

Sermon Notes, April 2, 2017 The Passion of Jesus—Betrayal, John 13:18-30

During Lent, millions of Christians are thinking about the meaning of the suffering and death of Jesus. We're looking at it through the eyes of the Apostle John, the gospel writer. As we get into this morning's passage we see that the subject of the passage is sin, but also in particular it's how Jesus Christ deals with sin at the Lord's Supper, at the Table.

The late psychologist Karl Menninger wrote a book entitled, *Whatever Became of Sin?* He said, "Here's the irony: In the name of helping people deal with guilt, we got rid of the concept of sin. These psychologists say, that the very effort to help people with guilt by getting rid of the concept of sin now may actually be hurting them, because without a concept of sin, what can you do about the indelibility of guilt? Blaise Pascal stated it quite poignantly when he said, "Certainly nothing offends us more rudely than [the doctrine of sin]; and yet, without this mystery, the most incomprehensible of all, we are incomprehensible to ourselves." Without a good concept of sin and understanding of sin, how do you repent? How do you get forgiven? When Jesus Christ, when he meets you at the Table, where he says he is most present, he notices things.

I want to suggest that there are two very important truths in this passage. The two truths are that sin is a betrayal of the Lord, and that the Lord at his Table loves to melt betrayers.

On the one hand, this passage teaches us that sin is betrayal.

The word betray literally means to take something off your hands, to get rid of your obligations. To *betray* means to take someone and to remove their power over you. Judas betrayed Jesus. Judas in his heart clearly stood in opposition to Jesus and what he came to do. What does *betray* mean? It means to put Jesus in a condition where Judas no longer had to deal with Jesus' power and authority and control of his life, and that

Judas could take control of the situation to try to maneuver Jesus into doing things his way.

It says in Rom. 8:7, “The natural heart is enmity toward God. It will not submit to the law of God; indeed, it *cannot*.” *That* is the radical doctrine of sin that many people find too radical for their own tastes. what that means is betrayal, an absolute hostility (*the word the Bible uses!*) to the power & authority claims of Jesus Christ is how your heart in its natural state must overwhelmingly inevitably respond. This is the teaching of this passage *implicitly* and it’s the teaching of the Bible *explicitly*.

Jesus Christ comes to you to say at the Table (as we’re going to see in a second here), what he says to Judas and saying to you is, “My dear friend, I want your glory. I want your complete obedience. You can’t pick and choose between everything I have taught. You must obey *all* of my teaching. You must submit completely to my Word and my Spirit if you’re ever going to achieve that glory, my beloved.” What does the human heart say? “Get away! I can’t breathe. I need my options open. I need my freedom.”

The second half of betrayal is you’re doing this to somebody to whom you owe that power. An example of it: Treason.

What it means to betray the Lord is simply to act as if you have rights you don’t have; to say,

“Get out of my life,” when you really owe him everything.

So, what does it mean for you today to acknowledge your debt? It means to come to Jesus Christ and say, “My dear Lord, I asked you into my life some years ago. I’ve tried to deal with you, but I see today that the only reason I’m alive today is because of you. The only reason I’ve been able to live is because of you. The only reason my life has any value is because of you.

Maybe some of you are sad, some of you are full of self-pity, some of you are depressed, some of you are angry, some of you are worried and anxious, maybe some of you live in a place of frustration, because you have not, through an act of the will, been continually reminding yourself of what you owe him.

If you don't every day, by an act of the will, remind yourself of what you owe him and what he has done for you, you're going to have the depression, you're going to have the anger, you're going to have the self-pity, you're going to have the worry.

Jesus brings up betrayal, but why is Jesus so discreet? Why is he so careful? Why won't he tell anybody else? Because he's not trying to shatter Judas; he's trying to melt his heart. He's not trying to condemn Judas; he's trying to convert Judas.

Giving Judas this 'piece of bread' is a final act of supreme love. What is Jesus saying to the betrayer (and notice they all thought they might have been) at his Table? He is not harsh. He would never treat us the way we treat him. *Never*. The cross is the answer to that! What is he saying? It's as David says, "You have searched me, LORD, and you know me." That's what Jesus says. "I see you." And he does it in the most discreet way.

Some of you are at this Table with some pretty difficult things in your life. Anger. Envy. Deep hurt. Guilt. Bitterness.

Get this: He won't tell anybody. This is the loving Savior. He's here, though, to melt you. He's saying, "I see you and I love you and I want you to get rid of these things—to unburden yourself." He is not saying, "Don't partake." He's saying, "Understand what it means to partake.

Drop the things in your life that are keeping you from full submission to my authority and the fullness of life that I came to bring you. I am your life."