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A Picture of the Best of Us

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path."

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE

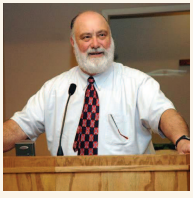
Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:12, EXCERPT

The failures recorded in Scripture expose weaknesses closer to home than we may wish to admit. John Weaver considers betrayal, denial, the love of money, and the resistance of the flesh. These messages turn familiar accounts into a call for self-examination, humility, and dependence on grace rather than confidence in our own strength.

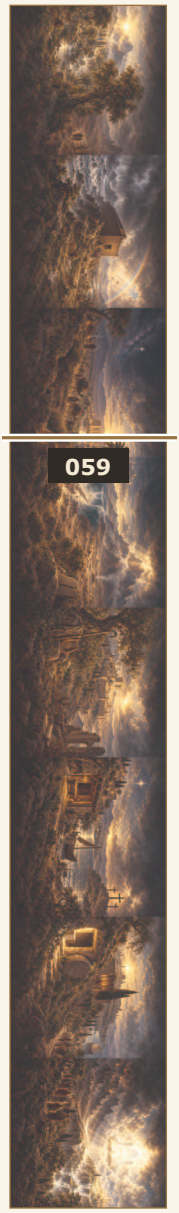
“In other words, the flesh always acts up. It always acts up in a time of revival.”

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.



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CHAPTER 1

A Picture of the Best of Us

Part One of Two

Introduction: A Picture Worth a Thousand Words

In Matthew 26, verses 3 through 5, we read: “Then assembled together the chief priests and the scribes and the elders of the people unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety and kill him. But they said, Not on a feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.”

Everyone has heard the old adage that a picture is worth a thousand words. We certainly all recall the proverb. It happens to be in Proverbs 25, verse 11, where the Bible says, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.” So the proverb is a picture itself. We may visualize apples of gold framed with a silver frame. He says a word spoken in due season and fitly spoken is just as beautiful.

Amazingly, when we all have our pictures taken, we always desire the one that makes us look the absolute best. That is for sure. Many

times I have heard people say when they are getting their picture taken, “Make sure you take my good side.” One side may happen to be better than the other, but the truth is that many times our pictures do not flatter us. We are not eager to take or receive pictures that make us look bad. So we search for one that makes us look really, really good.

A Picture of Betrayal

I heard—or rather, I read—about an old hillbilly who lived out in the mountains. He found a piece of broken mirror. They lived so far back in the mountains that he did not even know what a mirror was. He liked the piece so well that he took it home and hid it. He would go into the room where he had hidden the mirror and come back smiling.

His wife watched him do that day after day and became suspicious. She thought perhaps he was stepping out on her. One day, he went into the room, looked in the mirror, came out smiling, and walked out of the house. When she saw him go down the lane, she ran into the room, searched, and finally found that old piece of mirror. She looked into it and said, “So that’s the old hag he’s been running around with.”

So many times, the mirror simply does not do as well, and neither do our pictures, that is for sure. One way we know that the Bible is indeed the Word of God is because of all the pictures of mankind. The pictures of sin are not flattering whatsoever. They present to us a wicked, depraved picture; consequently, there is nothing good in man.

If man had written the Bible apart from God and apart from the Holy Spirit, clearly everything would praise man, all his goodness, his efforts, and his good stuff. But it does not do that at all. It presents nothing good in us because there is nothing good in us. That is why the Apostle Paul said in Romans 7, “I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing.”

We have two pictures in Matthew chapter 26: a picture of Judas and, mainly, a picture of Peter, though the other disciples are

involved as well. Both pictures are very telling and revealing. When you and I look at them, we can clearly see our own lives in them.

First of all, I want to bring you what I am going to call a picture of betrayal. The powers that be in Matthew chapter 26—the ruling elite, or, you might say, the cabal—have already determined to murder the Lord Jesus. They have consulted together and taken counsel that they might kill Him, and they are looking for the best way to dispatch Him. They want to make sure they do it in such a way that they do not upset the people.

The Conspiracy of the Ruling Elite

For instance, go back to verse 3: “Then assembled together the chief priests and the scribes and the elders of the people unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety and kill him. But they said, Not on a feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.”

Here were the chief priests, scribes, and elders—individuals responsible to know God's law and enforce God's law—and yet they were consulting, conspiring, and planning to violate the very law of God they should have been upholding. Interestingly, those in power and authority tend to think they are above the law, that they can do whatever they would like to do.

In John chapter 11, verses 47 and 48, this idea is revealed even in these wicked men: “Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? For this man doeth many miracles.” In other words, we cannot deny them. “And if we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him.” We have got to do something. “And if we don't do something, the Romans shall come and take away both our place and our nation.”

Notice that the word “place” is put before the word “nation.” They were more interested in losing their place than they were in losing their nation. The Greek word for “place” is topos; in fact, we get our English word “topography” from it. Topos means place, and graphe means writing, so topography is simply place writing. The word topos means any place or portion of space that is marked off. It refers to an inhabited place, a city, a village, or a district. It also

means the condition or station held by one in any company or assembly; that is, their power, authority, and position. They were saying, “We need to get rid of Jesus, because if we don't, we're going to lose our power and our position.”

When you and I think of betrayal, we normally think of individuals. We think of people like Benedict Arnold. We think of people like the Rosenbergs. There are many other people we could probably mention. But usually, when we talk about a traitor, we are thinking primarily of Judas, and Judas is specifically called a traitor in Luke chapter 6, verse 16. The Bible says, “...and Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, who also was the traitor.” So the Bible specifically calls Judas the traitor. There are other traitors as well, that is for sure. But the truth is that betrayal and treason often begin at the top level and descend to the bottom, where individuals are used.

Probably most people have heard countless sermons on Judas, but there are few people who have heard sermons on the conspiracy and treason of the ruling elite here in Matthew chapter 26—the high priests, the scribes, and the elders. We have an old saying: “Nothing happens by accident in politics,” which means that everything is planned, premeditated, and purposed. We see this in our text as well. Because we can see it in our text, we can see it in our history, and we can also see it in our government. The Bible says in Matthew 26, verse 5, “But they said, Not on a feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.”

The individuals who planned and precipitated the murder of Jesus Christ wished to remain anonymous. They wanted to make sure that His murder took place without fanfare and without them being noticed whatsoever. In other words, they were going to protect themselves, protect their positions, and make sure that no attention was drawn unto themselves.

