

The Betrayal

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon powerfully illustrates how Judas's betrayal of Christ fulfills prophecy, reveals the depths of human sin, and underscores Jesus' compassionate endurance of treachery for our salvation.

Scripture: Luke 22:47-48, Psalm 41:9, Psalm 55:12-14, Zechariah 11:12-13, Acts 1:16-20

Topics: "Betrayal", "Atonement", "Prophecy Fulfillment"

Description

In this profound sermon, C.H. Spurgeon explores the betrayal of Jesus by Judas, emphasizing the fulfillment of Scripture and the depth of human sin revealed through this act. Spurgeon highlights the compassionate response of Christ amidst treachery and warns believers about the dangers of hypocrisy and false faith. This message calls Christians to self-examination and steadfast loyalty to Christ even in trials.

Transcript

"And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"—Luke 22:47, 48.

WHEN SATAN HAD BEEN ENTIRELY worsted in his conflict with Christ in the garden, the man-devil Judas came upon the scene. As the Parthian in his flight turns round to shoot the fatal arrow, so the arch-enemy aimed another shaft at the Redeemer, by employing the traitor into whom he had entered. Judas became the devil's deputy, and a most trusty and serviceable tool he was. The Evil One had taken entire possession of the apostate's heart, and, like the swine possessed of devils, he ran violently downwards towards destruction. Well had infernal malice selected the Savior's trusted friend to be his treacherous betrayer, for thus he stabbed at the very center of his broken and bleeding heart. But, beloved, as in all things God is wiser than Satan, and the Lord of goodness outwitteth the Prince of Evil, so, in this dastardly betrayal of Christ, prophecy was fulfilled, and Christ was the more surely declared to be the promised Messiah. Was not Joseph a type? and, lo! like that envied youth, Jesus was sold by his own brethren. Was he not to be another Samson, by whose strength the gates of hell should be torn from their posts? lo! like Samson, he is bound by his countrymen, and delivered to the adversary. Know ye not that he was the anti-type of David? and was not David deserted by Ahithophel, his own familiar friend and counsellor? Nay, brethren, do not the words of the Psalmist receive a literal fulfillment in our Master's betrayal? What prophecy can be more exactly true than the language of the forty-first and fifty-fifth

Psalms? In the first we read, "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me;" and in the fifty-fifth the Psalmist is yet more clear; "For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company. He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he hath broken his covenant. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords." Even an obscure passage in one of the lesser prophets, must have a literal fulfillment, and for thirty pieces of silver, the price of a base slave, must the Savior be betrayed by his choice friend. Ah! thou foul fiend, thou shalt find at the last that thy wisdom is but intensified folly; as for the deep plots and plans of thy craft, the Lord shall laugh them to scorn; after all, thou art but the unconscious drudge of him whom thou abhorrest; in all the black work thou doest so greedily, thou art no better than a mean scullion in the royal kitchen of the King of kings.

Without further preface, let us advance to the subject of our Lord's betrayal. First, concentrate your thoughts upon Jesus, the betrayed one; and when ye have lingered awhile there, solemnly gaze into the villanous countenance of Judas, the betrayer—he may prove a beacon to warn us against the sin which gendereth apostacy.

