's feet. It was an incredible display of humility and service. No doubt the disciples were in shock that their master had stooped so low.

But he doesn't let them linger on his humility. Instead he reminds that not all of them will receive his washing.

[18a] I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. — He chose these guys, and he knew what he was working with.

He knew their hearts, their gifts, their inclinations, and their weaknesses. And **specifically** in this instance, he knew the heart of **Judas Iscariot**.

In verse 2 of this chapter John tells us that "the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him." Jesus knows this and begins to move towards a more explicit showdown with Judas.

But just like in the first half of this chapter when Jesus’ knowledge that Judas would betray him did not keep Jesus from washing Judas’ feet, we’re going to see again that **Jesus primary action towards Judas was kindness and grace, not animosity and hatred.**

Judas was a friend and a trusted member of the group. He wasn’t on the fringe, but on the inside.

This is why Jesus says Psalm 41:9 must be fulfilled:
[18b] “He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.”

The betrayal David lamented in Psalm 41 was a foreshadowing of Judas’ greater betrayal against the Lord himself.

Verses 19-20 — Jesus is not trying to pull cheap parlor tricks or read tarot cards for the disciples—**he has an agenda**. He wants the disciples to believe that he is the one sent from God to accomplish his sovereign plan:
“[19] I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he.”

Jesus isn’t a hapless or hopeless victim, but the focal point of God’s sovereign plan.

But that plan is not limited to the disciples—it’s **by design intended to expand beyond them**. That’s why Jesus doesn’t stop with the disciples’ believing.

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

Yes he wants the disciples to believe, **but he also commissions them**: he’s sending THEM out into the world to proclaim this same message. Anyone who receives their word receives Jesus, and therefore God himself.

(APP) Jesus is the pivot point of all salvation. No one received God the Father or is received by him if he doesn’t not come to him through the Son. This is an invitation to believe in and receive the Son.

(APP) But it’s also a commission for those who *have* received him. Your reconciliation to your creator God through Jesus was simultaneously a commission to invite others to know their Creator through this same Jesus. Who might you have the privilege of inviting to know this God through Jesus Christ?

Well, the scene picks up from there. Jesus’ torment is understandable—“**troubled in Spirit**”—and what has up to this point been somewhat veiled becomes explicit: “**One of you will betray me**” (21).

It’s somewhat astounding that the disciples are caught off guard by this, but they are nonetheless. So Peter

motions to John (“**the disciple whom Jesus loved**”) who was sitting close to Jesus—‘Ask who he’s talking about!’

And Jesus indicates that it’s Judas by giving him a piece of bread.

And as Pastor Tony mentioned last week, **it’s a great warning sign to us all that they didn’t immediately know who Jesus was talking about.** Judas wasn’t the black sheep of the group, but a trusted and accepted member. He looked the part, talked the part, and played the part of faithful follower, but his heart was far from Christ.

(APP) Friends, it is a testimony to the deceitfulness of sin that we are able to fool everyone around us, but we cannot fool Jesus—and he’s the only one that matters. There may be people in this room who have been going through the motions and making all the right moves to act, speak, and live like a Christian, but your heart is far from Christ. If that’s you, I want to encourage you that your lot is not sealed and it’s not too late. I am convinced that today, if you repent of your sin and throw yourself on the mercy of Christ he will receive you.

I think you can see it in this text. Notice that Jesus knows that Judas is going to betray him, **but he never turns against Judas.** By all indications even this act of giving Judas the piece of bread was a great kindness, an honor.

(ILL) It's like the host who wants you to taste the best part of the meal and shoves it in your face—"You have to try this!"

Jesus washed Judas' feet and shows him a special kindness. As 13:1 tells us, Jesus loved Judas "to the end." (APP) Jesus did not cast Judas out, and he won't cast you out if you receive him truly. It's not too late.

In our text, Judas did not repent. Instead, Jesus' act of kindness became an act of judgment, and upon receiving the bread Satan himself fully possessed Judas.

Knowing that Judas was set on betraying him, Jesus tells him to get to work quickly. The disciples don't understand, but Judas does. He goes out, and John tells us "it was night." This is more than a historical detail. It's a commentary on the state of Judas' soul and the impending death of Christ. Darkness has come.

(APP) Judas' act of betrayal is both a warning and an invitation. But it is **not** an occasion for despair.

The scene closes on a somber note, but God's plan is not being derailed.

Scene 2 shifts our eyes from darkness to Glory, Grace and Gospel Love.

SCENE 2: GLORY, GRACE, & GOSPEL LOVE (13:31-38)

Now that Judas has left, Jesus remains with only those who truly believe in him, even if imperfectly as we'll see.

Judas' betrayal is not the beginning of the downfall of God's sovereign plan, but the beginning of its culmination.

GLORY

Not only does Jesus not despair and lose faith, he exalts because this has been God's plan all along:

[31] "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. [32] If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once.

The sovereign plan of God that includes Jesus' betrayal leads to a triple glory:

- 1) Christ is glorified (31: "Now is the Son of Man glorified") — this refers to his entire saving work that reaches its climax in his death on the cross. **The cross is the glory of Christ because it was always his mission to die for the sins of the world. It isn't a mark of failure but a mark of success, and he glories in his completion of his mission**

- 2) God the Father is glorified in the Son's obedience — **"God is glorified in him"**
- 3) God the Father promises to honor the Son's obedience by raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand. **"God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once" (32)**

Far from doubting the plan of God, Jesus expresses great confidence in it.

GRACE

And that confidence allows him to **comfort the disciples**:
"Little children"

(ILL) He's preparing them for what's about to happen as a father would a young child when something scary is about to happen.

(33) **"Where I am going, you cannot come"** — It's here that we begin to see the grace of God's sovereign plan.

Jesus and Jesus alone is able to carry this burden.

Yes, he has called his disciples to follow him in humble service to one another, but **none of them can follow him in this path towards laying his life down for sinners.**

The Apostle Paul put it succinctly in **1 Timothy 2:5**: "[5] **For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus**"

This was not a road that others could travel with him.

Peter tries to, but makes a fool of himself.

In verse 36 he wants to know where Jesus is going and why he can't come.

Jesus says he'll follow, but not now. Peter will follow Jesus in death, but not an atoning death on others' behalf.

Jesus' death is a special grace, and Peter need not try to prevent it or replicate it.

Peter is shocked by not deterred: **"I'll lay down my life for you!"**

This, my friends, is what you call "irony." That's precisely what Jesus is saying Peter *can't* do. **Yes, Peter would follow** Jesus in a martyr's death, and yes, Peter would follow Jesus into eternity. **But not today.** Peter COULD NOT follow Jesus in this atoning death.

In fact, he couldn't even make it that far this time.

Jesus somberly predicts Peter's betrayal, confirming his own need for the grace Jesus was going to die for.

GOSPEL LOVE

Our role is not to be Jesus. But that doesn't mean we don't have a role. In this sovereign plan, we see Christ's glory, we receive Christ's grace, and we reflect Christ's love that we receive in the gospel.

[34] A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. [35] By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Jesus' disciples are not called to replace or repeat his atoning sacrifice. Instead, they are called to live lives that have been transformed by it.

The signature mark of this transformed life is gospel love. Just as we receive the love of Jesus in the gospel, so we reflect that love to one another.

(APP to the church, GG)

We are to be so marked by this sacrificial love that the world looks at us and concludes, "those are the Jesus people." They're the ones who have seen his glory, received his grace and not reflect his character.

CONCLUSION

Main Idea: God's sovereign plan invites us to receive Jesus' savings work and reflect Jesus' sacrificial love.