

Hands Of Betrayal

John 13:21-30 ²¹ When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me." ²² Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke. ²³ Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. ²⁴ Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke. ²⁵ Then, leaning back on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, "Lord, who is it?" ²⁶ Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it." And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon. ²⁷ Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly." ²⁸ But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him. ²⁹ For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, "Buy *those things* we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor. ³⁰ Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night.

Is there any sin greater than a betrayal at the hand of someone we love and trust? Is there anything that hurts more or is harder to forgive than betrayal by someone who was close to us? Forgiving someone whom we trusted who has betrayed is probably one of the hardest things God calls us to do.

In one of C S Lewis' Narnia Chronicle books, *The Voyage Of The Dawn Treader*, Lucy finds a spell that will let her see anything she wants. She uses it to spy on one of her closest friends. She hears her friend saying some really mean things about her behind her back. The book implies that Lucy and that girl were never friends again even though Aslan explains that she had only said those things to try and fit in with another group of girls.

Jesus was betrayed not once but twice, once of course by Judas in our text.

Why did Judas do it? What made Judas sink so low that he sold out Jesus for a handful of silver? What leads us to betray and hurt one another?

The gospel of John reveals a lot to us about the heart of Judas.

John 12:4-7 ⁴ Then 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. ⁷ But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial.

Why did he do it?

1. He was greedy. The love of money had gotten a hold of his heart. This was Judas' particularly weakness.
2. He was guilty. He had already started down that road. Once we start down a particular road its very easy to take another step and another step.
3. He was probably angry. Jesus had publicly rebuked him and he was probably smarting a little from that rebuke. He may well have been angry and in his anger allowed himself to be led into sin.

In the Gospel of Matthew we have a hint at a fourth reason as well

Matthew 27:3 ³ Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

4. He rationalized it. This passage implies that Judas justified his sin by thinking, well no one will get hurt. He probably thought something along the lines of, they will let Jesus go and then we will have an extra 30 pieces of silver.

Does all of this sound familiar? Greed the desire for something that is not mine, or even the thought that well I deserve that. Rationalizations, I'm not hurting anyone, this will help people out in the long run. Anger, look at what they did to me. And I've already done it, I've already started down that road, what's the big deal if I do it one more time.

I think in Judas' thoughts we can all hear echoes of our own thoughts; in Judas' hands we can see the reflections of our own hands.

Are my hands the hands of a betrayer?

In our text Jesus address not just Judas but all the disciples. "One of you will betray me." It seems as if each of the disciples began to ask the question, each began to wonder, "Is it I?"

Jesus could have taken Judas aside and spoken to him in person but he didn't he addressed all twelve. Did he do that because he wanted everyone of them to examine their own hearts, their own greed, their own excuses, their own weaknesses?

Certainly God calls us to examine our own hearts and hands. What Judas did is between him and Jesus and God. What concerns us tonight is what is in our own hearts.

How easy it is for Satan to lead us astray with these same four thoughts, greed, anger, excuses, and guilt. He leads us like a bull with ring in its nose. Often we don't even fight but just follow Satan docilly into betrayal. Betrayal of one another, and betrayal of Christ.

And yet despite how easily Satan leads us into sin and even betrayal, we are often so unwilling to forgive one another.

I said Jesus was betrayed twice, once by Judas. What was the second time? We could add to this list Peter and the other disciples.

We could add to that list the jeers of the crowds at the foot of the cross. We could add to this list our own hands, but all of those are insignificant compared to the real betrayal. And really all of those are one and the same, humans all humans betrayed Jesus.

Isaiah 53:6a ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way;

The second betrayal was much worse than any of these. The second betrayal was when the Father abandoned Jesus on the cross. How does Isaiah 53:6 end?

Isaiah 53:6b And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

That's right his own father betrayed, and abandoned Jesus and Jesus accepted this betrayal for our sakes. For the sake of those who had already betrayed and abandoned him.

In our sinfulness we so often betray even those we love the most. In our sinfulness we refuse to forgive those who have betrayed us, even though we can not possibly claim to be any better. But Christ accepted betrayal by the Father and death for the sake of those who had betrayed him. The hands of Judas as well as the betrayal of our own hands are washed clean in the blood of Christ.

Amen