Judas's Betrayal and the Role of the Conspiracy

Matthew 26:4 says, “And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety and kill him.” The word “subtlety” is the Greek word dolos—not doulos, which means slave or servant—but dolos,

meaning craft, deceit, or guile. They consulted that they might take Jesus by craft, deceit, and guile.

Here is an interesting thought: Have you ever considered that Judas may have failed in his attempt to betray Christ if there had not already been a conspiracy to murder Christ by those in power and authority? This was a top-level conspiracy. Judas knew that these individuals hated Jesus Christ. He knew that Christ had spoken against their traditions, their violations of the word of God, and their misinterpretations of the law of God. Judas knew that they were eager to get rid of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, Judas did not go to those who loved Jesus Christ, to the friends of Jesus Christ, or to those who worshiped Jesus Christ. He went to those who hated Jesus Christ.

The high priests, elders, and scribes, in betraying the Lord Jesus Christ, also betrayed their own nation. In treating Christ with treason, they committed treason against their own nation, because they delivered their nation into the hands of the Romans. Judas, in his betrayal of Jesus Christ, committed treason as well. If you have never heard it, or if you have heard it, I encourage you to listen again to the message I preached a few years back on the Bible and treason. In that message, I delineate biblical treason, constitutional treason, and religious treason.

We already see in verses 3 through 5 that they were planning to murder the Lord Jesus Christ. Now consider verses 6 through 13 and ask yourself: How does this passage fit with what precedes it and what follows it?

The Contrast Between Mary and Judas

Verse 6 says, “Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, there came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat. And when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman?”

"For she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her."

Why was this incident inserted at this particular point? First of all, it introduces what you and I would call the law of contrast. There is a vast contrast between Mary and Judas. They are extreme opposites. Mary was freely spending in love; Judas was willing to sell his master for money. Mary was willing to give everything, and Judas was willing to betray Jesus Christ for anything.

Secondly, this gives our Lord an opportunity to rebuke his disciples. He is letting them know that he is not going to be with them always, but the poor would be with them always. They could do to the poor what should be done at any time, but they could not do so with him because he was not going to be there.

John Calvin says: "This also is not unusual with the evangelists, when a thing has been done by one, it is attributed to many persons if they give their consent to it. John says that the murmur proceeded from Judas; Matthew and Mark include all the disciples along with him." Now Mark does not—that is where I disagree. The reason, Calvin says, is that none of the others would ever have dared to murmur if the wicked slander of Judas had not served for a torch to kindle them. When he began under a plausible pretext to condemn the expense as superfluous, all of them easily caught the contagion.

This example shows what danger arises from malignant and envenomed tongues. Even those who are naturally reasonable, candid, and modest, if they do not exercise prudence and caution, are easily deceived by unfavorable speeches and led to adopt false judgments. But if light and foolish credulity induce the disciples of Christ to take part with... What shall become of us if we are too easy in admitting murmurers who are in the habit of carping wickedly at the best actions?

We ought to draw from it another warning: we must not pronounce rashly on a matter which is not sufficiently known. The

disciples saw what Judas said, and because it had some show of plausibility, they were too harsh in forming a judgment. On the contrary, they ought to have inquired more fully whether the action deserved reproof, especially when their Master was present, by whose decision it was their duty to abide.

Let us know, therefore, that we act improperly when we form our opinions without paying regard to the Word of God. Paul informs us that no man liveth to himself or dieth to himself, but we all must stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Wherefore, we must give an account. Though there was a wide difference between Judas and the others, because he wickedly held out a plausible cloak for his theft, while the rest were actuated by foolish simplicity, still we see how their imprudence withdrew them from Christ and made them companions with Judas.

Matthew 26:8 says, “But when the disciples saw it, they had indignation.” So everyone is included here. Mark gives a further detail. In Mark 14, verses 3 through 6, we read: “And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. And there were some that had indignation within themselves.”

There were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, “Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor.” And they murmured against her. Matthew says “the disciples,” while Mark says, “And some that had indignation.”

“Some” could mean a minimum of two. It could be 50 percent or 90 percent, but it is “some.” It could be as little as two, though it could be far more. John helps us put this together: “Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.”

Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he

cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

So Judas is the instigator. Judas is the thief. Judas did not care for the poor or the needy; he cared only for himself. He was not compassionate. He was selfish, covetous, uncompassionate, and not loving whatsoever. Judas was a wicked, ungodly man. The height of his wickedness and ungodliness is this: he stole not only from his friends, but also from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Judas was a thief. He bare the bag. He started this row because he wanted the money. He wanted to handle the money, and he wanted to swindle the money. Unhappily, some of those disciples agreed with him without thinking and without seeking direction from the Lord Jesus Christ.

We know that Judas stole from the Lord Jesus Christ and from his friends. Here is my question: Would you steal from the Lord Jesus Christ? I can hear the answer being a resounding no. But here is the absolute truth: We do steal from the Lord Jesus Christ. That is true both of the saved and the unsaved alike.

The Sin of Stealing from God: Tithing as Recognition of Sovereignty

I will show you if you will turn in your Bibles to the book of Malachi, chapter 3, the last book in the Old Testament. Look at what our Lord asks: “Will a man rob God?” And he says, “Yet ye have robbed me.” So the answer is yes, a man will rob God. “But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee?” Here is the answer: “In tithes”—notice that is plural—“and offerings”—that is plural. He said, “Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.”

Individuals make up a nation, and so if the individuals in that nation are stealing from God and robbing God, the nation is guilty of doing so. Now look in verse 10: “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you

“Out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not

destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts."

There were three tithes in the Bible. The Levitical tithe was 10%. The tithe of rejoicing was also 10%; Deuteronomy 14 describes this tithe, which was spent on oneself for the seven annual feasts in Jerusalem. The third was a poor tithe. It also was 10%, but it was taken only once every three years. Thus, these people were actually tithing 23 and a third percent per year.

When you come to the New Testament, Roman taxes had been added, and the tax collectors were stealing and taking more than others. It was probably much like our day—50 or 60 percent being taken.

What is a tithe? I am not asking for the answer "10%." What is a tithe? A tithe is God's tax for the use of His earth.

The tithe is owed to God by the saved and the unsaved alike, because both receive and enjoy His bounties and blessings. Everyone is responsible to tithe. Why? Because it is a recognition of God's sovereignty and ownership—that everything in this world belongs to Him. How many times does the Bible say that? "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." Everything belongs to Him. When we tithe, it is a recognition of God's sovereignty and His ownership of everything.