I. LET US TARRY AWHILE, AND SEE OUR LORD UNGRATEFULLY AND DASTARDLY BETRAYED.

It is appointed that he must die, but how shall he fall into the hands of his adversaries? Shall they capture him in conflict? It must not be, lest he appear an unwilling victim. Shall he flee before his foes until he can hide no longer? It is not meet that a sacrifice should be hunted to death. Shall he offer himself to the foe? That were to excuse his murderers, or be a party to their crime. Shall he be taken accidentally or unawares? That would withdraw from his cup the necessary bitterness which made it wormwood mingled with gall. No; he must be betrayed by his friend, that he may bear the utmost depths of suffering, and that in every separate circumstance there may be a well of grief. One reason for the appointment of the betrayal, lay in the fact that it was ordained that man's sin should reach its culminating point in his death. God, the great owner of the vineyard, had sent many servants, and the husbandmen had stoned one and cast out another; last of all, he said, "I will send my Son; surely they will reverence my Son." When they slew the heir to win the inheritance, their rebellion had reached its height. The murder of our blessed Lord was the extreme of human guilt; it developed the deadly hatred against God which lurks in the heart of man. When man became a deicide, sin had reached its fullness; and in the black deed of the man by whom the Lord was betrayed, that fullness was all displayed. If it had not been for a Judas, we had not known how black, how foul, human nature may become. I scorn the men who try to apologize for the treachery of this devil in human form, this son of perdition, this foul apostate. I should think myself a villain if I tried to screen him, and I shudder for the men who dare extenuate his crimes. My brethren, we should feel a deep detestation of this master of infamy; he has gone to his own place, and the anathema of David, part of which was quoted by Peter, has come upon him, "When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few; and let another take his office." Surely, as the devil was allowed unusually to torment the bodies of men, even so was he let loose to get possession of Judas as he has seldom gained possession of any other man, that we might see how foul, how desperately evil is the human heart. Beyond a doubt, however, the main reason for this was that Christ might offer a perfect atonement for sin. We may usually read the sin in the punishment. Man betrayed his God. Man had the custody of the royal garden, and should have kept its green avenues sacred for communion with

his God; but he betrayed the trust; the sentinel was false; he admitted evil into his own heart, and so into the paradise of God. He was false to the good name of the Creator, tolerating the insinuation which he should have repelled with scorn. Therefore must Jesus find man a traitor to him. There must be the counterpart of the sin in the suffering which he endured. You and I have often betrayed Christ. We have, when tempted, chosen the evil and forsaken the good; we have taken the bribes of hell, and have not followed closely with Jesus. It seemed most fitting, then, that he who bore the chastisement of sin should be reminded of its ingratitude and treachery by the things which he suffered. Besides, brethren, that cup must be bitter to the last degree which is to be the equivalent for the wrath of God. There must be nothing consolatory in it; pains must be taken to pour into it all that even Divine wisdom can invent of awful and unheard of woe, and this one point—"He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me," was absolutely necessary to intensify the bitterness. Moreover, we feel persuaded that by thus suffering at the hand of a traitor the Lord became a faithful High Priest, able to sympathize with us when we fall under the like affliction. Since slander and ingratitude are common calamities, we can come to Jesus with full assurance of faith; he knows these sore temptations, for he has felt them in their very worst degree. We may cast every care, and every sorrow upon him, for he careth for us, having suffered with us. Thus, then, in our Lord's betrayal, Scripture was fulfilled, sin was developed, atonement was completed, and the great all-suffering High Priest became able to sympathize with us in every point.

Now let us look at the treason itself. You perceive how black it was. Judas was Christ's servant, what if I call him his confidential servant. He was a partaker in apostolic ministry and the honor of miraculous gifts. He had been most kindly and indulgently treated. He was a sharer in all the goods of his Master, in fact he fared far better than his Lord, for the Man of Sorrows always took the lion's share of all the pains of poverty and the reproach of slander. He had food and raiment given him out of the common stock, and the Master seems to have indulged him very greatly. The old tradition is, that next to the apostle Peter he was the one with whom the Savior most commonly associated. We think there must be a mistake there, for surely John was the Savior's greatest friend; but Judas, as a servant had been treated with the utmost confidence. Ye know, brethren, how sore is that blow which comes from a servant in whom we have put unlimited trust. But Judas was more than this: he was a friend, a trusted friend. That little bag into which generous women cast their small contributions had been put into his hands, and very wisely too, for he had the financial vein. His main virtue was economy, a very needful quality in a treasurer. As exercising a prudent foresight for the little company, and watching the expenses carefully, he was, as far as men could judge, the right man in the right place. He had been thoroughly trusted. I read not that there was any annual audit of his accounts; I do not discover that the Master took him to task as to the expenditure of his privy purse. Everything was given to him, and he gave, at the Master's direction, to the poor, but no account was asked. This is vile indeed, to be chosen to such a position, to be installed purse-bearer to the Ring of kings, Chancellor of God's exchequer, and then to turn aside and sell the Savior; this is treason in its uttermost degree. Remember that the world looked upon Judas as colleague and partner with our Lord. To a great extent the name of Judas was associated with that of Christ. When Peter, James, or John had done anything amiss, reproachful tongues threw it all on their Master. The twelve were part and parcel of Jesus of Nazareth. One old commentator says of Judas—"He was Christ's alter ego"—to the people at large there was an identification of each apostle with the leader of the band. And oh! when such associations have been established, and then there is treachery, it is as though our arm should commit treason against our head, or as if our foot should desert the body. This was a stab indeed! Perhaps, dear brethren, our Lord saw in the person of Judas a representative man, the portraiture of the many thousands who in after ages imitated his crime. Did Jesus see in Iscariot all the Judases who betray truth, virtue, and the cross? Did he perceive the multitudes of whom we may say, that they were, spiritually, in the loins of

