

United With God's Children

by Erlo Stegen

The sermon warns believers of the dangers of pride and hypocrisy, and the importance of staying true to God and His community to avoid falling into sin.

Duration: 1:13:17

Scripture: Matthew 26:47

Topics: "Sin"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by recounting the story of the Trojan horse and how the Greeks used it to deceive and destroy the city. He draws a parallel to Satan's cunning plans and warns the listeners to be vigilant against his tactics. The preacher then shifts to the story of Judas Iscariot, emphasizing the severity of his betrayal of Jesus. He urges the audience to be cautious and watchful, as even those close to Jesus can fall into sin. The sermon concludes with a reminder to watch and pray, remaining focused on the Lord to avoid being led astray.

Transcript

We ask you, Lord Jesus, to be in our midst by your Spirit, your Holy Spirit, touching our hearts, working in our hearts, that we will be able to leave the service strengthened, revived. Amen. Today's text, Matthew 26.

From verse 47. Till verse 50. Now this text is in keeping with the approaching Easter time that we look at that particular time of the Lord.

Let's start with verse 47. And while you're still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude, with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now his betrayer had given them a sign, saying, Whomever I kiss, he is the one, seize him.

Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, Greetings, Rabbi, and kissed him. Then Jesus said to him, Friend, why have you come? We'll read thus far. I'd like to speak about this deed of Judas Iscariot, he who was one of the chosen twelve disciples of Jesus.

I don't see that there is any sin so wicked, so depraved, as this of Judas Iscariot. Jesus said, It must happen, but woe to the one through whom it will happen. Now Judas Iscariot was one of the chosen twelve disciples of Jesus.

Now he knew the Lord Jesus well, having been with him, close to him, traveling with him for three years. He knew Jesus, everything about him. He heard all his sermons that had never been preached like this manner, in this manner, on earth before.

No one had ever preached like this man preached, known by Judas. And I don't think there's any miracle that had been performed without Judas Iscariot being aware of it. For he was with the Lord, day and night.

Traveling with him, crossing the land with Jesus. Seeing the miracles of Jesus. He felt the love that Jesus had shown to people.

And he himself, that is Judas, was trusted. To the point that he was made the treasurer of the money bag. He could witness as he traveled with Jesus that all that the prophets had said were being fulfilled in him, in the Lord.

That Jesus is the Messiah. Is the Son of God. Sadly though, little by little, Satan found entrance.

Maybe he was proud, seeing himself as having a position that was higher than the others. Trusted by his fellow disciples and the Lord, for you don't just ask anybody to be the treasurer. And I don't know what the actual reason was for him to betray Jesus.

Was it perhaps that he felt so lofty, elevated, and he became proud? One who is proud hates being corrected, even the slightest gentle correction upsets him. If one thinks of that woman who came in Bethany. Mary, who took that vase with very expensive perfume anointing the Lord Jesus.

Judas Iscariot rebuked her sharply. What is this that you have to do? Couldn't this oil have been sold for a very high price and then the money distributed to the poor? But the Bible says of that incident, he didn't say that because he loved the poor, but because he was a thief. You also get those in this era who speak so highly of the poor, though they don't have a heart for them at all, instead they have a thieving spirit and they love the money.

Jesus said, leave her alone for what she does, she does for my burial. And also a proud person is likely to not want any rebuke and is very upset and angered. Could it be that this incident is the result of Judas Iscariot? Could it be that this incident is what parted him from Jesus for it was very seldom that he had been rebuked before others? Even when Jesus sat with them and him at the table and said, one of you will betray me.

And each one was touched, convicted, even Judas was one of those who said, can it be me Lord? Then the Lord took bread, putting it then into that dish, saying, the one who puts his bread with me into the dish, he will betray me and rebuked him before all and said, what you intend to do, do quickly. A person who is proud, seeing themselves as being elevated, very intelligent, they think that of themselves, seeing that their position is more important than others, such a person dislikes any rebuke. Even the slightest rebuke angers him.

