



SERIES: John Believe

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Wednesday, March 22, 2023

Scripture: John 13:21-30

TITLE: Vengeance or Compassion? The Choice Is Yours

Who is the last person you'd want to show kindness to? Who is that person who, if something bad happened, you wouldn't shed a tear? We all have those people who have hurt us or who we don't like. It can be someone we know personally or someone else we only know of.

But have you ever considered the compassion and love Jesus had even for His betrayer? It's an incredible story that we need to hear. This compassionate love is found in John 13:21-30.

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

Being betrayed is one of the worst feelings. To love someone but to experience rejection and harm seems unthinkable. But it happens all the time. It's in movies and on reality tv, and chances are it's happened to you. I know it's happened to me. And it hurts. When I see it or experience it, I want vengeance and justice. Not Jesus.

Here Jesus has clearly identified His betrayer. Jesus hand-picked Judas as one of His disciples. Jesus knew there would be betrayal and death through the actions of Judas. And yet in verse 21 it says, "After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit." Instead of anger, Jesus' spirit was troubled. It's the same word that described Jesus' soul at Lazarus' tomb. He is deeply saddened.

Why? Jesus still loved Judas. Jesus came to seek and save the lost. He came to make the sick well and the spiritually dead alive. He came to make enemies part of His family. Though these actions must take place, they broke Jesus' heart. He cared for Judas. After all that Jesus had shown and done for Judas, Judas would still betray Him. That is gut-wrenching. Jesus knew that apart from His gift of salvation, it meant hell for Judas. An eternity away from the savior. This

broke Jesus' heart. This betrayal would lead to the worst kind of punishment, torture and death. It was a lot to feel all in one moment.

Jesus' heart was breaking, yes for the pain, but also because of His great love. No bitterness. No resentment. No vengeance. Compassion and love.

Today, who are the people who've hurt you or hurt others, and it drives you to anger? I have them. I don't want to love them. I want justice. And apart from Jesus' free gift of salvation, they will receive it. That reality breaks Jesus' heart. I should feel the same way.

So identify those people and ask God to give you a heart for them. Ask God for a heart of compassion and sorrow. Not so you break down and do nothing. So your heart moves you to forgive them and offer them hope that only Jesus provides.

Ephesians 2 says we were dead in our sins, but God makes us alive with Christ. Remember it. Live it. Share it.