Judas? Hymeneus, Alexander, Hermogenes, Philetus, Demas, and others of that tribe, were all before him as he saw the man, his equal, his acquaintance, bartering him away for thirty pieces of silver.

Dear friends, the position of Judas must have tended greatly to aggravate his treason. Even the heathens have taught us that ingratitude is the worst of vices. When Caesar was stabbed by his friend Brutus, the world's poet writes—

"This was the most unkindest cut of all;
For when the noble Caesar saw him stab,
Ingratitude, more strong than traitor's arms,
Quite vanquish'd him; then burst his mighty heart;
And, in his mantle muffling up his face,
Even at the base of Pompey's statua,
_____ great Caesar fell."

Many ancient stories, both Greek and Roman, we might quote to show the abhorrence which the heathens entertain towards ingratitude and treachery. Certain, also, of their own poets, such, for instance, as Sophocles, have poured out burning words upon deceitful friends; but we have no time to prove what you will all admit, that nothing can be more cruel, nothing more full of anguish, than to be sold to destruction by one's bosom friend. The closer the foeman comes the deeper will be the stab he gives; if we admit him to our heart, and give him our closest intimacy, then can he wound us in the most vital part.

Let us notice, dear friends, while we look at the breaking heart of our agonizing Savior, the manner in which he met this affliction. He had been much in prayer; prayer had overcome his dreadful agitation; he was very calm; and we need to be very calm when we are forsaken by a friend. Observe his gentleness. The first word he spake to Judas, when the traitor had polluted his cheek with a kiss, was this—"FRIEND!" FRIEND!! Note that! Not "Thou hateful miscreant," but "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" not "Wretch, wherefore dost thou dare to stain my cheek with thy foul and lying lips?" no, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" Ah! if there had been anything good left in Judas, this would have brought it out. If he had not been an unmitigated, incorrigible, thrice-dyed traitor, his avarice must have lost its power at that instant, and he would have cried—"My master! I came to betray thee, but that generous word has won my soul; here, if thou must be bound, I will be bound with thee; I make a full confession of my infamy!" Our Lord added these words—there is reproof in them, but notice how kind they are still, how much too good for such a caitiff—"Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" I can conceive that the tears gushed from his eyes, and that his voice faltered, when he thus addressed his own familiar friend and acquaintance—"Betrayest thou," my Judas, my treasurer, "betrayest thou the Son of Man," thy suffering, sorrowing friend, whom thou hast seen naked and poor, and without a place whereon to lay his head. Betrayest thou the Son of Man—and dost thou prostitute the fondest of all endearing signs—a kiss—that which should be a symbol of loyalty to the King, shall it be the badge of thy treachery—that which was reserved for affection as her best symbol—dost thou make it the instrument of my destruction? Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" Oh! if he had not been given up to hardness of heart, if the Holy Ghost had not utterly left him, surely this son of perdition would have fallen prostrate yet again, and weeping out his very soul, would have cried—"No, I cannot betray thee, thou suffering Son of man; forgive, forgive;

spare thyself; escape from this bloodthirsty crew, and pardon thy treacherous disciple!" But no, no word of compunction, while the silver is at stake! Afterwards came the sorrow that worketh death, which drove him, like Ahithophel, his prototype, to court the gallows to escape remorse. This, also, must have aggravated the woe of our beloved Lord, when he saw the final impenitence of the traitor, and read the tearful doom of that man of whom he had once said, it would be better for him that he had never been born.

Beloved, I would have you fix your eyes on your Lord in your quiet meditations as being thus despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and gird up the loins of your minds, counting it no strange thing if this fiery trial should come upon you, but being determined that though your Lord should be betrayed by his most eminent disciples, yet, through his grace you will cling to him in shame and in suffering, and will follow him, if needs be, even unto death. God give us grace to see the vision of his nailed hands and feet, and remembering that all this came from the treachery of a friend, let us be very jealous of ourselves, lest we crucify the Lord afresh and put him to an open shame by betraying him in our conduct, or in our words, or in our thoughts.

