

“A JOURNEY THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF JOHN” SERIES

#25: “Betrayal, a New Commandment, and Denial”

SCRIPTURE: John 13:21-38

²¹ After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, “Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” ²² The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. ²³ One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side, ²⁴ so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. ²⁵ So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, “Lord, who is it?” ²⁶ Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.” So, when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. ²⁷ Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “What you are going to do, do quickly.” ²⁸ Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. ²⁹ Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the feast,” or that he should give something to the poor. ³⁰ So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

³¹ When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. ³² If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. ³³ Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going you cannot come.’ ³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

³⁶ Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus answered him, “Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward.” ³⁷ Peter said to him, “Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.” ³⁸ Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.”

INTRO:

As this passage opens, Jesus and the disciples are still at the supper table, preparing to eat the Passover meal. Jesus has washed the disciples' feet. Then He announces:

“ONE OF YOU WILL BETRAY ME” (v. 21).

He doesn't say, “Look, I've got something I need to tell you. I wish it weren't true, but we've got a traitor among us. One of you has been consorting with my enemies and made plans to hand me over to those who want to kill me.” He just says, “One of you will betray me.”

You can imagine the scene. The disciples begin to look at one another, trying to imagine who it could be. Peter nudges John and says, “Ask him, John. Ask him who it could be.” If anyone knew, it would be John. But John says, “Who is it?” Judas says, “Is it I?” The rest of the disciples are saying, “Who could it be? Surely not one of us!”

Jesus silences them as He says, “It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.” The eyes of the disciples follow His hand intently as He dips the bread into the sop and then gives it to their treasurer, Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.

Judas takes the bread...and at that very moment, Satan entered him. Now, let's think about that for a moment. What happened? How does Satan “enter” a person?

The New testament Scriptures teach that Satan has no power over us other than the power we give him. Paul warns us in Ephesians 4:27 to ***“give no opportunity to the devil.”*** James 4:7 instructs us to ***“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”*** Satan is a spiritual being, and he operates in a spiritual realm. Paul wrote in Ephesians 6:10-12: ***“...be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”***

Judas had given opportunity to the devil. He had not resisted him. He had not put on the whole armor of God. Therefore, Satan entered his heart and skewed his thinking, enabling him to be deceived, just as Eve was in the garden.

If you give opportunity to him, he'll do the same to you! He'll get you to believe wrong is right and that evil is good. He's got whole societies fooled! He got whole nations fooled!

So, Jesus said to Judas, ***"What you are going to do, do quickly"*** (v. 27).

John adds this bit of color to the incident: ***²⁸ Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. ²⁹ Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor. ³⁰ So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.***

Then, John tells us that when Judas had left, Jesus said to the remaining eleven disciples:

"NOW IS THE SON OF MAN GLORIFIED, AND GOD IS GLORIFIED IN HIM" (V.31).

And He once again let's the disciples know that His time is short; He won't be with them very much longer; and he tells them that where He's going, they can't come.

As He's told them previously, He's going to be lifted up; His temple will be destroyed, but in three days He'll raise it up again. These were all references to His impending crucifixion and resurrection, which would glorify both Him and God the Father.

He then tells them of...

...A NEW COMMANDMENT...

...to "love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another" (v. 34).

How has Jesus loved us? How would you answer that? How would you describe Jesus' love for you?

Someone has said, "The greatest demonstration of God's love for us is **the cross of Jesus Christ**. On one of the last nights before He would give His life, Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this; to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13)."

Another: "The phrase 'love of Christ,' refers to the love that He has toward mankind. His love can be briefly stated as His willingness to act in our best interest, especially in meeting our greatest need, even though it cost Him everything and even though we were the least worthy of such love."

Still another: "This love which He demonstrated toward us on the cross is just the beginning. When we place our trust in Him as our Savior, He makes us God's children, co-heirs with Him! He comes to dwell within us through His Holy Spirit, promising that He will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5-6). Thus, we have a loving companion for life. And no matter what we go through, He is there, and His love is ever available to us (Romans 8:35). But as He rightfully reigns as a benevolent King in heaven, we need to give Him the position He deserves in our lives as well, that of Master and not merely companion. It is only then that we will experience life as He intended and live in the fullness of His love (John 10:10b)."

And note that He, in essence, gives the world the right to judge us: ***"By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another."*** In other words, if people of the world see that we don't love one another, they have the right to say that we are not truly disciples of Jesus. I repeat: **IF PEOPLE OF THE WORLD SEE THAT WE DON'T LOVE ONE ANOTHER, THEY HAVE THE RIGHT TO SAY THAT WE ARE NOT TRULY DISCIPLES OF JESUS.**

At this point, Peter says:

"LORD, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?" (v.36).

We're saying, "Oh, come on, Peter! Don't you get it by now? Jesus is going to be executed! He's going to die!"

But Peter was just expressing what the rest were thinking. They didn't get it. That Jesus would allow the Jewish authorities to have Him executed was the furthest thing from their minds.

So, Jesus said, "Peter, *where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward*" (v. 36). In other words, Peter would die at the hands of the same authorities and follow Jesus to heaven.

But Peter didn't get this, either. He said, "*Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you*" (v. 37).

Jesus so much as said, "Will you, Peter? Will you really lay down your life for me?" He knew that Peter was just being the impetuous Peter. How many of us have been as impetuous about our loyalty to Christ and the Christian faith? Some of us, I'm sure.

Knowing Peter better than Peter knew himself, Jesus says, "*Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.*" Not once, not twice, but three times!

Apparently, Peter didn't have a come-back at this point. At least, John doesn't record it. Neither does Luke. But both Matthew and Mark record that when Jesus told the disciples that they would all fall away, they all denied it, Peter most vociferously. Of course, Peter *did* deny Him three times, and the rooster crowed, as we will learn from chapter 18.

IN CLOSING...

Does this mean that Peter was really a coward? On the contrary! Peter just had the wrong concept of the kingdom Jesus came to establish. More on this later...