How much more if they are rebuked by Jesus in front of all. Some of the other disciples didn't know who would betray him. Even when the Lord made it clear who it would be, the one who puts his bread into the dish with him, the other disciples still did not see properly.

However, Judas Iscariot knew full well what he was up to and what he had already done. Despite the rebuke and his haughtiness, it doesn't matter how big the person might be in our eyes, we should never

get to the point where we get angry and indignant because of a rebuke. Never.

It is not right. If somebody comes to you and rebukes you, don't get upset. Rejoice, be glad.

For if you open that door, you are giving entrance to the same Satan who then entered into Judas Iscariot to betray the Lord. And some will get so upset. Even now there are those that will get so angered that they will sell the Lord Jesus for 30 silver pieces, nothing really.

It was the price of a slave. Jesus said it's not good that a person should be alone. But when a person is alone, he can fall easily.

But when a person is alone, he can fall easily. A person can be proud because of anything, it might be their clothing, it might be their beauty, it might be their position, their age, whatever it is. And because of this, he was hypocritical and he covered it up.

You might also be the one who scolds another person too quickly and you just quickly, like Judas, rebuked the woman for what she had done and Jesus had to rebuke him. You might be proud because of your abundance of possessions and your becoming great. Many things.

Many things. I don't think I need to spell them all out. All the things that can cause you to become arrogant.

Such a person doesn't like to be counseled, instructed, rebuked and gets upset. So-so. And a person gets angry, how can that person dare to rebuke me like that? So Judas, these things angered him.

Hatred. Hatred, anger and dislike entered into him. Gone was that joy and now he was upset with the person who had caused this.

For when you have hatred in your heart, there's a maliciousness that enters in so that you are glad when you see him in trouble and you speak about it and you say that sickness is a direct result of what they've done. This became hatred, grew in him and wished that Jesus would die. Always hypocritical, being a Pharisee.

Treated Jesus as if though he was his greatest friend. For when he met him, he kissed and embraced him for that was the Jewish way of friends at that time. But lies and hypocrisy are inseparable twins.

Came like a friend of Jesus. And then the enemies got the opportunity to seize him, Judas leading the pack. We are born again.

So what had happened? And he wasn't a real true friend of Jesus anymore. He rather identified with the Pharisees and Sadducees, those who wanted to kill him. And became a murderer in his heart.

But didn't let on. Didn't share with anybody, at least not the true disciples of the Lord. Instead, those who he shared with were the enemies.

Listen to what I say. Paul wrote to the Romans, saying may your love be without hypocrisy. Hate evil.

Evil should be something that rises up within you in a disgust towards evil. We must be disgusted with evil, hate it. But it's shocking.

If a person who was so close to Jesus, with the very disciples of Jesus, Permitting the smallest sin to enter. Be very careful. It is only grace if a disciple of Jesus, a believer, stands true right to the end.

Never turning aside on the way. But remains focused on the Lord always. We should tremble, we should be in fear before the Lord as we hear this about Judas Iscariot.

That is why the Bible says watch and pray. Even before you pray, you need to watch like a watchman, a night watchman. You need to be on your guard, for at any time the enemy can approach.

It is dangerous. For sin can start in the smallest way. You start being pelly-pelly with a certain person.

As a German once said, if you have fallen in love with a man or a girl, then you have already fallen. If you have fallen in love with a man or a girl, then you have already fallen. Be very careful, lest you start becoming so close to somebody through whom sin can enter.

A certain girl, an American girl who grew up in a Christian family, had a beautiful, had a most beautiful voice that seemed like no one could sing like she could. She would sing in the Sunday, in the church choir. And it seemed like it seemed like there was no female voice that could go to such a low octave and to the highest octave like she could.

She was an exception and was regarded as being the best in the world. I thought it would be Anna Zatz, a German singer who was renowned, famous throughout the whole world. The older generation would remember her.

She once came to Pietermaritzburg. As the audience left, some of the English people, one of the English persons said, this is the greatest day of my life. Never has there been so great a day.

