

Betrayal

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Preacher: Reverend Neil Lachie Macdonald

[0:00] For thy peace, and time, and long, in thy truth, breaking me.

! My voice, Lord, do I hear, unto my supplication's voice, if I'm not tempted here.

For the good shall stand in thy role, Lord, should spark iniquity.

But yet with me, for him rests, that fear thou mayest be.

I wait for all, my soul not wait, my hope is in his word.

[1:53] For the good shall stand in thy voice, if I'm not tempted here.

For the good shall stand in thy voice, if I'm not tempted here. A warm welcome to this service this evening, those who are in the building, those who are online as well.

And again, it's good to have a few visiting with us from different congregations, and it's always an encouragement to have visitors with us. Just one or two notices. The first is to remind you that the session remains open, and we met last night with Lauren McSween-Varhees, who came forward, and also Miriam, sitting there in the front.

And we were encouraged, as we heard them profess faith in Christ, and they will come, God willing, and sit at the Lord's table for the first time with us tomorrow.

But for others who may be trusting the Lord, and who haven't yet come forward, the session remains open, and we'd be delighted to meet with any who want to come and speak and come forward.

Thank you.

[3:31] Thank you, David, and good evening. Nice to see you all again, and it's a pleasure to be here with you. Well, we've come to worship, so let's do that.

Let's sing to God's praise from the hymn Trust and Obey. When we walk with the Lord in the light of his word, what a glory he sheds on our way.

We'll stand if we're able and sing together. Let's sing together. When we walk with the Lord In the light of His Word What a glory He sheds on the way While we do His good will He abides with us still And with all who will trust and obey Trust and obey For there's no other way To be happy in Jesus But to trust and obey Not a shadow can rise

Not a cloud in the sky But His smile quickly drives it away Not a doubt, not a fear Not a sigh, not a tear Can abide while we trust and obey Trust and obey For there's no other way To be happy in Jesus But to trust and obey Not a burden we bear Not a sorrow we share But our joy He doth richly repay Not a grief, not a loss Not a throne, not a cross Not a cross Not a cross

But as blessed if we trust and obey Trust and obey For there's no other way To be happy in Jesus But to trust and obey But we never can prove The delight of His love Until all on the altar we lay For the favour he shows And the joy he bestows Are for them who will trust and obey Trust and obey For there's no other way To be happy in Jesus But to trust and obey

[6:58] And in fellowship sweet We will sit at His feet Or we'll walk by His side in the way What He says we will do What He says we will do Where He says we will go Never fear, only trust and obey Trust and obey For there's no other way To be happy in Jesus But to trust and obey Well folks, let's unite our hearts together in prayer and let's pray Lord God, our loving and heavenly Father we give thanks this evening for that reminder that if we trust and if we obey we will find true blessedness that if we believe in our hearts and confess with our lips that Jesus is Lord we will be saved that if we follow You if we walk in step with Your

Spirit if we listen to the instruction of Your Word if we heed its command then we will find the blessing of the Lord

And yet we recognise Lord God that so often when we do these things it actually can garner difficulty for us pushback opposition it may even lead us into conflict and that's because we live in a world and in a generation and in a culture that has turned away from You but Lord we thank You that You are sovereign that You are above all things over all things in all things through all things that You are the God who is from everlasting to everlasting the One who does not change who is the same yesterday today and forever the One who is steadfast and true the One who is kind and compassionate the One who is faithful always and so we give thanks that as we profess Your name and as we hold to the truths of Your Word that regardless of what comes to pass nothing can snatch us from Your hand nothing can remove us from Your presence nothing can rob us of the eternal security that is ours through our faith in Jesus Christ our Lord the One who has died as we deserve the One who has borne our sin and our shame the One who has propitiated who has turned away the wrath of God from us that we may be redeemed and reconciled that we might be renewed and ushered in to Your family as sons and as daughters what great love You have lavished upon us that we might be called the children of God and that is what we are this evening John reminds us if our trust is in You if our hope is in You if we are obedient to Your call upon our lives and to the work that You have set apart in advance for us to fulfill and so Lord we pray that You would work in our hearts our hearts that are so often conflicted crowded distracted idle lazy even apathetic to the point of indifference Lord may we be enthusiastic enthused impassioned by the wonder of the gospel that we own by the truth of Your grace by the experience of Your mercy through the knowledge of Your love may You transform us day in and day out Lord we recognize that we cannot be indifferent and we cannot be apathetic and we must not be idle if our trust is in You and we understand the far-reaching consequences of Your hope and the gospel hope that we find in Christ Jesus so Lord as we mine the depths of the unsearchable riches of Christ as we come to Your word day in and day out as we feed upon it just as our bodies need food for sustenance and nourishment so our souls long for the sustaining power of Your word the thirst quenching nature of Your spirit and Your word in our lives and we pray that that would enable us and empower us and enthuse us and equip us to be winsome witnesses for You in a generation that is lost to a world that has turned away from You and seeks to fill the God-shaped void in their hearts with anything and everything and yet always they come up empty they come up wanting for You and You alone are the only one are the only thing that can truly fulfill the deepest yearning of our hearts

