

Betrayers & Deniers; *how Jesus prepares the church for mission*

John 13:18-38

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Introduction Jesus preparing his new messianic community for mission prepares them for his departure. This departure is known as his crucifixion and exaltation. His disciples need to appreciate what Jesus came to do on the cross and how that would empower them for his mission.

We come now to the place in the story where we encounter very troubling things. It's nighttime. Satan is present. Lanterns, torches and weapons are being collected (18:3). A diabolical plot is ready to unleash upon Jesus. The storyline intensifies. Read on and you will see blood. You will hear cries. as a mob. Cruelty, brutality, injustice; the most barbaric and heinous sins will be carried out in just hours from where we are today in the story.

What are we to learn today? What are we to see? Who are to watch? How will this relate to Clearcreek Chapel?

Our passage starts with a betrayer and it ends with a denier. And in between these two people we see Jesus preparing his church for mission. (show slide one to get The Big Picture) In the midst of betrayal and denial we find Jesus doing two things to prepare his church to be sent into the world (set this message in Clearcreek Chapel's context; then pray)

Removing the betrayer

v18-30

The first thing we see Jesus doing has to do with Judas Iscariot. To prepare his church for mission he removes the betrayer from their company. This we see in v18-30.

Jesus predicts the betrayer

v18-21

Jesus has warned a few times of the traitor within their midst (cf. 6:71; 12:4; 13:2). He now in v18-21 says it again. But this time is different. He is about to remove the traitor from among the genuine. Take a listen as to how he does this.

[18] I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, 'He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.'

[19] I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he. [20] Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me."

[21] After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me."

To show of his suffering

18

To remove the betrayer, first Jesus makes a point about himself; something about himself that his followers will need to understand.

It is necessary for *The Messiah to suffer* is the point. Why did Jesus choose Judas and then predict his betrayal? Why did he not just stop him earlier in their ministry?

The reason Jesus chose Judas owed not to some oversight on his part. Rather it was to fulfill Scripture (18). The text Jesus uses is Psalm 41:9. This verse is found in a Psalm that shows the suffering King David lamenting over the treason of a close friend. Likely the context of Ps.41 is 2Sam.16 and how Ahithophel helped David's son Absalom to steal the hearts of the people away from the King. Later, Ahithophel, seeing that his counsel was not obeyed, went home and hanged himself. Reminiscent of someone we see in this passage.

The fulfillment of this Psalm is found in Jesus who being the great King did not exempt himself from suffering. The suffering servant/king has come to obey his father's will and complete that for which the Father has sent him.

To tell of his strategy

19-20

By demonstrating that He fulfilled the types in the OT of the messiah was to strengthen their faith. He tells them of the betrayal before it happens as a strategy to engender belief in his disciples.

This belief in Him would provide encouragement for his disciples as they were sent out on mission. V20 gives a word of encouragement to those following the abandoned / betrayed one Jesus.

Jesus exposes his betrayer

v21-26

Having predicted his betrayal, he now in v21-26 exposes the betrayer. Listen as we pick up the story in v21-26.

[21] After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." [22] The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. [23] One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side, [24] so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. [25] So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, "Lord, who is it?" [26] Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it." So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.

There is great trouble in the heart of Jesus. Grief always is present in the Lord when such heinous sin is present.

By warning of his presence

21

To expose his betrayer, Jesus warns of his presence (v21). Imagine him saying to a small group in a small room, "one of you will betray me". How will each of them respond? Will the false believer sense he's busted and come broken for mercy? Will Jesus' true believers take casually the admonition thundering from Jesus?

The answers to both questions reveal both their identities. Judas simply becomes more resolved to carry out the diabolical plan. And Christ's true followers feel the weight of his words. By warning of the betrayer's presence, Jesus moves toward uncovering his identity. This is seen in v22-26.

By uncovering his identity

22-26

Here in v22-26 we have a fascinating scene. Jesus just said that one of them will betray him. Now we notice how the true believers respond to Jesus' warning. They are in stunned silence. They take it to heart and are concerned. "Looking around" they are at a loss to know which of them he meant.

And so, here comes Peter. But this time he does it differently. Instead of blurting out he signaled to his friend to ask the Lord the identity of the betrayer. His close friend is known in this Gospel as "the disciple whom Jesus loved". This person most Bible readers concur is the writer of the gospel whose name is John.

This episode is communicating something of the true disciples' view of Jesus. The warning from Jesus alarms their heart into action. They care about what Jesus says. You don't see Judas to anxious.

Also, this text and v29 point to the fact that apart from Jesus betrayers would not be found out. Jesus is the only one who can uncover his identity.

The writer of John wants to keep the spotlight on Jesus throughout his gospel. In this scene, John will not even call himself by name. He remains to the reader unanimous to make plain that it is all about Jesus. A true believer as John was demonstrates a humble and profound sense of grace as he points fully at Jesus.

The answer to Peter and John's question comes quietly to John. And then it happens. Jesus removes the betrayer as seen in v27-30

By removing him from the disciples

v27-30

The plot to kill Jesus is activated. The descent into depravity is done. Judas is at the bottom of his treasonous scheme. And to expose him, Jesus takes a piece of bread, dips it into some juices and hands it to Judas (in normal situations this activity would have shown much humility on the receiver's part and much honor on the giver's part). But as it is, this act was to demonstrate how heinous betraying Jesus truly is.

Judas is now ready to carry out the most wicked of sins; turning fully away from the Messiah, handing him over to be killed and this for some pocket change. And o yes, and sop too. Judas receives the morsel dipped in the tasty juices but he does not receive Jesus the Christ, the son of God.