SCRIPTURE READING - Deuteronomy 26:12-19 (KJV)

> For a Christian, for a believer, it is more than that. Deuteronomy 26 shows what it actually means. He says, "When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes"—there it is, plural—"of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled." The festival tithe, or the tithe of rejoicing, is Deuteronomy 14.
>
> "And thou shalt say before the Lord thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not

> transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them. I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away ought thereof for any unclean use, nor given ought thereof for the dead: but I have hearkened to the voice of the Lord my God, and have done according to all that thou hast commanded me." And Lord, I am obedient.
>
> "Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey." "This day the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments: thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul."
>
> "Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice. And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments; and to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God, as he hath spoken."

Notice in verse 17 the word "avouched," and in verse 18 the word "avouched." It is interesting here: these people are tithing and declaring that they are obeying God in doing this, and they are seeking God's blessing. Then God says, "Thou hast avouched the Lord this day"—that is, the day of tithing—"to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments." Then in verse 18, "the Lord hath avouched thee."

There is an avouchment going on on two sides. On one side, it is the person who is doing the tithing who is avouching that God is his God. On the other side, the person who is tithing is being avouched by God as being His. So what in the world does the word "avouch" mean? The Hebrew word is amar, and it means to speak, to utter, and to avow. Moreover, it carries the emphasis of being a declaration or a matter of fact, a thing that can be proven. Another way to say it is that it is to authenticate and to affirm.

Here is what God is saying: when we are tithing in obedience to Him, when we are recognizing Him as the sovereign and as the owner, then we are authenticating and avouching that we are His people because we are obeying Him—not just in the tithing, but in our lives as well. God says, when we do this, He is going to avouch us to be His people. Now, let me tie this together because, think it through, we are talking about Mary and we are talking about Judas as well in Matthew chapter 26.

Money as a Touchstone: Mary's Generosity vs. Judas's Greed

You see, money seems to be the touchstone in a lot of people's lives. You must remember that money in and of itself is not evil. Money is not the evil. First Timothy chapter 6, verse 10, tells us that it is the love of money that is evil: "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." So I want you to think about the implications that I am going to share about money and the contrast between Mary and Judas. Before we go there, turn right back to Deuteronomy chapter 6, and then we are going to go to 1 Chronicles 29. Look in Deuteronomy chapter 6. Verse 4 is known as the Shema Israel. We will read that and then read verse 5. Look at verse 4, Deuteronomy 6: "Hear, O Israel:

"And observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee"—that is verse 3—"that floweth with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord." That is the Shema Israel. Verse 5 says, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

When we hear the word "might," we normally equate it with force, strength, power, and ability. That certainly is included. We are to love Him with all our power and all our might. But look at how the word "might" is used in 1 Chronicles chapter 29. Verse 1 says, "Furthermore David the king said unto all the congregation, Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is yet young and tender, and the work is great"—the work of building the temple—"for the palace is not for man, but for the Lord God."

Then David says, “Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God the gold for things to be made of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and the brass for things of brass, the iron for things of iron, and wood for things of wood; onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistering stones, and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance.”

Moreover, “because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of mine own proper good, of gold and silver, which I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house.” He gave three thousand talents of gold, the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver to overlay the walls. He goes on through the chapter; there is a message there.

I figured out one time that everything David gave was in the millions. Now here is what he said: “Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God the gold for the things of gold.” When David and his army won battles, especially against the heathen, they took the gold, silver, precious stones, and everything else, dedicated it to God, and gave it to Him. So there was a great store of silver, gold, precious stones, and everything needed for the building of the temple. But David said, “Ha! Because of my own proper affection for the house of God, I’ve given over and above that of my own proper good.” When he said, “I prepared with all my might,” he was literally saying, “I prepared with all my money.” David’s might was his money. Above that, it was his love and affection for God and His house that made him so generous.

Mary, like David, loved our Lord and was willing to sacrifice everything. Judas, who did not love Him, was willing to betray Him and sell Him for anything. In fact, he was willing to sell Him very cheaply. Here is a picture of the best of us, and it is not very beautiful whatsoever. This picture is true not only of a fallen man; it is also true of a redeemed man.

The Price of a Slave: Thirty Pieces of Silver

“Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me? and I will deliver

him unto you. And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver."

Judas went to them. They did not come to him. He went to them and said, "What will ye give me? I'm willing to betray him, but I want something for my betrayal. What will ye give me?" They covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. Judas simply asked, "What will ye give me?" and they answered, "We'll give you thirty pieces of silver."

That was a demonstration of their absolute contempt for Jesus Christ. It revealed their hatred of Jesus Christ and their low estimate of Jesus Christ. How can I say that? Let me show you. Keep Matthew 26 in mind as we look back to Exodus 21:32. The passage in Exodus gives the legal measure for the loss of a slave. "If the ox shall push a manservant"—that is, a slave—"or a maidservant"—that is, a slave—"he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, or thirty pieces of silver, and the ox shall be stoned." If my ox got out and killed a slave, man or woman, I had to pay the owner of the slave thirty pieces of silver, and the ox was to be killed. That is what they offered Judas for Jesus Christ: the price of a slave.

The prophecy in Zechariah 11:12–13 shows the same thirty pieces being weighed and cast to the potter in the house of the Lord. It says, "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them"—sarcastically. "And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord." Here is the prophecy that our Lord was going to be sold for thirty pieces of silver.

Someone has written a couplet concerning this: "Still as of old, man by himself is priced. For thirty pieces Judas sold himself, not Christ." You have heard the old saying, "Every man has his price." What does that mean? It means every man is willing to sell himself and sell other people out for

The right amount. But we are not selling others; we are selling ourselves. Albert Barnes writes, "And it is not unlikely that this sum was fixed on them to show their contempt of Jesus, and that they regarded him as of little value. There is no doubt also that they

understood that such was the anxiety of Judas to obtain money, that he would betray his Lord for any sum."

Seeking Opportunity to Betray

When you go back to Matthew chapter 26, Judas has gone to those who hate Jesus Christ and said, "What will ye give me?" They answered, "We'll give you the price of a slave. We'll give you thirty pieces of silver." Then verse 16 says, "And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him." The word "opportunity" is very important. It is the word eukairia, from eukairos. Eu means good or well, and kairos is the Greek word for time. So the word means a good time. We talk about euthanasia—eu, Greek for good or well, and thanatos, death. Euthanasia means a good death. When Judas sought opportunity, he sought a good time, a seasonable time, a right time. He sought an opportunity to do this without being detected or discovered. In other words, he was going to do what was right and suitable for himself.