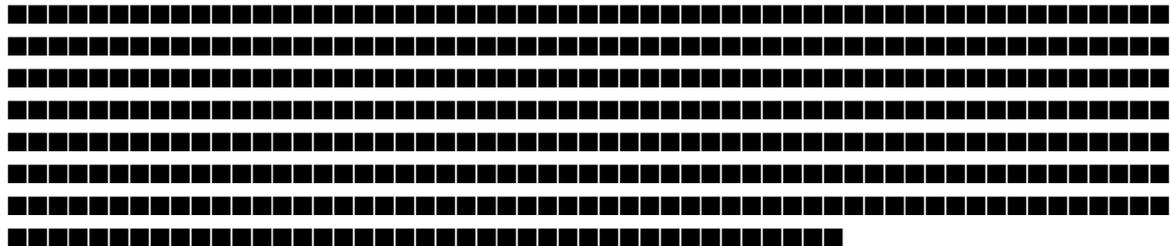
Lord we may look to many things we may indeed even enjoy many things but we pray that we would enthrone You that You would occupy the throne of our hearts that You would have our utmost attention and our highest priority that we would live to You and for You through You and in You in our lives here and now Lord we thank You for the great encouraging news of Miriam and Lauren's profession of faith in Jesus as they have publicly professed a faith that they have come to know that You have taken them from the dominion of darkness and brought them into the glorious kingdom of light through the Son whom You love through Jesus and Lord we pray that You would guard their hearts and their minds in Christ Jesus especially from the wiles of the evil one who prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour we pray that they would know to cast their burdens upon You for You care for them that they would stand firm in the grace that has been given them and that indeed we all would stand firm in the grace that we have been given that we would cast all of our burdens upon You as the psalmist reminds us because You will never let a righteous one fall

Lord we recognize that proximity is not enough as we will consider this evening that being close is not enough but we must be in Christ Jesus we thank You for their profession for Lauren and for Miriam and we pray that You would bless them and You would bless the profession of faith that they have made to encourage both themselves those whom they gathered with and indeed each and every one who will come into contact with them in the coming days Lord we pray that as we prepare to come to Your table tomorrow that You would be at work in our hearts and in our minds that we would be still and that we would know that You are God sometimes that's difficult for us to fathom when we look at our news feeds when we consider the headlines when we see the politics of the world stage where we see the conflicts that are forthcoming and that have been enacted when we see the oppression of one to another nation against nation peoples against peoples and

yet we recognize that none of this is a surprise that it is all foretold in Your [14:44] Word but Your Word reminds us that You are King of all so Lord we pray that we would not put our trust in princes in mortal men who cannot save for as the psalmist reminds us all their plans will come to nothing when they perish in the grave but we give thanks for those who are in Christ we will never perish we will live eternally with the Lord Jesus we have been given a hope that transforms not only our future not only our eternity but our present day as well and may You embolden us Lord God may You make us courageous witnesses!

for You as we speak openly of Jesus as we articulate our faith for how can those who are lost know about You if we do not tell them how can they understand if You are not displayed and exhibited demonstrated and verbalized Lord may the fruit may the the desires and the yearnings of our hearts be the fruit of our lips for Your Word reminds us from the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks give us a desire give us an interest give us an infatuation with Jesus and may we make Jesus known amongst the peoples to whom You have placed us in the families that You have made us a part of in the workplaces that You have given to us Lord may we see all of these places all of these people all of these opportunities to witness to and to speak of the wonder-working power of Jesus the one who saves to the uttermost the one who delights to come into the brokenness of this world and draw us close to the Father and so Lord we pray that You would bless us this evening and tomorrow as we gather in worship we pray that Your Word would be made alive to us through Your Holy Spirit we recognize that we can speak and point but Lord