To make perfectly clear the authority and control of Jesus we notice his command to Judas. He tells him in effect "get on with it". Even though Judas is awful, even though the most monstrous of creatures is present and possesses him, even though he wants to be sold out to Satan to carry out the wicked plan; yet he is still under Jesus' authority. And when Jesus told him to leave quickly v30 tells us he did just that. Jesus is in control of his death.

(succinct recap over the first way Jesus prepares the church for their mission)

Instructing the denier

v31-38

The second way Jesus prepares the church for mission is found in v31-38. After the turn coat is removed, our attention is now is placed on the denier. His name is Peter the apostle. Watch how Jesus instructs someone who is not like the betrayer; a wicked sinner but like Peter; a weak saint. Picking up the story we read v31-38.

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

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

On the design of his departure

v31-32

He instructs weak saints first on the design of his departure as seen in v31-32. Jesus insists that his disciples understand what his departure means; what his crucifixion and exaltation are designed to accomplish. What is it that the suffering messiah is to accomplish on the cross? Making God look as He truly is – INCOMPARABLE, UNSURPASSED, MIGHTY, SPECTACULAR, WITHOUT PEER OR RIVAL, WITHOUT FLAW OR FOIBLE, HERE IS PURE GREATNESS ON DISPLAY.

The text says that now [in the very hour of suffering] is the Son of man [suffering servant] glorified [revealed as utterly worthy of worship] and God is glorified in him [the son's full yielding to die] and God will glorify him [display his approval in the resurrection].

When we are weak like Peter and wavering in doubt we need a reminder of the intention of the cross. Jesus instructs his church first on the design of his departure; namely that God be glorified.

On the duty after his departure

v33-35

Having made plain the design of his departure Jesus in v33-35 makes plain the duty after his departure.

What are his disciples to do after his crucifixion and exaltation? What will keep them from drifting into denying the Lord who purchased them on the cross? How will they help each other endure great pressures to recant and walk away from the glorious One?

Love one another

The answer is found in v34; love one another.

Reasons (as though we would need any) for paying attention to the duty after his departure are many. In verses 33-35 we see no less than three.

It comes from the Lord as a command

This is not a suggestion the Lord gives his disciples. He is not submitting a humble request as he departs from this world that his followers would stay together and love each other. This is the master of the universe telling his followers to do one thing. And he calls this a New commandment likely referring to the New Covenant and how his departure will usher in the newness of the Spirit enabling them to love as he loved.

Why should we listen with an eye toward obedience to the duty after his departure? It comes from the Lord.

It follows the Lord as an example

The second reason the Lord gives his followers for this command is it follows the Lord as an example. His followers are not left in the dark as to what to do. When we struggle with obedience the general reason is not due to uncertainty over what to do. The Lord in these verses tells his followers that the command has a pattern. Look to how the Lord served his disciples and then go and do likewise in the power of the newness of resurrection life.

It reflects the Lord as a witness

The last reason to take this duty to heart is the simple fact that it reflects the Lord as a witness. When we love each other in front of unbelievers they see something amazing. They realize we are following the unseen yet fully present Christ. When obeying this command by faith we are putting Jesus on display. And this is a convincing reason to take to heart the privilege to love each other.

On the denial in the midst of his departure

v36-38

The last piece to Jesus instruction for his disciples as he readies himself for departure is found in v36-38. Jesus is about to hit head on something we all do from time to time. And that something is deny our Lord in the midst of pressures. In these verses we come to Jesus instruction on the denial in the midst of his departure.

Comes from something more attractive than obedience

Where does denial come from? Why would anyone following Jesus want to not follow Jesus? Notice Peter. Right after Jesus command to love each other, he wants to talk about something else. His interest is on Jesus' destination after the departure rather than on his command to love one another.

Denial is fueled by something we believe is more attractive than obedience. If we are more enamored with speculative curiosity than with practical and personal demonstrations of obedience, we are on the verge of awful denial of Jesus. It will happen when the occasion comes.

Comes from bad self-assessment of abilities

The second place denial comes from is seen in v37. Peter's zeal and intentions appear to be good. He says he will follow him into death. But sometimes our intentions to sacrifice for the Savior appear more attractive at dinner time, with friends, in a safe well lit environment. But when these intentions are tested in a garden filled with a mob at night – the will melts like wax under flame.

The reason for this appears to be found in the simple fact that when we have a bad assessment of our abilities to endure we are on the verge of denial.

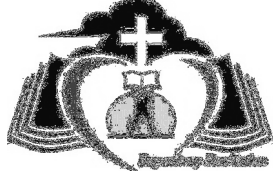
Jesus instructs his weak followers about denial in the midst of trials.

Conclusion

To reflect upon this passage for personal and church growth here are some questions to take home.

1. We talk much about church mission at the Chapel. What's the environment in which the church is sent out?
2. How can knowing the risen Christ cares for his church like this (ie. removes the wicked and renews the weak) increase your confidence in him?
3. Who are you in this story? Are you outwardly conformed to the church? People around you don't know your true identity. But inwardly you want stuff from Jesus rather than Jesus. What is God telling you this morning? Repent and be saved.
4. How does knowing the temptation to deny instruct you for tomorrow? How will obedience to the new commandment assist you in staying clear of denial?

Notice Jesus in the middle of his mission to the church. Worship him in spirit and truth. Take his word to heart. Learn to obey by faith. Times will get tough. He is with us and preparing us for what lies ahead. Let us together trust and obey the master and teacher of our lives. Amen.



Title
Text
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The Chapel Pulpit • <date> Sunday Morning

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Heading

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