Judas was no different from the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes. They wanted to act discreetly. They did not want to call attention to themselves or cause an uproar: "We're not going to do this on a feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people. We're going to do this by opportunity, the best way that we can escape and get away with it." Judas conducted himself exactly as the ruling elite, seeking the best opportunity. May I remind you that your enemies will always seek the best opportunity for themselves? We do have enemies; even God Himself has enemies. Your enemy will not act in your presence when you will quickly catch on, nor will he say it to your best friend. No, he will gossip about you, slander you, and lie to you and about you when you are not around and cannot defend yourself. He will take the best opportunity.

Muggers, rapists, and robbers do not look out for your benefit; they look out for their own. They will take a seasonable time for themselves, not for you. So neither the rulers of Jesus nor Judas considered Jesus Christ. They considered only themselves. They did not care what happened to Him: the rulers wanted Him dead, and Judas wanted the money.

Application: Our Sins as Betrayal of Christ

Here they are with this horrible picture before us. Now I want to make some applications, because here is the first one. How in the world can this be a picture of us? We can understand how this picture could apply to the reprobate. We can understand how it could apply to the unsaved. But how can it apply to Christians? How can this be a picture of the very best of us?

First of all, most people do not remember, but you should remember, your confession at your baptism. Do you realize that the earliest baptismal confession consisted of three words: “Jesus is Lord”? I have baptized a lot of people. When I get them in the water, the very first thing I ask is, “Do you confess Jesus Christ as Lord?” Sometimes they say, “Yes, I confess Jesus Christ as Lord,” or they simply say, “Jesus Christ is Lord.”

You must remember that the word “Lord,” kurios in the Greek, literally means boss, owner, master, and sovereign. When you are baptized, you are confessing that Jesus Christ is your Lord. He is your boss, your owner, and your master. You are to be in submission to Him. You are to obey Him.

Most people tend to think that baptism is nothing more than a ritual or ceremony. No, it is not that. In the first century, if you were being baptized and said, “Jesus is Lord,” do you realize what you just said and what you just did? You declared war against Julius Caesar, Anthony Caesar, Octavian Caesar, or whoever was Caesar at that particular time, because Caesar had on his coin, “Caesar is Lord.” You were saying, “I am at war now with the state. I am at war now with the Caesar cult. Caesar is not Lord; Jesus Christ is Lord.” Christians were put to death in the Roman Empire not because they were Christians, but because they refused to say, “Caesar is Lord.” In the Roman Empire, you could believe in Christ if you wanted to.

Believe in Baal, believe in Aphrodite, believe in whoever you wanted to believe. They had, quote unquote, freedom of religion, so to speak. Ah, but that freedom was based upon the fact that once every year you raised your hand, swore by the genius of Caesar, and said, "Caesar is Lord." Christians refused to do that. Thus they were

executed as traitors and treasonous individuals to the Roman government, and to the emperor particularly.

May I remind you of another passage? In First Timothy chapter 6, the Apostle Paul tells Timothy to remember that good confession which you confessed before so many witnesses. He's talking about his baptism. Yet at baptism, he said, "Jesus is Lord." Moreover, when you get to First Corinthians chapter 6, verses 19 and 20, what does the Bible say? "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God? Ye are not your own; ye have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are his." The point I'm making right now is this: We belong to Jesus Christ. Now I want you to think: How does this apply to us?

How is this a picture of us? Judas betrayed Jesus Christ for money. That is wicked, wrong, and ungodly. But we're worse than Judas. How can that be? We don't betray Christ for money, but we betray him for the lust of our flesh, the lust of our eyes, and the pride of life. In other words, we're willing to swap Jesus Christ for something that will satisfy us.

There's a passage in Isaiah chapter 43, verse 24, where God says, "Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities." So we betray Christ when we sin. I'm going to show you this even fuller. Secondly, like Judas, we seek an opportunity to betray Christ—an opportunity when folks will not know what we're doing. Look in your Bibles to Proverbs chapter 7. I tell everyone, especially every man—young men, middle-aged men, and old men—you ought to read Proverbs 5, 6, and 7 regularly, because there are warnings to men to keep themselves pure. Look in Proverbs 7, beginning with verse 5.

Proverbs 7:1–4 speaks of God's commandments and law, binding them upon your fingers and writing them upon the table of thine heart. It says, “Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman.” Then verse 5 says, “That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words.”

“For at the window of my house I looked through my casement, and beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding, passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house, in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night.”

Why did he go in the twilight? Why did he go in the evening? Why did he go in the black and dark night? Why did he not go in the midday, mid-morning, or early afternoon? The answer is opportunity. He wanted opportunity to sin without witnesses, without being caught, without people seeing him.

Listen, when we sin, we do not get on the news and broadcast, “Look, we're going to sin this coming Saturday,” or “We're going to sin this coming Friday night.” No, no, no, we do not do that. When we sin, we do not announce it publicly. We try to arrange it so that it can be hidden. We look for an opportunity that will suit us.

Now let me show you. Watch this carefully, because this really hits the nail on the head. Look in your Bibles to Malachi, the last book in the Old Testament. In Malachi chapter 2, beginning with verse 13, God says, “And this have ye done again”—the words “have done”

They have done it again: “And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping”—you would think that would be good, but not in this context. “And with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more.” God does not regard them or their offering, or receive it with goodwill at their hand. “Yet ye say, Wherefore?” That is, “What is wrong, God? Why will You not receive this? Look, I am crying. Look, I am screaming. Why will You not receive it?” God says, “Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet she is thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.”

The word “treacherously” is bagad in the Hebrew. It means to act treacherously, deceitfully, to deal treacherously, to be faithless, and to act deceitfully. Pointedly, it means to betray your spouse. God said, “I’m not listening to you because you’re traitors. You’re betraying the wife of your youth.”

The principle is this: it is not merely through adultery and fornication that we betray Christ. Every time we sin, we betray the Lord Jesus Christ. We trade His law for our law, His will for our will, His word for our word, and His way for our way. In essence, we are saying, "Lord, I do not want You to be my Lord, my boss, owner, master, or sovereign. I do not want You telling me what to do. I want to live the way I want to live."

When we sin, we betray Christ. We are not betraying Him for money, like Judas; we are betraying Him for our own lusts. We trade His deliverance for our enslavement. We need to see sin as treason and betrayal—my sin, your sin, our sin, the sins of the ruler, and the sins of the nation—as God sees them. Jeremiah 44:4 says, "Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate."

