



Repentance Tabernacle Church

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ET TU, Judas?

Focus Verses: John 18:4-7 - ⁴Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? ⁵They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. ⁶As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. ⁷Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

Lesson Text: John 18:1-11

Truth About God: God loves everyone, even those who reject Him.

Truth For My Life: By His grace, I will stay close to God, no matter what.

John's Gospel begins Jesus' earthly ministry with His baptism and disciple selection. While John only recorded the specific calls of Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip, and Nathaniel (John 1:40-51), he reported the total core disciples as twelve in agreement with the other Gospel writers (John 6:67-71). This inner circle began believing when they saw Jesus turn water to wine (John 2:11). After encountering many more of Jesus' signs and teachings, they received a powerful commission to make disciples. Jesus picked Judas to be one of those chosen men.

Judas was there when Jesus asked the disciples who people thought He was. Judas allowed an evil spirit to guide his thoughts and actions rather than trust Jesus. Jesus would not kick out the Romans and keep the disciples' purse full. Jesus' mission sprang from a different place than a downtrodden, frustrated man's quest for vindication. After Judas disappeared from the other disciples, he showed up at the familiar retreat garden just to identify His one-time teacher for the officers and soldiers.

Jesus spoke first with a simple question: "*Whom seek ye?*" Since it was now time to be glorified, He revealed Himself as Jesus of Nazareth (John 18:4-5). In this case the arresting party could not help but respond appropriately; they went backward and fell to the ground. They came with swords and spears. Jesus simply spoke words of revelation. They involuntarily assumed a posture of worship. His words always have more power and authority than the weapons formed against Him.

After the soldiers composed themselves from their fall, Jesus asked them again whom they sought. It seems Jesus had to remind them of their mission. They answered the same as before "*Jesus of Nazareth*" (John 18:7). He revealed the second time that He was the one. Soldiers follow their officers' orders. Chief priests and Pharisees both had their selfish reasons for arresting Jesus. The guards bound Jesus and took Him to their masters for trial. Judas was wrong to betray Jesus, but Peter was wrong too. The sword needed to be put away. Jesus was ready to drink the painful, bitter cup. He alone would take the step toward the cross.

The same Jesus who called the twelve apostles still calls us to follow Him today. The similarities do not stop there. While contemporary disciples have the advantage of reading the end of John's Gospel, we still must walk by faith and trust Jesus. **The disciples' stories have been written, but ours are still being written.** But every disciple comes to the same garden moment as Judas. Jesus' ways differ from our expectations. Unexpected losses, ministry disappointments, failure of others, and the long-delayed thoughts spring unbid to mind. Is Jesus really true? Is the Word really trustworthy? These questions call disciples back to simple faith. **While His plans may not match expectations today any more than they did for Judas, we must trust Jesus.** We choose to walk by faith.

As we read the story from a two-thousand-year distance, we know Jesus' death was for whosoever will, rather than just the eleven at His side on that day. **Jesus' arrest calls us to make a choice:** will we be disappointed by Jesus' kingdom plan and betray Him, or will we kneel in awe of His compassion for all humanity? Jesus refuses to limit His offer of grace. Yet we know more challenges will present themselves. Some challenges arise from occurrences like aging and storms. Other problems flow from being part of a broken culture around us. Still other crises explode out of moments when the light within us clashes with darkness around us as we have an opportunity to suffer for Jesus' sake.

God has always graced His faithful people in difficult times. We stand committed to the Savior regardless of the dangers we face, for nothing has the capacity to separate us from God's love (Romans 8:38-39). **Make a commitment to stay close to Jesus regardless of the crises you may face in the future.**