



THE BLACKLIST | THE BETRAYER | Week 5 April 7, 2019

Matthew 26:14-16; 21-22; 47-49

Opening: During the Lenten season we are reflecting on the opposition that Jesus encounters on the way to the cross. We have discussed the Chief Priests and the Pharisees, Caiaphas, Herod and last week we discussed Peter. It's extremely helpful for our own spiritual formation to understand what motivated their hostilities, perhaps what blinded them, from the very Truth in their midst. And once we understand we can prayerfully ask, "Are we doing anything like that?"

Context: We have all experienced the surprising adaptability and susceptibility of human nature. A classic example is high school reunion. You go back to the familiar surroundings of your high school years and you see people you haven't seen in a decade. You thought you knew them well in high school and yet when you see them now you are surprised and say to yourself "How did that happen?" It may be surprising success or surprising failure. Today we consider Judas and we ask, "How did that happen?"

The Betrayer Why: Read Matthew 26:14-16. Pastor Dan starts with a list of conventional passions like greed, anger, fear, lust, envy, ambition and hatred. *In your opinion do you think any of these explain WHY Judas betrayed Jesus? Which one of these are you most susceptible to? Why? How does it affect your relationships?*

The Betrayer "Surely you don't mean me": Look closely at Matthew 26:21-22. Imagine the setting. After foot-washing and a poignant meal with Jesus' closest companions Jesus makes this announcement of betrayal. *Placing yourself on the scene, what would have been your response to this shocking statement of Jesus?*

"How did that Happen?": Pastor Dan describes the remarkable three year experience Judas lived as a disciple of Jesus. *Share with each other the opportunities the disciples, including Judas, enjoyed during their time with Jesus. What had they committed to and what had they been given? What is your most remarkable spiritual memory or experience? How has that impacted you? How has the impact changed over time?*

More than the Beginning: We all know stories, like the high school reunion, where things start one way and end another. Pastor Dan muses about "temptation and off-center compass bearings." He comments about "slippage secret" and "cover-ups." *What is the secret of not just starting well but finishing well? What helps you stay centered on "true north?"*



Exposure vs. Taking In: Judas was exposed to Jesus. He heard Jesus teach. He had the chance to discuss things that weren't clear. He saw the miracles. *How could Judas then not take in the teaching and practice "the WAY?"* Pastor Dan cites the following:

- *Matthew 6:24* money
- *John 18:36* politics
- *Matthew 5:43-44* love and forgiveness
- *Matthew 7:13-14* the narrow way

Choose one or two of these and talk about how it influences your life today. How do you use it in your thinking and living? Imagine if you had heard it from Jesus.

The Challenge: Pastor Dan concludes, "If you can't point to specific places where Jesus has actually CHANGED the way you use money, or think about politics, or deal with your enemies, or practice forgiveness, then you haven't been taking Jesus in." *Read Luke 8:1-18*
Pastor Dan asks us to answer vs 18. How do you listen? How soft is your soil? Satan is part of the picture, is he stealing the seed? How would you know if he did? Who can you talk to about it?

Only God Changes Hearts: Dan encourages us with two things. His theory is that Jesus would have forgiven Judas with an invitation to new life had Judas asked. That is the Father's love. He also encouraged us to keep sowing new life. It is not our performance that makes the seed sprout and grow, only God can change the human heart. *What does this encouragement mean for you? Is there someone you would like the group to pray for? Share the seeds you are sowing.*

Practice of the Week: Lord, show me. Psalm 139

This week read Psalm 139 and meditate on vs. 23-24. Ask God to show you where your compass has gone off course. Listen and hear the loving correction with thanksgiving. Your beginning is in the past, God is joyfully with you for your strong finish.

Family Formation: Hearing, listening, understanding....what's the difference?

What can we pray about? We all have stories about hearing but not "listening" where you know the child physically heard the sound waves but there was no response—no listening. Talk about a recent example and make it funny if you can, maybe even self-deprecating. Then read Luke 8:1-15. Talk about the importance of hearing that Word.

Additional Resources: During this Lenten season we have been providing weekly devotionals that complement the previous Sunday's message. This Monday reflect on the one for Judas. They can be found at ChristChurch.us/lentdevo19.

We'd love to hear from you!
If you have thoughts questions, comments, ideas on how to make these study guides more meaningful for you and your group, please let us know.

We also enjoy hearing how God is using these scriptures and study guides in your lives.

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