I said, oh no, that wasn't the greatest day. The greatest day was when the royal family, the king, came to Pietermaritzburg. At the time, it was the king of that previous generation who was the father of the present queen of England.

Only the English will understand that. The other languages won't understand that. This girl was Whitney Houston.

She sang fantastically. She sang in the beginning in a Baptist church choir, living for the Lord, and spread the gospel through song. But as she began to get a bit older, she began to look in this direction and that direction and looked at the world until the TV people arrived, asking whether she could perform on TV.

She agreed. There she went off to sing there. The presenter spoke to her, praising her, flattering her, and she became world famous.

The presenter said, your eyes are sparkling, such pure, beautiful eyes. A girl who is pure, beautiful, doesn't matter who she is, if she's pure, a virgin, there's a sparkle in her eyes recognizable by all. She doesn't need makeup.

And so this presenter said, it's the first time I see such purity, such beauty. It is a very rare thing to come across a person so beautiful and pure. Your beauty has a radiance about it.

Like a holy saint. Poison entered into Whitney through this. And so she was enticed by the fashions of the world, the things that the world considered as beauty.

They began to enter into her. Just as Judas Iscariot, the poison that entered into him was incremental. It came in little by little.

Until eventually she stopped going to church. Stopped singing in the church choir. Loving the world.

For Jesus said, a person who loves the world is at enmity with God. And so it infiltrated into her little by little, these things. In the beginning she would walk around with the Bible.

Sharing. Sharing with people of the world and with boys. Finally, she was far from the Lord.

And after a few weeks, this love of the opposite sex came in. And there was the suspicion of drug use. Slowly but surely, the world penetrated until she fell completely.

The Lord He told her, while you are in the house and in the college, when you go back to your house and to the college, you will be able to tell us that the Lord is with you. Because the Lord is with you. He is with you.

And one of the sponsors, those who were here yesterday, one of the sponsors of two graduates remarked yesterday how the one graduate she had supported had AIDS by the time she graduated. Made to the person, a handsome, nicely built young man, had an affair, and then married him. But she went from bad to worse, on the way down, her whole life.

Her life was spoiled. And this disease then got hold of her and she got old very quickly. Died very young, was just 48.

With 48 years she died. Followed the way of Judas, Iscariot. The word says, do not give room to the devil.

Now, a very long time ago, and if you have had some academics, you will remember the story of the horse in Troy. The Trojan horse. I think all of you probably know the story.

It was the Greeks, were at war with a certain city called Troy. For ten years, they were at war. Battling against the city of Troy.

But, the Greek soldiers failed to conquer them. Till finally, they realised, we won't conquer them. We need to use some cunning plan to be victorious.

And so they built a huge, beautiful looking horse. But, it had a secret wooden door in the stomach. So they put their soldiers into the stomach of this horse.

This huge wooden horse was on wheels and had to be pulled. Today, that city is called Athens. At that time, Athenaesus.

Sorry, Ottomus. And so they were putting up an idol of a female goddess to Ottomus. Then they took this horse from their city to the city of Troy.

Saying, we are offering you this beautiful horse, this huge horse as an offering to the goddess, Ottomus, who they worshipped. One person, a priest, Laocoon, warned, said, be careful, the enemy has some aim in mind. They ignored the warning of this priest.

They pulled the horse then to the city. And said, you inhabitants, you citizens of Troy, here is our offering, our gift to you. And the inhabitants were so glad.

They said, our enemies have given us such a huge prize. They opened the city doors in Troy. Pulled this big horse inside.

Saying, behold, the spectacular beauty of this huge horse given to us by the Greeks. They boozed until everybody was drunk. They celebrated and they drank every manner of alcohol.

That night, drunk, lying paralytic drunk, and drunk with their own wines, the soldiers crept out of the stomach of this wooden horse. And running towards the door, they killed everybody in sight. They opened the doors and outside the doors was the encampment of the whole Greek army.