II. Grant me your attention while we make an estimate of the man by whom the Son of man was betrayed—JUDAS THE BETRAYER.

I would call your attention, dear friends, to his position and public character. Judas was a preacher; nay, he was a foremost preacher, "he obtained part of this ministry," said the Apostle Peter. He was not simply one of the seventy; he had been selected by the Lord himself as one of the twelve, an honorable member of the college of the apostles. Doubtless he had preached the gospel so that many had been gladdened by his voice, and miraculous powers had been vouchsafed to him, so that at his word the sick had been healed, deaf ears had been opened; and the blind had been made to see; nay, there is no doubt that he who could not keep the devil out of himself, had cast devils out of others. Yet how art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! He that was as a prophet in the midst of the people, and spake with the tongue of the learned, whose word and wonders proved that he had been with Jesus and had learned of him—he betrays his Master. Understand, my brethren, that no gifts can ensure grace, and that no position of honor or usefulness in the Church will necessarily prove our being true to our Lord and Master. Doubtless there are bishops in hell, and crowds of those who once occupied the pulpit are now condemned for ever to bewail their hypocrisy. You that are Church-officers, do not conclude that because you enjoy the confidence of the Church, that therefore of an absolute certainty the grace of God is in you. Perhaps it is the most dangerous of all positions for a man to become well known and much respected by the religious world, and yet to be rotten at the core. To be where others can observe our faults is a healthy thing though painful; but to live with beloved friends who would not believe it possible for us to do wrong, and who if they saw us err would make excuses for us—this is to be where it is next to impossible for us ever to be aroused if our hearts be not right with God. To have a fair reputation and a false heart is to stand upon the brink of hell.

Judas took a very high degree officially. He had the distinguished honor of being entrusted with the Master's financial concerns, and this, after all, was no small degree to which to attain. The Lord, who knows how to use all sorts of gifts, perceived what gift the man had. He knew that Peter's unthinking impetuosity would soon empty the bag and leave the company in great straits, and if he had entrusted it to John, his loving spirit might have been cajoled into unwise benevolence towards beggars of unctious tongue; he might even have spent the little moneys in buying alabaster boxes whose precious ointments should anoint the Master's head. He gave the bag to Judas, and it was discreetly, prudently, and properly

used; there is no doubt he was the most judicious person, and fitted to occupy the post. But oh! dear friends, if the Master shall choose any of us who are ministers or Church-officers, and give us a very distinguished position; if our place in the ranks shall be that of commanding officers, so that even our brother ministers look up with esteem, and our fellow-elders or deacons regard us as being fathers in Israel—oh! if we turn, if we prove false, how damnable shall be our end at the last! What a blow shall we give to the heart of the Church, and what derision will be made in hell!

You will observe that the character of Judas was openly an admirable one. I find not that he committed himself in any way. Not the slightest speck defiled his moral character so far as others could perceive. He was no boaster, like Peter; he was free enough from the rashness which cries, "Though all men should forsake thee yet will not I." He asks no place on the right hand of the throne, his ambition is of another sort. He does not ask idle questions. The Judas who asks questions is "not Iscariot." Thomas and Philip are often prying into deep matters, but not Judas. He receives truth as it is taught him, and when others are offended and walk no more with Jesus, he faithfully adheres to him, having golden reasons for so doing. He does not indulge in the lusts of the flesh or in the pride of life. None of the disciples suspected him of hypocrisy; they said at the table, "Lord, is it I?" They never said, "Lord, is it Judas?" It was true he had been filching for months, but then he did it by littles, and covered his defalcations so well by financial manipulations that he ran no risk of detection from the honest unsuspecting fishermen with whom he associated. Like some merchants and traders we have heard of—invaluable gentlemen as chairmen of speculating companies and general managers of swindling banks—he could abstract a decent per-centage and yet make the accounts exactly tally. The gentlemen who have learned of Judas, manage to cook the accounts most admirably for the shareholders, so as to get a rich joint for their own table; over which they, no doubt, entreat the divine blessing. Judas was, in his known life, a most admirable person. He would have been an alderman ere long there is no doubt, and being very pious and richly-gifted, his advent at churches or chapels would have created intense satisfaction. "What a discreet and influential person;" say the deacons. "Yes," replies the minister; "what an acquisition to our councils; if we could elect him to office he would be of eminent service to the Church." I believe that the Easter chose him as apostle on purpose that we might not be at all surprised if we find such a man a minister in the pulpit, or a colleague of the minister, working as an officer in Christ's Church. These are solemn things, my brethren; let us take them to heart, and if any of us wear a good character among men and stand high in office, let this question come home close to us—"Lord, is it I? Lord, is it I?" Perhaps he who shall last ask the question is just the man who ought to have asked it first.