You need to bring Your Spirit You need to make Your Word alive to deadened hearts to distracted minds for we know that Paul may plant and Apollos may water but You alone bring the growth that we may toil and labor but we do so in vain if You are not with us and so Lord speak speak now speak through Your Word encourage us in it we ask in Jesus' name Amen Folks we're going to sing again this time in the language of heaven I'm reliably informed from the Gaelic and from Psalm 27 it's the double stanza of verse 4 Psalm 27 is a psalm of seeking the Lord's light rejoicing in the Lord who is our light in the midst of darkness in the midst of difficulty in the face of oppression and the psalmist's desire is to be with the Lord and to be in His presence and Psalm 27 and verse 4 in the English reads one thing I have desired of the Lord that I will seek that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in His holy temple remain seated for this and we'll sing these two verses together and we'll sing of the Lord



SONG PLAYS SONG PLAYS SONG PLAYS

SONG PLAYS John chapter 13, and we're reading at verse 12.

[22:27] This is God's Word.

You also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. I am not speaking of all of you. I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled.

He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me. I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place, you may believe that I am he.

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

[23:56] After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, truly, truly, truly, truly, truly, truly, truly, truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.

The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side.

So, Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus. So, Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking.

So, that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, it is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.

So, when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. Then, after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him.

[25:01] Jesus said to him, what you are going to do, do quickly. Now, no one at the table knew why he said this to him. Some thought that because Jesus had the money bag, Jesus was telling him, buy what we need for the feast, or that he should give something to the poor.

So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out, and it was night. Amen. May the Lord bless that reading to us.

And before we turn to look at that for a short time this evening, again, let's sing to God's praise, this time from Psalm 139 in the Sing Psalms. We'll sing the first ten verses.

A great psalm reminding us of the sovereignty of God, of his omnipotence, of his omniscience, of his everlasting presence, that there is nowhere that we can go that he has not.

There is nowhere that we can go where he will not find us. And that's both an encouragement and a caution to us. Shall we stand, if we're able, and sing together?

[26:20] O Lord, you have examined me, you know me through and through.

My sitting, rising, all my thoughts are far gone to you.

My going loud and buying down are plain before your view.

Before I speak a word, O Lord, it is well known to you.

You held me in, me behind me for, you lay on me your hands.

[27:43] Such knowledge is too wonderful, too high, too understand.

Where can I from your spirit, me, or from your presence, go?

If to the heavens you are there, are in the depths below.

If I should take the wings of dawn and dwell beyond, on the sea, there also you would be my guide, your right and holding me.

Let's just pray again, folks. And now, Father, we give thanks that regardless of who we are or where we are, regardless of what we've done, that you are present, that you know us through and through, that you hem us in, that you understand our thoughts, you know them from afar.

[29:32] You're a God who has made us. We are fearfully and wonderfully made, as the psalmist reminds us. You have knit us together in our mother's womb.

You have set our days apart. And so, Lord, we pray that as we recognize your sovereign power and as we know your sovereign grace, we pray that we would delight in you as we walk through life with you.

We pray this evening for those who are all at sea, those who are uncertain and unsure, those who are doubtful and those who are skeptical, and even those who are cynical.

Lord, we thank you that you have an answer to each and every one, that your word is sufficient, and it is reliable, and it is authoritative, and it is relevant, and it is enough.

We thank you that there is no shortage of evidence to justify and to quantify your word. But, Lord, so often we put barriers up.

[30:43] We create obstacles that are not necessary, and it is largely because of the pride of the human heart. We are all proud people to one degree or another.

But, Lord, we pray that you would instill within us that meekness that Jesus exercised, meekness that is not weakness, but is strength under control, that we, like Christ, would humble ourselves, that we would look unto you, and that you would reveal yourself to us more and more.

And so, Lord, we pray now that as we turn to your words, that you would enliven it for us, that you would make it living in our minds, that you would inspire our hearts through it and by it.

For we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, I think it's a universal truth that we as people hate injustice.

We like justice to be done. We like there to be equity and impartiality. Of course, that's not always the case in the world in which we live.

[31:53] I read the story of an American man. It's always America, isn't it? But this man went out and he bought some very expensive cigars. So expensive were these cigars that he bought, he took out an insurance policy on these cigars.

And before he'd even paid one of his, or after he'd paid only one of his premiums toward this insurance policy, he had smoked all of his cigars, and he made a claim to his insurance company, citing that his cigars had been lost in a series of small fires.

You can imagine the insurance company refused to pay, citing the obvious reason that he had consumed the cigars by smoking them.