God hates idolatry. God hates sin. When we sin, we are acting like Judas and like the reprobate rulers who conspired to murder the Lord Jesus Christ. We are showing contempt for Him. Our Lord said in Luke 6:46, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" If Jesus Christ is our Lord,

We should obey Him. When we sin, we are saying, "No, You are not my Lord. I am my lord. I do as I please." I began this message by saying a picture is worth a thousand words. We need to see the true picture: our sins are a betrayal of Jesus Christ and His Word. It would have a grave effect upon each of us if we actually saw ourselves in the mirror as Judas and as the rulers. Judas sold Him for money. Today we sell Him for the lust of our flesh, the lust of our eyes, and the pride of life. It is a picture of the best of us, because each of us has been guilty before God of betraying the Lord Jesus Christ. What a picture.

One that is not very pleasant to look at, and one that I do not wish to see in the mirror, because it reveals the depths of our depravity and the wickedness of our lives. When you come to the realization of the truth of Romans 8—that your flesh hates God and there is a constant battle that you must fight—otherwise you are going to be looking in the mirror and seeing that old hag. That is not a very pretty picture.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee this day. We thank You for Your Word and Your truth. Lord, what a picture You give of the best of us, and yet sometimes we refuse to see it. Help us, enable us, and empower us not to betray the Lord Jesus Christ, not to sell Him to satisfy the lust of our flesh, the lust of our eyes, and the pride of life, but to be conscious of the wickedness of our sin and sin in general, that we may turn from it and give the honor and glory in Christ's name. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

A Picture of the Best of Us

Part Two of Two

Introduction and Review

In Matthew chapter 26, the Bible says, “And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples, ‘You know that after two days is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified.’”

Last week I dealt with a picture of the best of us, and I showed how Judas, in one sense of the word, was a picture of us. I pointed out that many times pictures do not flatter us. Even though they are true, pictures are often easy to the eyes and easy on the mind, in the sense that seeing is often easier than thinking. That is why we always say a picture is worth a thousand words. We only need to look at a picture and then understand it. Sadly, while many pictures are accurate, they are not very flattering as well.

The Passover Lamb Typology

In Matthew chapter 26, Jesus Christ has been betrayed by Judas. This is in the setting of what you and I would call the last Passover meal and/or the institution of the Lord's Supper. The Bible says in verse 2, "You know that after two days is the feast of the Passover." The Passover was where the Lamb of God was slain. In this instance, it is the true Lamb of God, for the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 5 and verse 7 that even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

There is a beautiful truth regarding the Lord Jesus Christ as the Passover Lamb given to us in the book of Genesis. In Genesis chapter 22, God is testing Abraham and tells him to take his only son Isaac and go to one of the mountains.

God told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. So, if you look in Genesis chapter 22, the Scripture says, "Now it came to pass after these things that God did tempt or test Abraham and said unto him, 'Abraham.' And he said, 'Behold, here I am.' And he said, 'Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah. Offer him therefore a burnt offering upon one of the mountains, which I will tell thee of.'"

The interesting thing to me is this: God had just told Abraham to sacrifice his only son with Sarah. Look at verse 3: "And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass." If that had been most of us, we would have slept in as late as we could. But Abraham got up early so that he could obey the Lord.

It took him three days to get there. When they arrived to offer the sacrifice, "Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it upon Isaac, his son. And he took the fire in his hand and a knife, and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto his father, unto Abraham, his father, and said, 'My father.' And he said, 'Here am I, my son.' And he said, 'Behold, the fire and the wood. But where is the lamb for a burnt offering?' And Abraham said, 'My son, God will provide himself a lamb for the burnt offering.' And so they went both of them together."

The picture is very, very revealing. Abraham, the father, lays the wood upon Isaac, which is typical of the Lord Jesus Christ. He carried his own cross until they drafted Simon the Cyrenian to help

him. Abraham the father carried the fire and the knife, which speaks of the wrath and anger of God the Father. Here you have the picture of God the Father in His righteous anger and righteous wrath, and a picture of the Son carrying the wood. Isaac said, "My father." And he said, "Here am I, my son." And he said, "Behold, the fire and the wood."

"I know what we need. But where's the lamb for the burnt offering?" Now look at Abraham's response in verse 8: "And Abram said, 'My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering.' So they went both of them together."

Note that there was one word missing. The word should not be there, but most people put it there and think that it should be there. When Isaac asked, "Here's the fire and here's the wood, but where's the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham did not say that God would provide for himself. He said, "God will provide himself." In other words, God will give God; God will give Himself.

This is exactly why, when John the Baptist saw the Lord Jesus Christ, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Certainly Jesus Christ is God in the flesh. John 1:14 says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." First Timothy 3:16 says, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory." Jesus Christ was the true Lamb of God, and He was sacrificed for us.

Think about this: of all the millions of lambs slain in the Old Testament, all of them pointed to the one true Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

When you come to Matthew 26 and Luke 22, you find this last Passover meal, which indeed is the institution of what we know as the Lord's Supper.

The Seriousness of the Last Supper

This was a very serious, solemn, and spiritual occasion. The last supper was serious for Jesus Christ. Why was it so serious? First, He

had a great desire to eat this last supper with His disciples. He said in Luke chapter 22 and verse 15, “And he said unto them, ‘With desire I have desired to eat this last supper with you.’” He desired to have that.

Secondly, He knew it would be His last meal with them. When He sent them to prepare that meal, He said in Matthew 26 and verse 18, “My time is at hand.” In Luke 22 and verse 15, He said He wanted to have this meal “before I suffer.” Thirdly, He knew that at this meal He would be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Matthew 26 says, “And as they did eat, he said, ‘Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.’ And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, ‘Lord, is it I?’ And he answered and said, ‘He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of Man goeth as it is written of him, but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It had been good for that man had he not been born.’ Then Judas, who betrayed him, answered and said, ‘Master, is it I?’”

He said unto him, “Thou hast said.” That is equivalent to our statement, “You said it, buddy.” In other words, you are right. Notice that Judas asked, “Master, is it I?” He said, “Yes, it is you.”

The Flesh Acts Up in Spiritual Moments

There is a principle here that we must see, grasp, and truly understand: When you have the most solemn, serious, and spiritual occasion, the flesh always acts up. There is never a safe time from the flesh.

If you don't believe that, just say, "I'm going to dedicate myself to 30 minutes of uninterrupted prayer." The next thing you know, you will be interrupted 15 times, if not by a phone or someone knocking at the door, then by some strange noise or thought that gets you thinking of other things. The same thing happens with reading Scripture. You determine that you are going to read Scripture for a month, or read it through in a year, and you start out very well. But somehow something will stop you, and you simply never get it done. In other words, the flesh always acts up. It always acts up in a time of revival. It always acts up when the power of God is around, because

your flesh hates God. That's very simple. I'll show it to you from the Bible. Your flesh hates God.

