

Sermon Discussion Guide

Encounters with Jesus: Judas

John 12:1-6; Matthew 26:14-16, 20-25, 36-50; 27:3-8

March 28 & 29, 2020

This discussion guide is written in three sections. The first is for private/individual reflection. The second is for couples or for small groups who may be meeting via video or phone. The third contains questions for family discussion. As many of you are sheltering in place, we encourage you to continue to read the passage and study it throughout the week. This way you can meditate on new truths each day and discover new things God might teach you in his word.

Section 1: Individual Reflection

1. As uncomfortable as it may be, part of the purpose of this story is to lead us to examine our relationship with Jesus as compared to Judas' relationship with Jesus. Unlike Judas, would you say that you profess faith *and* possess faith in Jesus? How can you tell?
2. The story of Judas helps us to distinguish the difference between remorse and repentance. What are some of these differences from the story? Imagine what true repentance would have looked like for Judas.
3. Brandon taught that we need to be careful to not give Satan too much credit for the actions of Judas. What did you learn from the sermon about Satan's method of operation? How do we know that we can't lose our salvation?
4. Consider how this sermon affects our head, heart and hands. What does the passage teach us - what knowledge/information do we gain from this passage (head)? What does this passage show us about our sinfulness and how our affections need to be changed by the gospel (heart)? How should this passage change our actions - what do we need to do or think in our everyday life because of these truths (hands)?

Section 2: Couple/Small Group Discussion

1. What portions of the sermon were most significant and helpful to you? Summarize some of your answers from the previous section.
2. Read the appendix below entitled, "Biblical Repentance." What reflections do you have from it? How might you need to change and improve your practice of repentance?
3. Brandon said that remorse leads to death, but biblical repentance leads to life. Can you think of and describe a time in your life when you repented (or when someone repented to you) and how you experienced it leading to life?
4. Brandon said that the very reason Jesus came into the world was to ensure what we were delivered from darkness. Discuss what he means by that? How have you experienced being delivered from darkness?

Part 3: Family Discussion

1. Share with your kids your reflections from Sections 1 and 2. Ask them to share some of their highlights and see if they can summarize the sermon.
2. Discuss with your kids how you (although not perfectly) possess and not just profess your faith. Now is a great time to ask them if they would say they are following Jesus. (Remember, even though you may despair or be discouraged by their answers, God's got our kids - use this as a means to pray for them in their faith.)
3. Discuss as a family the core principles of repentance. Ask your kids how you are doing leading in biblical repentance. Ask them how well they are practicing repentance.

Biblical Repentance

Biblical repentance is characterized in particular ways - it is more than just words and not just action. It is a careful and critical examination of the heart and a sacrificial engagement with the oftentimes painful and difficult process of honesty and reconciliation. For a person who is caught up in sin and whose heart has been broken by their shortcomings, the following is how their repentance should be described:

- There is complete truth. Deep, biblical repentance means being truthful about the sin, about the events surrounding it, myself and my sin's impacts on others.
- Humility is apparent. Biblical repentance comes from a submissive spirit. I will recognize that I have demonstrated a lack of wisdom and discernment. Having demonstrated the "wrong mind" (1 Cor. 2:16), I will be humble enough to submit myself to those who give evidence of the mind of Christ and the lordship of following Jesus.
- Repentance means having empathy for those who have been wronged and damaged by my sin. Empathy can be defined as the act of understanding, being aware of, sensitive to and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another.
- Biblical repentance is an awareness that my sin goes against the goodness and holiness of God. The amazing news of God's forgiveness is only as powerful as my understanding of the nature of God's wrath towards sin and his hatred of sins presence in our hearts and lives.
- Repentance requires commitment to the truth that sin is a product of a sinful heart, not merely a behavioral aberration that got me in trouble. Biblical repentance includes a careful consideration of the root of my particular sin and the systemic causes of all my sinful behavior.
- Thorough repentance leads to a desire and effort to make restitution. This means not just saying "I'm sorry," but also making a faithful effort to do what is necessary to repair the relationship(s) with those effected by my sin.
- Repentance includes being willing to accept the variety of effects of my sin. This includes owning any trail of inconsistencies, falsehoods and unintended consequences of the sin. Repentance over blatant misdeeds may sometime warrant stepping back from positions of leadership and authority in order to reflect on the Holy Spirit's work in my life and to focus on the healing process from sin and deeply experience the balm of the forgiveness of God's grace.