But being America, being a place where litigation is not unusual, the man sued and he won. He won against his insurer.

And in delivering the ruling, the judge agreed that the insurance company were right in claiming that the claim this man made was frivolous.

[33:12] But the judge stated, nevertheless, he held a policy from the company in which it warranted the cigars were insurable, and it had not determined or defined that by smoking them, that the insurance policy would be null and void.

So rather than engaging in a lengthy and costly appeal process, the company accepted the ruling and paid the man \$15,000 for the loss of his cigars in these series of small fires.

And we think, wow, he got away with it. That's incredible. It's even a wee bit galling. Well, shortly after this man had received his check, the insurance company had him arrested on charges of arson.

And with his own insurance claim and the testimony of his previous case being employed against him, he was convicted of intentionally burning his insured property and was sentenced to 24 months in jail and a \$24,000 fine.

And we laugh because we like that kind of story. We like it when somebody gets their comeuppance, when justice is served.

[34:44] The worst crime ever committed was the selling out of Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.

It is the greatest injustice ever known. And nobody at this Passover meal, the special meal that Jesus was sharing with his disciples, knew that night that it was Judas who was going to betray Jesus.

None of them knew that Judas Iscariot was a betrayer until it was revealed to them at this meal. Now, Judas is synonymous with treachery and betrayal.

He is the ultimate traitor, if any of you have been watching that recently. But Judas, the name itself, actually comes from the word Judah, which means praise.

When Judas was born, his parents' hope, his parents' desire was that he would grow up to praise the Lord. But as time has gone by, his name has become synonymous, not with praise, not with adoration, not with joy or blessing, but it has become synonymous with betrayal.

[36:02] And it's become synonymous with treachery, the friend who betrays a comrade. Of all of the birth announcements that I've heard, of all the baptisms that I've performed, and I'm sure David as well, I've never baptized a baby named Judas.

Indeed, I've never really heard of anyone naming their child Judas. It's a name that people generally steer well clear of because his name is synonymous with this act of betrayal where Jesus, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God, is sold, is betrayed for a sum of 30 pieces of silver.

Betrayal is a horrible thing, isn't it? Many of us have experienced betrayal. Marriages have been split apart through betrayal.

Friendships have been ended because of betrayal. Nations have split, and wars have begun because of betrayal.

And yet something within us loves the thought of a story of betrayal. Lies and betrayal is the salacious headline that draws us in. It's the clickbait that makes us think, oh, I want to find out about this, what has been happening.

[37:27] Well, here before us, we have the ultimate story, the ultimate instance of betrayal. And we're going to notice three things this evening

as we look at the betrayal perpetrated against Jesus.

Number one is the prediction that Jesus makes that this betrayal is going to take place. He selects an Old Testament scripture. He cites a psalm to say that, so that scripture will be fulfilled, this will take place.

Jesus predicts it. Jesus knows about it. It has been prophesied in advance. Then we're going to look at the paradox of betrayal. As bad as it was, it would still be used in a way that would benefit, would be of purpose to the disciples, the other disciples, who didn't betray Jesus.

So it would be employed for something good. The blessing would come from that betrayal, ultimately. And third, we'll notice the proximity of the betrayer.

So we're going to notice the prediction, the paradox, and the proximity of the betrayer, where he was at the table, and what that teaches us this evening as we prepare to come to the Lord's table tomorrow.

[38:43] Just in case you're wondering, why on earth are we thinking about Judas and his betrayal the night before communion? Well, all scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching, correcting, and training in righteousness, Paul reminds us as he writes to Timothy.

And hopefully, by the end of this evening, you will understand where we're going. So number one, the prediction, the prediction of betrayal. What's interesting here is that it didn't surprise Jesus.

This was no surprise to Jesus that Judas was about to betray him. In fact, Jesus cites an Old Testament passage.

He cites Psalm 41, where David, King David, wrote a psalm about a similar circumstance, about a man whom he had loved, one whom he was close to, one who had been his friend, one who was his closest trusted counsel, counsel, a man who had sat at his table and eaten his food, but who had ultimately betrayed him.

Ahithophel, if you remember. Psalm 41, verse 9, even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.

[40:00] So David writes of Ahithophel. You remember, David had a son, Absalom. Absalom. Absalom had rebelled, against David.

He had tried to usurp the kingdom. But during that period, if there was one person that David knew that he could rely upon, one person that he knew that he could trust, his closest associate would have been Ahithophel.