The Bible gives us pictures in the Old Testament that are more clearly seen in the New Testament. The New Testament is in the Old Testament concealed, and the Old Testament is in the New Testament revealed. In other words, you see the truth in germ form in the Old Testament, and then you see clearly in the New Testament the truth concealed in the Old Testament as it is revealed. Turn to Exodus chapter 17, while holding Matthew 26. I am going to give you a picture before we look at Matthew 26. Exodus chapter 17 contains a tremendous statement that is often overlooked. Look at verse 8: "Then came Amalek and fought with Israel in Rephidim."

Amalek as a Type of the Flesh

Note the timing of Amalek's war with Israel, with the people of God. What had happened in Exodus chapter 12 was the Passover; the blood had been applied. In Exodus chapter 16, God miraculously provided manna from heaven. In Exodus chapter 17, God miraculously provided water out of the rock, because Moses smote that rock. Now look in Exodus chapter 17, beginning with verse 4: "And Moses cried to the Lord, saying, 'What shall I do unto this people?"

The Lord said unto Moses, “Go on before the people, and take with thee the elders of Israel, and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take it in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock at Horeb, and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink.” And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

Note this: the blood had been applied, the manna had been given, and the water had been given. Then, in verse 8, “Then came Amalek.” Here is the interesting thing. The Bible tells us, as I have already quoted in 1 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 7, “even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.” We have just read in Exodus about the manna and the water. Do you remember in John chapter 6, where Jesus Christ said, “I am the bread of life”?

They said, “Give us this manna. Moses gave us this manna. Show us that you’re the Son of God.” He said, “Verily, Moses did not give you that manna in the wilderness, but my Father gave you that manna.” He said, “My Father now has sent the true manna,” which, of course, is Jesus Christ. When you get to John chapter 7, He said, “I am the water of life. Whosoever drinketh of me, it shall be in him a well springing up into everlasting life.” Jesus Christ is not only the manna, the divine manna; He is our food, our nourishment, and our sustenance. He is our water as well.

Now look in your Bibles at 1 Corinthians chapter 10, verses 3 and 4. This ought to put it together for you. Remember, this is a picture given to us so that we can understand. “And they did all eat that same spiritual meat”—that would be the manna—“and did all drink that same spiritual drink.” “For they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ.” Jesus Christ is the bread of life and the water of life. In Exodus 12, you have the blood applied; in Exodus 16, the manna given; and in Exodus 17, the water. Jesus Christ is bread and water. Here is the most serious, solemn, and spiritual occasion where God is providing everything. Then came Amalek. Who was Amalek, and why is this important?

Genesis 36:12 tells us who Amalek was: “And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz, Esau's son, and she bare to Eliphaz Amalek. These were the sons of Adah, Esau's wife.” This means that Amalek was the grandson of Esau. Esau was one who despised spiritual things; he sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. Hebrews 12:16–17 says, “Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.” Thus, Amalek was the grandson of Esau, who despised spiritual things.

In Exodus 17, there is a war in which Joshua is fighting against the Amalekites. Moses is up on the hill with the rod of God in his hand. When Moses raises that rod, Israel prevails. When his hands grow weary and he drops the rod, Amalek prevails. Aaron and Hur see what is happening. They put a rock under Moses so he can sit, and they stay up his hands. As Moses holds up the rod, Israel continues

to prevail; when he becomes weary, Amalek prevails. Of course, Joshua ends up winning that battle.

But look at verse 14 of Exodus 17: “And the Lord said unto Moses, ‘Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua.’” Then God says, “For I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.” This is what God is saying: “I'm gonna wipe him out.”

There is another verse in Numbers 24:20, the prophecy of Balaam as he looks out and says: “And when he looked on Amalek, he took up this parable and said, ‘Amalek was the first of the nations, but his latter end is that he shall perish forever.’”

I want to ask you a question. In Exodus chapter 17, verse 15, we read: “And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah Nissi. For he said, Because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.”

How in the world is the Lord going to have war with Amalek from generation to generation if He smites him utterly, according to verse 14, and wipes out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven? How is it that Numbers chapter 24 and verse 20 says he is to be destroyed forever, and yet the Lord is going to have war with Amalek from generation to generation?

Amalek as a people were wiped out, just as the Scripture says. But when God said He was going to have war with Amalek from generation to generation, it is the principle which Amalek represents that continues. What does he represent? Look in your Bibles at Deuteronomy chapter 25. You are going to see this, I hope, in the New Testament.

Beginning with verse 17, God says, “Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way when you were come out of Egypt.” Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way when you were come out of Egypt. In verse 18: “How he met thee by the way.” In other words, Amalek purposely and premeditatedly pressed the attack. He was the initiator. Israel did not attack Amalek; Amalek attacked Israel.

Mark this down: Amalek is someone or something that will purposefully, premeditatedly press the attack. He will initiate the attack. “How he met thee by the way, and smote behind most of

thee”—an attack from the rear, when you were not looking—“even all that were feeble behind thee”—he attacked the weak—“when thou was faint and weary; and he feared not God.”

“Therefore it shall be, when the Lord thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. Thou shalt never forget it.”

In verse 17, God says, "Remember what Amalek did to you." In verse 19 He says, "Thou shalt never forget it." Even though God has wiped out Amalek as a people, there is a principle that you and I are to never, ever forget. Amalek is a type of our flesh. Esau was the one who hated spiritual things. Amalek feared not God, the Bible said. He had no concern for God. God says you are never, ever to forget him. The reason God is going to have war with Amalek from generation to generation, and the reason that you and I are never to forget, is that Amalek is a type of the flesh.

You can find this in Romans 8, verses 6 through 8. Listen to what the Bible says: "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Hang on now, "because the carnal mind is enmity against God. It's not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Listen, verse 8: "So then they that are in flesh cannot please God." Nothing our flesh can do can please God. Nothing. And Amalek is a type of the flesh.

In the most solemn, serious, and spiritual occasion, the flesh attacks. It will sneak up on you from behind. It will purposely press the attack. It will hit you when you are weak and weary, when you are faint and faltering. It does not care because it does not fear God.

The Disciples' Boastful Flesh

In Matthew 26 we have the institution of the Lord's Supper, the last Passover which Christ ate with His disciples before He was betrayed into the hands of sinners. Christ announced that He was going to be betrayed by one of the twelve. "And as they did eat, he said, 'Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.' And they were

exceedingly sorrowful and began every one of them to say unto him, 'Lord, is it I?'"