But, secondly, I call your attention to his real nature and sin. Judas was a man with a conscience. He could not afford to do without it. He was no Sadducee who could fling religion overboard; he had strong religious tendencies. He was no debauched person; he never spent a two-pence in vice on his life, not that he loved vice less, but that he loved the two-pence more. Occasionally he was generous, but then it was with other people's money. Well did he watch his lovely charge, the bag. He had a conscience, I say, and a ferocious conscience it was when it once broke the chain, for it was his conscience which made him hang himself. But then it was a conscience that did not sit regularly on the throne; it reigned by fits and starts. Conscience was not the leading element. Avarice predominated over conscience. He would get money, if honestly, he liked that best, but if he could not get it conscientiously, then anyhow in the world. He was but a small trader; his gains were no great things, or else he would not have sold Christ for so small a sum as that—ten pounds at the outside, of our money at its present value—some three or four pounds, as it was in those days. It was a poor price to take for the Master; but then a little money was a great thing to him. He had been poor; he had joined Christ with the idea that he would soon be proclaimed

King of the Jews, and that then he should become a nobleman, and be rich. Finding Christ a long while in coming to his kingdom, he had taken little by little, enough to lay by in store; and now, fearing that he was to be disappointed in all his dreams, and never having had any care for Christ, but only for himself, he gets out of what he thinks to have been a gross mistake in the best way he can, and makes money by his treason against his Lord. Brethren, I do solemnly believe, that of all hypocrites, those are the persons of whom there is the least hope whose God is their money. You may reclaim a drunkard; thank God, we have seen many instances of that; and even a fallen Christian, who has given way to vice, may loathe his lust, and return from it; but I fear me that the cases in which a man who is cankered with covetousness has ever been saved, are so few, that they might be written on your finger-nail. This is a sin which the world does not rebuke; the most faithful minister can scarce smite its forehead. God knoweth what thunders I have launched out against men who are all for this world, and yet pretend to be Christ's followers; but yet they always say, "I is not for me." What I should call stark naked covetousness, they call prudence, discretion, economy, and so on; and actions which I would scorn to spit upon, they will do, and think their hands quite clean after they have done them, and still sit as God's people sit, and hear as God's people hear, and think that after they have sold Christ for paltry gain, they will go to heaven. O souls, souls, souls, beware, beware, beware, most of all of greed! It is not money, nor the lack of money, but the love of money which is the root of all evil. It is not getting it; it is not even keeping it; it is loving it; it is making it your god; it is looking at that as the main chance, and not considering the cause of Christ, nor the truth of Christ, nor the holy life of Christ, but being ready to sacrifice everything for gains' sake. Oh! such men make giants in sin; they shall be set up for ever as butts for infernal laughter; their damnation shall be sure and just.