But ultimately, Ahithophel was a traitor. And ultimately, he betrayed David. And similar to Judas, he went out and hung himself.

Another sad story. But he speaks here of lifting his heel against David. The idea there is to kick a person when they're down.

If what Absalom would have done to David wasn't bad enough, Ahithophel kicked David when he was down, when he was already down. He got another kicking from the one who he thought he was closest to and who was his most trusted advisor.

[41:10] Now, why is this important? Why does John bring this into the story? Why does he include this in this account of the Last Supper? Well, here's why.

For David, it was a surprise. For David, it was a shock when Ahithophel betrayed him. But Jesus is omniscient.

Jesus knows everything. Jesus is all-knowing. And we discover in the Gospel of John, John wants to remind us again and again of Christ's knowledge and the fact that he is in total control, that there's nothing that is a surprise to him because of who he is.

He is second member of the Trinity. He is God in human flesh. He's not an unsuspecting victim. He's not a helpless passenger.

He knows what is happening. He knows it all in advance. He knows everything. We see that again and again through Jesus' experience, don't we? Remember when he meets the woman of Samaria at the well and they're having a conversation and so often Jesus doesn't skirt around the issues.

[42:25] He goes right into the heart of the matter, doesn't he? Go and call your husband, he says to her. She says, well, I don't actually have a husband. He says, you're right, you don't have a husband, you've had five and the guy that you're living with just now, well, he's not even

your husband.

Or does she say, oh, I perceive that you're a prophet. In Luke 6 where Jesus at the synagogue and there's people watching him keeping their beady eye upon him, there's the man with the withered hand there, they want to see what Jesus is going to do.

The Bible says, Jesus knowing their thoughts. He knew their thoughts. He knew what was in the heart of man. In Matthew chapter 12, I believe you're working through Matthew just now, there was a man who was demon-possessed.

He was mute. He was deaf. Jesus healed him. Jesus delivered him from that demon. And as soon as the man was cured, some of the audience said, well, this man, Jesus, just cast demons out by the name of Beelzebub, the prince of demons.

He did it in Satan's power. Once again, we read, but Jesus knowing their thoughts, knowing their thoughts. He knows our thoughts.

[43:43] He knows everyone's thoughts. He knows not just our actions. He knows what we're thinking. He knows them from afar, our thoughts, as we just sang. In Psalm 139, he knows what we are thinking.

And so here in this moment, Jesus knows that it's Judas, and he knows that it's Judas that's going to betray him. Imagine living like that. Imagine knowing every negative thing that's going to happen in your experience.

It would be absolutely paralyzing, wouldn't it? It would be so debilitating, knowing the horrors that lie ahead of us. There is grace. There is mercy in God withholding these things from our knowledge, because if we knew them all, we would be undone, would we not?

Knowing that the loved one's going to get into a terrible car accident, or knowing when a parent is going to die, or when a child is going to pass, knowing all of the negative things, it would be absolutely paralyzing for us, but for Jesus, he knew it all.

He knew that Judas was going to betray him. He knew that Peter was going to deny him. He knew that Thomas was going to doubt him. He knows all of these things.

[45:07] But just because he knew these things doesn't mean that he wasn't troubled by them. Verse 21, after he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, very truly, I tell you, one of you is going to betray me.

The word troubled. We see it in John 11 when he goes to the grave of Lazarus, and he's deeply troubled in spirit. It's like the snorting of a horse.

It's that shuddering, almost, that is within him. And what that reminds us is that Jesus, whilst fully God, became fully man.

Sometimes we so emphasize the deity of Christ that we neglect the humanity of Jesus. He was human, just like we are.

He took to himself all of the frailties of the human frame, and yet was without sin. It's the amazing thing, isn't it? We might be tempted to think, well, you know, he's God in the flesh, he knew everything that was happening, he's kind of detached and removed and indifferent to these things that are happening, but that's not the case.

[46:22] He's deeply moved, he's deeply troubled, because one whom he'd chosen, one whom he'd called, one who he classified as a friend, one of the inner circle was going to betray him, and it troubled him, because he's fully human.

Hebrews 4 reminds us that he was in all points tempted like we are, yet he was without sin. But also notice what Jesus did.

He says, I'm not referring, verse 18, to all of you. I know those whom I have chosen. Look at that word, chosen. Sovereign election, predestination.

We can't necessarily go down that route tonight. We don't have time for that. It's not the direction of our travel. But Jesus knew everything, and he knew whom he'd called, and he knew what was in their hearts.