Peter asked, "Is it I?" Nathaniel asked, "Is it I?" Andrew asked, "Is it I?" John asked, "Is it I?" Look in verse 23: "And he answered and said, 'He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of Man goeth as is written of him, but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It had been good for that man if he had not been born.' Then Judas, who betrayed him, answered and said, 'Master, is it I?'"

He said unto him, "Thou hast said." In other words, "You said it, buddy. You have nailed it." Each one of the disciples questioned himself. Each one asked, "Lord, is it I?" Each one was concerned as to whether or not he would be the one to deny Christ.

Secondly, our Lord told His disciples exactly what was going to happen. He not only told them exactly what was going to happen; He even quoted the Scripture that prophesied what was going to happen. Matthew 26, beginning at verse 31, says: "Then said Jesus unto them, 'All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.'" Our Lord said, "Here's what's going to happen. You're all going to be scattered from me. You're all going to be offended in me."

He quoted Zechariah 13:7: "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts. Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered, and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones." Our Lord had already told them what was going to happen and quoted Scripture to prove it. When He said, "All of you shall be offended in me this night," the word "offended" is the Greek word skandalizo, from which we get "scandal" and "scandalize." Here it means to stumble, or to have one's foot entangled. Literally, all these disciples were going to desert Christ, forsake Him, run away, and leave Him alone.

In Mark chapter 14, beginning with verse 50, look what happened: "And they all forsook him and fled." That would be the eleven disciples, every one of them. Judas had hanged himself. "And

there followed him a certain young man having a linen cloth cast about his naked body. And the young men laid hold on him. And he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked."

Now, practically every scholar you would encounter will say that Mark is stating what happened to him. He was the one with the linen cloth; and when they grabbed him, he let them hold the cloth and ran off naked. But they all forsook Him and fled.

Now go back to Matthew 26. This is our passage. Look in Matthew chapter 26, beginning in verse 33. Please keep in mind that this passage is in light of what our Lord told His disciples and in light of the prophecy He quoted. Our Lord told them, "You're all going to flee, you're all going to desert Me."

Matthew 26: "Peter answered and said unto him, 'Though all men should be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.' Jesus said unto him, 'Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.' Peter said unto him, 'Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.'" Are you looking? "Likewise also said all the disciples." Peter said, "I'm not going to be offended. I'm not going to be scandalized. I'm not going to get my foot entangled. I'm not going to fall. I'm not going to run. I'm not going to desert You." Likewise said all the apostles.

Go back to Mark chapter 14, beginning with verse 27: "But Peter said unto him, 'Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.' And Jesus said unto him, 'Verily I say unto thee, that this day, even this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.'" Here it is: "But he spake the more vehemently, 'If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise.'" And then: "Likewise also said they all."

Peter was the one who enunciated this. He was the vocal one, the spokesman. Peter made sure that our Lord understood that he would be the man who would never forsake Jesus Christ. Then all the other disciples chimed in. They were saying, "We're never, ever going to deny you. We're never, ever going to flee. We're going to protect you. We're going to guard you. We're going to be with you through thick and thin."

Now look in Matthew 26, beginning with verse 36: “Then cometh Jesus with them into a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto his disciples, ‘Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.’ And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, James and John, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then said he unto them, ‘My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. Tarry ye here—and watch with me.’”

“And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, ‘O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.’ And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep. And he saith unto Peter, ‘What, couldst thou not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.’ He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, ‘O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.’ And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then cometh he to his disciples, and said unto them, ‘Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed”

“Into the hands of sinners.” Here is what I find absolutely astounding. These disciples said, “I will never deny thee. I will die with thee. I will be with you through thick and thin. It doesn’t matter what happens. Lord, we will never leave you.” Yet they could not even stay awake to guard Him for one hour. They were so vehement and determined: “No, no, no. This will never happen. We will never.” And they could not even stay awake and pray with Him, or watch to make sure no one slipped up on Him while He was praying—not for one hour.

Peter's Denial and the Weakness of the Flesh

I hope you are beginning to see Amalek, the flesh. Look how proud, arrogant, and haughty the flesh is. The flesh believes itself to be bold, brave, and powerful, yet it is exceedingly and extremely weak and sorry. Have you ever noticed in your dreams, even daydreaming, when you imagine encounters with wicked enemies? You are always the victor; you always come out on top. But that is not the way it is in

reality. You do not always come out on top. The truth of the matter is, anything the flesh does is wicked and unacceptable before God.

Now look, if you would, at Matthew 26 and verse 56. Here it is in black and white: “But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him and fled.” Forsaking Christ is bad enough and wicked enough in and of itself. But Peter did not just forsake Him; Peter also denied Him three times.

Look in Matthew chapter 26, beginning with verse 69. Here are the three times Peter denied Christ: “Now Peter sat without in the palace. And a damsel came unto him, saying, ‘Thou also was with Jesus of Galilee.’ But he denied before them all, saying, ‘I know not what thou sayest.’ And when he was going out into the porch, another maid saw him and said of them that were there, ‘This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth.’ And again, he denied with an oath, ‘I do not know the man.’ And after a while came unto him they that stood by and said to Peter, ‘Surely thou art one of them, for thy speech bereath or betrayeth thee.’ Then began he to curse and swear, saying, ‘I know not the man.’ And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the words of Jesus, which said unto him, ‘Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.’”

And he went out and wept bitterly. The first time Peter denied the Lord, a damsel came to him—a little maiden, a little girl, a little woman, a young woman. The second time, verse 71, “and when he was going out on the porch, another maid said unto him,” another little girl. Twice, this big, strong, rough, tough fisherman who said he would never deny Christ was troubled under two little girls. That’s amazing. You remember, one of them was the doorkeeper. She had no authority, she had no power; she was a doorkeeper. She just let people in and out. And even she, when she asked about him and said, “You’re one of them,” he answered, “No, no, no. I don’t know the man.”

What happened to this big, bold, rough and tough fisherman? What happened to all those other disciples who were so vehement that they would never desert Christ, that they would never deny Christ? The truth is, then came Amalek. Amalek was their flesh.

They trusted in their flesh. Anytime you trust in the flesh, you bring yourself under a curse.

The Curse of Trusting in the Flesh

Jeremiah 17:5 says, “Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.” Anytime you trust in man, anytime you trust in yourself, in your power, in your strength, in your ability, you are departing from the Lord. God says, “For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.” In other words, worthless. Then verse 7 says, “Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat”

“Cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither cease from yielding fruit.” Here is the difference between the man who trusts in his flesh and the man who trusts in the Lord. When you trust in the flesh, you are under God’s curse and are like the heath in the desert. You are like a drought: nothing works, everything is worthless. But when you trust in the Lord, you are like a tree planted by the river, planted by the water. Everything you do will prosper, and there will be no drought for you because you are by the riverside.