The third point is, the warning which Judas received, and the way in which he persevered. Just think—the night before he sold his Master what do you think the Master did? Why, he washed his feet! And yet he sold him! Such condescension! Such love! Such familiarity! He took a towel, and girded himself, and washed Judas's feet! And yet those very feet brought Judas as a guide to them that took Jesus! And you remember what he said when he had washed his feet—"Now ye are clean, but not all;" and he turned a tearful eye on Judas. What a warning for him! What could be more explicit? Then when the Supper came, and they began to eat and drink together, the Lord said—"One of you shall betray me." That was plain enough; and a little farther on he said explicitly—"He that dippeth with me in the dish the same is he." What opportunities for repentance! He cannot say he had not a faithful preacher. What could have been more personal? If he does not repent now, what is to be done? Moreover, Judas saw that which was enough to make a heart of adamant bleed; he saw Christ with agony on his face, for it was just after Christ had said "Now is my soul troubled," that Judas left the feast and went out to sell his Master. That face, so full of grief, ought to have turned him, must have turned him, if he had not been, given up and left alone, to deliver over his soul unto his own devices. What language could have been more thundering than the words of Jesus Christ, when he said, "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." He had said, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil." Now, if while these thunders rolled over his head, and the lightningflashes pointed at his person, if, then, this man was not aroused, what a hell of infernal pertinacity and guilt must have been within his soul! Oh! but if any of you, if any of you shall sell Christ for the sake of keeping the shop open on Sunday, if you shall sell Christ for the extra wages you may earn for falsehood—oh! if you shall sell Christ for the sake of the hundred pounds that you may lay hold of by a villanous contract—if you do that, you do not perish unwarned. I come into this pulpit to please no man among you. God knoweth if I knew more of your follies you should have them pointed out yet more plainly; if I knew more of the tricks of business, I would not flinch to speak of them! But, O sirs, I do conjure you by the blood of Judas, who hanged himself

at last, turn you—if such there be—turn you from this evil, if haply your sin may be blotted out!

Let us for one minute notice the act itself. He sought out his own temptation. He did not wait for the devil to come to him; he went after the devil. He went to the chief priests and said, “What will ye give me?” One of the old Puritan divines says, “This is not the way people generally trade; they tell their own price.” Judas says “What will ye give me? Anything you like. The Lord of life and glory sold at the buyer’s own price. What will ye give me?” And another very prettily puts it, “What could they give him? What did the man want? He did not want food and raiment; he fared as well as his Master and the other disciples; he had enough; he had all that his needs could crave, and yet he said, What will ye give me? What will ye give me? What will ye give ne?” Alas! some people’s religion is grounded on that one question—“What will you give me?” Yes, they would go to church if there are any charities given away there, but if there were more to be got by not going they would do that. “What will you give me?” Some of these people are not even so wise as Judas. Ah! there is a man over yonder who would sell the Lord for a crown, much more for ten pounds, as Judas did! Why, there are some who will sell Christ for the smallest piece of silver in our currency. They are tempted to deny their Lord, tempted to act in an unhallowed way, though the gains are so paltry that a year’s worth of them would not come to much. No subject could be more dreadful than this, if we really would but look at it carefully. This temptation happeneth to each of us. Do not deny it. We all like to gain; it is but natural that we should; the propensity to acquire is in every mind, and under lawful restrictions it is not an improper propensity; but when it comes into conflict with our allegiance to our Master, and in a world like this it often will, we must overcome it or perish. There will arise occasions with some of you many times in a week in which it is “God—or gain;” “Christ, or the thirty pieces of silver;” and therefore I am the more urgent in pressing this on you. Do not, though the world should bid its highest, though it should heap its comforts upon one another, and add fame, and hononr, and respect, do not, I pray you, forsake your Master. There have been such cases; cases of persons who used to come here, but they found they did not get on, because Sunday was the best day’s trade in the week; they had some good feelings, some good impressions once, but they have lost them now. We have known others who have said, “Well, you see, I did once think I loved the Lord, but my business went so badly when I came up to the house of God, that I left it; I renounced my profession.” Ah, Judas! ah, Judas! ah, Judas! let me call thee by thy name, for such thou art! This is the sin of the apostate over again; God help thee to repent of it, and go, not to any priest, but to Christ and make confession, if haply thou mayest be saved. You perceive that in the act of selling Christ, Judas was faithful to his master. “Faithful to his master?” you say. Yes, his master was the devil, and having made an agreement with him he carried it out honestly. Some people are always very honest with the devil. If they say they will do a wrong thing they say they ought to do it because they said they would; as if any oath could be binding on a man if it be an oath to do wrong? “I will never go into that house again,” some have said, and they have said afterwards, “Well, I wish I had not said it.” Was it a wrong thing? What is your oath then? It was an oath given to the devil. What was that foolish promise but a promise to Satan, and will you be faithful to him? Ah! would God that you were faithful to Christ! Would that any of us were as true to Christ as Satan’s servants are to their master!