And many times, many opportunities, again and again, Judas was given the opportunity opportunity to know, to love, to follow Jesus.

[47:33] He was called by Jesus. It even reminds us in Luke chapter 6 that on one of those days, Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray and spent

the night praying to God.

When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles. And he gives us all the names, including Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. So, here's the question that rises in our minds. If Jesus knew that Judas was going to deny him, why did Jesus choose him to be part of his twelve in the first place?

Well, there are a couple of reasons, I think. Number one is stated in what we've just read in the Scripture. It's so that Scripture might be fulfilled.

So that what had been predicted previously, what had been prophesied, would be fulfilled. That Jesus understood there had to be some catalyst, there had to be some mechanism by which the fulfillment of his mission would come to pass.

[48:45] Judas was that mechanism. Judas was this betrayer. And this betrayal would be the ignition to the passion. Judas' betrayal was the earthly means by which Jesus would fulfill the work the Father had given him to do.

So, reason number one, to fulfill Scripture. Reason number two is on a more human level, anyone who loves, to love is to be vulnerable, is it not?

Love risks being hurt. Love hurts, as the song goes. If you're going to commit yourself, if we commit ourselves to a loving relationship with any other person, we open ourselves up to the possibility of being hurt, of being betrayed, of being deserted, of experiencing pain and difficulty and hardship along the way.

That's why when we marry people, that's why when we stand at the altar, we don't say for better or best, or for richer or for riches, or until we live happily ever after.

We say for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer in sickness and in health. Our commitment is in the good and it's in the bad because we recognize that it's not always good.

[50:12] It's easy to love an ideal person, isn't it? The challenge is to love a real person. In giving love, there is a vulnerability that comes with that.

Yeah, sure, Jesus could have done an island sugar, Judas, you're fired, you're out of there. The truth is that we might be betrayed, that somebody may well take advantage of us.

We could be misrepresented by someone. It could very well be by somebody who we love and they may bring hurt into our experience.

But what do we do? Jesus says that we should choose to love anyway. Whose feet did Jesus wash at this supper? His disciples' feet.

Washing the feet of the betrayer, the one who he knew was going to betray him and still he showed him love and he exercised grace and he showed restraint.

[51:20] I'm going to choose Judas, I'm going to give him opportunity again and again and again, but I know that he's going to fulfill Scripture, but still I'm going to love him, but still I'm going to show him my grace, but still I'm going to show him and give him opportunity.

So we see here the prediction of that betrayal. Secondly, we see the paradox of this betrayal. I'm telling you now before it happens so that when it does happen you will believe that I am who I am, says Jesus.

These are amazing words really and there's such, well there are so many lessons within them. Let me just give you three that come from this.

He says there are three benefits that come from knowing this in advance. Number one, it will produce a greater trust in the Savior.

It will produce a greater trust in the Savior so that when it does happen you will believe that I am who I am. He didn't say, well now I'm going to tell you who the betrayer is so that when you find out you can take him outside and give him a good hiding.

[52:37] He doesn't say that. Peter would have loved that. Many of us probably would have loved that as well. No, I'm going to tell you in advance so that when it does happen you will understand who I am, that you will have more clarity and more trust and more reliance upon me, that you'll see that all of the claims that I have made, that all of the truth that I have shared with you is actually true.

Like on the Easter morning when the women come to the grave and the angel says, who is it that you're looking for? You're looking for Jesus. He is not here for he has risen just as he said. Just as he said. All of these things will come to pass just as he says. All of the predictions of Jesus are being fulfilled.

And Jesus wants them to know that. God and God alone is the one who makes promises and keeps promises. He's the covenant-making, covenant-keeping God.

There is nobody like him. There is nobody sovereign. He is the king of kings. You know, in the Old Testament where God challenges the false gods and goddesses, you know, and he says to them, well, let's see, let's see you predict the future line.

[54:00] Let's see you bring to pass. Isaiah 41, tell us what the future holds so we may know that you are gods. Do something, do something, whether good or bad, so that we will be dismayed and filled with fear.

Listen, put your money where your mouth is, God says to them. But they can't, of course, because he and he alone is the one with power. So he says, I want to tell you these things so that when they come to pass, you'll have greater confidence in me and how that is amplified for you and I tonight because we have the whole revelation of Scripture.

We have the whole canon of the Bible. We have this great story from Genesis to Revelation. We have all of the information contained therein. We have all of the fulfilled promises noted down for us.