They came in and destroyed the city. They destroyed every last relic that there was. Today there is nothing left of that city.

It is utterly annihilated. Do you see? Satan comes with his cunning plans. And if you are not careful and watch, you will find that the enemy will come and doesn't matter how high your position is.

Satan has his cunning and his cunning plans. You know how lions are clever? When they are starving, and the pride is hungry, the pride will then approach a herd of buffalo. But buffalo are also clever.

And they encircle each other and they put the youngest and the weakest in the middle of the circle. But lions have their tactics too. But despite that, they cannot penetrate a united front of these buffalo when they are encircling each other.

The lions will prowl around and walk around the circle. And then it is said, One of the young buffalo males in fear broke loose and ran off alone in no time at all. It was killed by the lions.

They left the pack and they got hold of this youngster. God said it is not good that a person is alone, for if he is alone, he is easily harassed and troubled. God said it is not good that a person is alone, for if he is alone, he is easily harassed and troubled.

Blessed is that one who stays in the company of God's saints and is protected by them, and like a child who stays under the covering of the parents, their protection, wanting to be with them. Not like Judas Iscariot, leaving the other eleven and going off and isolating them. I guarantee that if there is any one of you, you forsake the saints of the Lord, you will not succeed and you will not survive.

It is spoken of, the fellowship of the saints. You will become the food of the roaring lions. But it is not just a single lion, a whole pride of lions, many of them.

Let me end with this story. I was told once about the cunning of lions. If it is an area where there are known to be lions, the people put their cattle inside a crown of protection.

And there is no way for the lions to penetrate this fence, to get at the meat. So you know what the tactic of the lions then is? They check the wind direction. If it is coming from the south or from the north, they will go to the place from which the wind is blowing.

And so they will go to the other side of the crow where the wind is blowing, perhaps from the south, to blow towards the crow. When they are there, they break wind. When the cattle smell this coming with the wind from the lions, they go crazy with fear.

So even those cattle that are lying comfortably on the ground will stand up in terror. And then the cows begin to run around in a crazed manner till they break their own protection. And then, of course, it's a feast for the lions.

That's the biggest feast. They will eat till they can eat no more, just through their smell going with the wind towards them. Brethren, let the one who has an ear to hear listen.

If Satan breaks wind and you smell his smell, don't be terrorized. Judas got that smell. You've heard about it.

That girl who sang in America, she got the smell of the lions. The smell of the world got confused till finally she was in the stomach of those lions dying at just 48 years of age. She was once a pure girl, but look what happened to her.

You be careful. Christians, be aware. Be on your guard.

Otherwise, Satan and the demons in hell will rejoice because of your fall. If you don't do it, listen to the word of the Lord. Watch and pray.

Satan will get hold of you and you'll find yourself in a hole where you see it's impossible to get out. Through your being a Pharisee, your lies, you become a Judas Iscariot of this era. Is that understandable? I've tried with the word of the Lord to try and help you, to try and illustrate for you.

Children, have you heard? Blessed is the one who has an ear to hear and keep it. That you wouldn't be the plaything of the devil, of Satan. Today we speak of that girl from America, that beautiful, pure girl at one time.

We speak about those who lived in Troy. Be on your guard. That you wouldn't have such a thing happen to you too.

That you wouldn't end in such a manner. Rather say, Lord, have mercy on me. Be gracious to me.

I stand up. Shall we pray? Lord Jesus, we call upon you and we ask you to be gracious to us that we wouldn't have that smell of the lions influencing us, bewitched by them, till the person becomes food for the lions, till they in the lion's stomach up and down this world, chewed by the devil, locked into the very stomach of Satan, the roaring lion. Help us, O Lord.

So that even if they feel it's impossible to get out, like Jonah in the stomach of that great fish, till he cried out in repentance that even heaven heard and caused the fish to spew him out on the beach. Be gracious to us, O Lord, in your mercy and grace, by the conviction of your Holy Spirit. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

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