Judas betrayed his Master with a kiss. That is how most apostates do it; it is always with a kiss. Did you ever read an infidel book in your life which did not begin with profound respect for truth? I never have. Even modern ones, when bishops write them, always begin like that. They betray the Son of man with a kiss. Did you ever read a bank of bitter controversy which did not begin with such a sickly lot of humility, such sugar, such butter, such treacle, such everything sweet and soft, that you said, “Ah! there is sure to be something bad here, for when people begin so softly and sweetly, so humbly and so smoothly, depend upon it they have rank hatred in their hearts.” The most devout looking people are often the most

hypocritical in the world.

We conclude with the repentance of Judas. He did repent; he did repent, but it was the repentance that worketh death. He did make a confession, but there was no respect to the deed itself, but only to its consequences. He was very sorry that Christ was condemned. Some latent love that he had once had to a kind Master, came up when he saw that he was condemned. He did not think, perhaps, it would come to that; he may have had a hope that he would escape out of their hands, and then he would keep his thirty pieces of silver and perhaps sell him over again. Perhaps he thought that he would rid himself from their hands by some miraculous display of power, or would proclaim the kingdom, and so he himself would only be hastening on that very blessed consummation. Friends, the man who repents of consequences does not repent. The ruffian repents of the gallows but not of the murder, and that is no repentance at all. Human law of course must measure sin by consequences, but God's law does not. There is a pointsman on a railway who neglects his duty; there is a collision on the line, and people are killed; well, it is manslaughter to this man through his carelessness. But that pointsman, perhaps, many times before had neglected his duty, but no accident came of it, and then he walked home and said, "Well, I have done no wrong." Now the wrong, mark you, is never to be measured by the accident, but by the thing itself, and if you have committed an offense and you have escaped undetected it is just as vile in God's eye; if you have done wrong and Providence has prevented the natural result of the wrong, the honor of that is with God, but you are as guilty as if your sin had been carried out to its fullest consequences, and the whole world set ablaze. Never measure sin by consequences, but repent of them as they are in themselves.

Though being sorry for consequences, since these are unalterable, this man was led to remorse. He sought a tree, adjusted the rope, and hanged himself, but in his haste he hanged himself so badly that the rope broke, he fell over a precipice, and there we read his bowels gushed out; he lay a mangled mass at the bottom of the cliff, the horror of every one who passed. Now you that make a gain of godliness—if there be such here—you may not come to a suicide's end, but take the lesson home. Mr. Keach, my venerable predecessor, gives at the end of one of his volumes of sermons, the death of a Mr. John Child. John Child had been a Dissenting minister, and for the sake of gain, to get a living, he joined the Episcopalians against his conscience; he sprinkled infants; and practiced all the other paraphernalia of the Church against his conscience. At last, at last, he was arrested with such terrors for having done what he had, that he renounced his living, took to a sick bed, and his dying oaths, and blasphemies, and curses, were something so dreadful, that his case was the wonder of that age. Mr. Keach wrote a full account of it, and many went to try what they could do to comfort the man, but he would say, "Get ye hence; get ye hence; it is of no use; I have sold Christ." You know, also, the wonderful death of Francis Spira. In all literature, there is nothing so awful as the death of Spira. The man had known the truth; he stood well among reformers; he was an honored, and to a certain extent apparently a faithful man; but he went back to the Church of Rome; he apostatized; and then when conscience was aroused he did not fly to Christ, but he looked at the consequences instead of at the sin, and so, feeling that the consequences could not be altered, he forgot that the sin might be pardoned, and perished in agonies extreme. May it never be the unhappy lot of any of us to stand by such a death-bed; but the Lord have mercy upon us now, and make us search our hearts. Those of you who say, "We do not want that sermon," are probably the persons who need it most. He who shall say, "Well, we have no Judas amongst us," is probably a Judas himself. Oh! search yourselves; turn out every cranny; look in every corner of your soul, to see whether your religion be for Christ's sake, and for truth's sake, and for God's sake, or whether it be a profession which you take up because it is a respectable thing, a profession which you keep up because it keeps you up. The Lord search us and try us, and bring us to know our ways.

And now, in conclusion—there is a Savior, and that Savior is willing to receive us now. If I am not a saint, yet I am a sinner. Would it not be best for all of us to go again to the fountain, and wash and be clean. Let each of us go anew, and say, “Master, thou knowest what I am; I know not myself; but, if I be wrong, make me right; if I be right, keep me so. My trust is in thee. Keep me now, for thine own sake, Jesus.” Amen.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ch-spurgeon/the-betrayal/>

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