What confidence we can have in the Savior, but what trust we can have in his word. That's the second thing. It will produce a greater trust in the Savior, but it will also produce a greater trust in Scripture, won't it?

In quoting Psalm 41, Jesus is using something that was predicted long before it happened. And he's saying, look, my word is verifiably true.

[55:22] It's authentic and it's reliable and it stands up to scrutiny and it's not fearful of critical evaluation because it's true and something that's true doesn't need to be feared.

And his word is absolutely true. And his prophecy transforms the way that we look at Scripture because it showcases the reliability, the veracity, the authority of the Bible.

We live in unstable times. We live in an uncertain world in many ways. There is financial crises, there's political turmoil, there is war and civil war and rumors of war and natural disasters and the apparent climate crisis and the list goes on.

And so, where do we go? To what do we turn? To what absolute truth? To what steadfast and steadying thing can we turn to in times such as this? Well, we say the Bible, the Word of God, the revelation of God Himself, the One who promises and who fulfills, who delivers on His promises, the One in whom we can have absolute confidence because He does not change and He does not blow hot and cold.

He disciplines us. He draws us close to Himself. You know the story of John Newton, I'm sure. John Newton raised in a Christian home.

[57:05] His parents died when he was just a child at six years of age. His parents had given him an upbringing until that point rooted in the truth of Scripture.

But after their death he goes to live with relatives. He doesn't get on with these relatives. It's a hard time for him, difficult having lost both of his parents.

He joins the Navy, the British Navy, as a teenager. He doesn't like it. He goes AWOL. He leaves the Navy and he joins the slave trade.

Now he's trafficking humans in the slave trade. He's making money from shuffling them around the world. Well, long story short, after years of working in the slave trade, he's coming back to England, going home, he's on a boat, and he encounters this storm.

And he thinks he's going to die in this storm. And in that moment, all of the Scriptures that his parents had instilled in him at the young age, between his birth and age six, come flooding back to him.

[58:16] He hadn't thought about them for years. A reminder to us that we should teach our children in the way that they should go, and they will never depart from it. These Scriptures, they come to his mind, and he cries out to the Lord for the first time in many years.

His life is spared, he makes it home, and he pens those familiar words, amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found was blind, but now I see. Jesus telling them about what's coming will produce a greater trust in him as Savior, will produce a greater trust in his word and scripture, and will also lead to a greater trust in service.

Greater trust in service. Verse 20, very truly I tell you, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me, and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me.

He's reliable. He's calling on them to rely upon him. Jesus is saying, I am the one who is unchangeable.

[59:25] I am the one in whom you can rely upon. I am the one that you should give your life to in service, because if you trust in me, then I am sent by the Lord himself, and we will reveal ourselves, and indeed, we know in John 14, we will make our dwelling in your heart.

So, we've seen the prediction of betrayal, we see the paradox of betrayal, time is vanishing, thirdly, and finally, we see the proximity of the betrayer. Verse 21, when Jesus had said these things, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, most assuredly, truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.

According to Matthew, the disciples start to say, is it me? Is it me, Lord? Not I, Lord. Even Judas said, is it me? He knew it was him, but he's falling in with the crowd, he's trying to put on a good show.

The disciples are perplexed by this reality. But there's one who's leaning in toward Jesus, the one, the disciple whom he loved.

Now, if you know Scripture, you know that's John, that's the writer of this gospel. And John is the closest to Jesus. He's leaning in toward him.

[60:43] And Simon Peter says to him, ask him who it is. Find out, find out who it is. Ask him which one he means. Lord, John says, who is it?

And Jesus says, the one to whom I will pass this bread to. Now, many of us have the picture of the Last Supper, like the Leonardo da Vinci painting of the Last Supper.

You know, Jesus in the middle of a big table and his disciples either side. But the reality is that's not how it was. It would have been a U-shaped table. It would have been low to the ground. They would have been leaning on one elbow with their legs protruding away from the table.

And what that tells us is John was on the right side of Jesus, on his left elbow, inclined toward Jesus, and the next in the line to the left of Jesus was Judas, and his feet closer to Jesus, and he was inclined away from Jesus.

And there's a real picture there, isn't there? John, concerned to be close to Jesus, Judas pointing away from Jesus.

[61:51] There's a picture there, isn't there? They're both in the same room. They both have relative proximity towards Jesus. One is drawing closer and the other one is edging away.

I wonder, where are you in that sense this evening? Are you longing to be closer to the Savior? Are you drawing closer to Him, yearning to know more, and to get closer and to learn from Him?