Glorying in the flesh, bragging in the flesh, trusting in the flesh, and boasting in the flesh are all condemned in Scripture. There is a curse placed upon it. Let me show you.

In Jeremiah 9, the Bible says in verse 23: “Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might. Let not the rich man glory in his riches, but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in all these things I delight, saith the Lord.”

God said, if you are going to glory, do not glory in anything but Him. In 1 Corinthians 1, beginning with verse 26, the apostle says:

"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called"—some may be, but not many. "But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to

"Confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are." Why has God chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise? Why has God chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty? Why has God chosen the base things of the world and those things which are despised? Why has He chosen these to bring to pass all these things that are? Here is why: "That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

Anytime we trust in the flesh, lean upon the flesh, or glorify the flesh, we are departing from the Lord. The Scripture tells us that they that are in the flesh cannot please God. That is what he said in Romans 8 and verse 8.

Application: The Flesh in the Church

How is this a picture of all of us? Here is a hard lesson, probably the most difficult lesson that you and I will ever learn: our flesh hates God. There is not one thing that our flesh can do that will please God. Our flesh hates God. The picture given to us in Matthew 26 of Peter and the other disciples should be clear: anytime we trust in the flesh, we are going to fail and fall.

Just stop and think: if those disciples who were with Christ for three years had no strength in themselves to stand, how can we who have not been with Him personally for three years? In other words, our flesh is absolutely worthless. Now I want you to look in your Bibles in the

Galatians chapter 5 tells us exactly the problem that has just been enunciated. Beginning with verse 13, Paul says, "For, brethren, ye

have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion of the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Then verse 15 says, "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."

I have often wanted to preach one message on that verse, entitled "Cannibal Christians." That is exactly what happens in Christianity because most people have no knowledge of their flesh and do not understand that their flesh hates God. They end up destroying everything because they are following their flesh.

Paul continues: "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth or fights against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Whenever you do that which is normal and natural, that is fleshly. When you do that which is contrary to the flesh and supernatural, that is the Spirit.

Think about all the fleshly efforts in our churches. What is worse is that we trust in those fleshly efforts rather than in the Lord, His Word, and His Spirit. We have all kinds of fleshly programs, gags, gimmicks, and gadgets to attract people and get them to come. We do not trust the Word of God or the Holy Spirit.

I was with a pastor this past week who told me about a church not far from him where they do anything and everything to get people to come. They have given away a bicycle, a pony, and a car just to get people to come. Then they called him.

He owns a furniture business. They wanted him to donate furniture so they could give it away. He said, "No, I don't think so." If you get people with hot dogs, you're going to have to give hamburgers and steaks to keep them. If you get them with bicycles, you're going to have to give them motorcycles and cars to keep up. It's just that simple.

Every preacher knows today that you cannot build a huge ministry just by preaching and teaching the Word of God, because people don't want it. They want entertainment. So we're trusting in the flesh—all the gags, gimmicks, and everything else to get people

in. There is a vast difference between genuine Holy Spirit-convicted and converted converts and those that man's conviction brings to Christ.

Look at the turnover in the average church today. I remember—and I could tell you this church, but I'm not going to it—I preached in a church one year that had three to four hundred people. The church was packed out every night. I went back the next year to preach in the same church. It still had three to four hundred people, but I recognized only two or three families. The turnover was almost a hundred percent.

What happened? Obviously, if you get them with gags and gimmicks, you have to give them something else to keep them. But there is another reason, I think: 1 John 2:19, where God said, "They went out from us, that it might be made manifest that they were not of us; for had they been of us, no doubt they would have continued with us." The proof that you have ever genuinely been converted and drawn to Jesus Christ is that you continue. We are talking about the flesh. And then came Amalek.

Conclusion and Call to Trust in the Lord

If God were to send, by His infinite grace and mercy, a sweeping revival tomorrow—hundreds swept into the kingdom of God, people getting right with God left and right—it would be 24 hours before the flesh acted up somewhere. Then came Amalek.

We should learn from this that we should never brag or proclaim what we will do and what we will not do. What did Peter say? “I will never deny thee.” And yet he did. Likewise said they all.

I have had people say, “I will never deny Christ. I’ll die first.” That sounds good. I would like to say that myself. But I have news for you: if a man came through that door with an AR-15 loaded with a 60-round magazine and said, “Deny Christ or die right here,” your flesh would want to live. Your flesh would make every rational argument as to why you should deny Christ.

Your flesh is not going to lie as silently and obediently upon the altar as Isaac did, because your flesh hates God, loves itself, and wants all that it wants all the time. If Peter and the apostles failed by

trusting in the flesh, how much more will we fail if we trust in the flesh. This happens in our churches and lives.

We do not realize that in Matthew 26, at the last Passover Christ had with His disciples and the institution of the Lord's Supper, in the most solemn, serious, and spiritual occasion, then came Amalek. "We will not deny thee. We will not flee. We will not forsake thee." Yet they could not pray with Him for one hour. Your flesh hates God. I can only confess this to God and apologize. This is why the Bible says flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Anytime God blesses us, we have to watch out for Amalek, because our flesh is still flesh. Our Lord said all flesh is as grass. It has no stability, no real substance, and no backbone. It is here today and gone tomorrow.

Here is a picture of us: Judas willing to betray Christ for his own lusts, and Peter and the other disciples willing to deny Christ to save their own skins. Therefore, you and I need to cry to the Lord daily and ask God to preserve and protect us.

Listen—not just from our enemies, but from ourselves. What did the Apostle Paul say in Romans 7:18? "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." There is nothing I can do, he said, to please God. But in Philippians 4:13 he said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." It is not the flesh, but Christ; not the flesh, but the Spirit; not the flesh, but the Father. We need to trust in Him, lean upon Him, and not trust in our flesh.

The picture we see is that we are trusting in our flesh. May God change that picture and enable us to trust in Him in every area and sphere of life.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we pray for ourselves, help us to be holy and godly, to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh, and to honor You. Help us not to trust in ourselves, our determination, our will, or anything about us, but only in You. Give us grace to walk with You and in the Spirit, not in the flesh, for Your honor.

Source Notes

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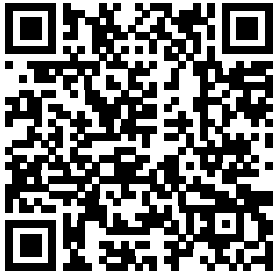
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