Or are you holding Him at arm's length and even trying to move away from Him? John and Judas are both in the room with Jesus, but only one is moving toward Jesus.

It's not enough just to come into the presence. It's not enough just to come to church, tick. it's what we do with Jesus that matters.

As we come to His table, are we inclining toward Him, or are we moving away from Him? That's a question that you have to answer for yourself this evening.

[63:11] John's desire was to be closer and closer and closer to Jesus, to rest even on His chest. Judas, the opposite, to move further and to put on a good show.

Is it me, Lord? He may have put on a good show, and it might have looked good to the disciples around about him, but Jesus knew everything. Jesus knew His heart, and He knew what He was going to do, and Jesus this evening knows your heart, knows my heart, knows why we're here, knows the motivations of our hearts, and the thoughts of our minds, and the inclination of our hearts and our minds.

John concludes this portion that we've read with saying, Judas went out, and it was night. And it's a picturesque description, because it just speaks of darkness.

Judas is enveloped by the darkness. darkness. John speaks a lot about contrast in his gospel, and a contrast that he often appeals to is the contrast between darkness and light.

Right at the beginning of his gospel, the true light that gave light to everyone was coming into the world, but the world did not recognize him. Why? Because men love darkness and not light.

[64:37] Jesus said of Himself, I am the light of the world. And yet here we have a picture of Judas, one who was in with the twelve, who was close to Jesus, but who was enveloped by darkness, and we know ultimately was lost.

I'm glad that you're here tonight. I'm glad that you're in the building. But the greater question is, are you in Christ? Are you, like John, inclined toward him, looking toward him, listening to him, longing to know more of him?

Or are you leaning away? Are you being drawn into the darkness? What is filling your heart and your mind this evening?

Is it the light and the life of Jesus? If it is, then your place is at His table tomorrow as we take the bread and as we take the wine, as we rejoice in all that He has done for us.

Right up until the very end, Jesus is giving opportunity to Judas to turn, to repent, to come, to come back.

[66:00] Perhaps He's giving you the same opportunity this evening. Will you listen to Him? will you incline toward Him or will you turn away from Him?

You know, the answer to that question carries with it eternal consequences. Let's pray. God, our Father, we thank You for the grace of Jesus that calls us when we are attracted to the darkness, when we are tempted to turn away.

He stands with open arms beckoning us to come, come and to know rest and rest for our souls.

Lord, we thank You that not one of us here has made it, not one of us is perfect, that we are sinners, saved but by the grace of God.

We pray that each and everyone here tonight would know that grace, would rest in that grace, would incline themselves toward the Savior, the one who knows all things, who knew all from the beginning and yet exercised grace and showed love and gave opportunity that Judas might turn.

Lord, may we learn from the folly of Judas' action and may we turn to the Savior who beckons us to come. In His name we pray. Amen.

[67:25] Folks, we're going to conclude by singing from the hymn Yet Not I, I think Stuart's going to read this in this yet, yet not I, but Christ in me.

Great words as we think of the meaning of why we come together at communion is to celebrate that truth, yet not I, but Christ in me.

It is all of Jesus. Let's stand if we're able and sing together. Amen. God's gift of grace is Jesus my Redeemer.

There is no more for heaven now to give. He is my joy, my righteousness and freedom, my steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace.

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus, for my life is wholly bound to His.

[68:45] O how strange and divine I can sing, all is mine, yet not I, but through Christ in me.

The night is dark, but I am not forsaken, for by my side the Saviour He will stay.

I labor on in weakness and rejoicing, for in my need His power is displayed.

To this I hold, my shepherd will defend me, through the deepest body He will lead.

O the night has been gone and I shall overcome, yet not I, but through Christ in me.

[69:51] Fate I dread, I know I am forgiven, the future sure, the price it has been paid, for Jesus for Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon, and He was raised to overthrow the grave.

To this I hold, my sin has been defeated, Jesus now and never is my plea.

O the chains are released, I can sing, I am free, yet not I, but through Christ in me.

With every breath, I long to follow Jesus, for He has said that He will bring me home, and day by day I know He will be new, until I stand with joy before the throne.

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus, all the glory evermore to Him.

[71:21] When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat, yet not I, but through Christ in me.

When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat, yet not I, but through Christ in me.

And now may the grace, the mercy, and the peace of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, rest and remain with us all now, and evermore, and all God's people say, Amen.

Amen.