

“Overcoming”

During our current study we are seeing a concentrated focus on the last meal with Jesus and his disciples. We get a peek into this heart to heart relationship with last minute words being said. The thing that becomes very clear and crystallized is his love for his own, central in the heart of Jesus.

In the last weeks these are the foundational scriptures that have guided our study:

Week 1: *“I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.” (Luke 22:15)*

Week 2: *“I am among you as one who serves.” (Luke 22:27b)*

Week 3: *“I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail.” (Luke 22:32)*

The “Big Story” is what God is doing, and then our stories intersect with God’s story. We will look at two such stories, *Judas* and *Peter*. The uniqueness of these two stories is found in their failure.

Judas: Honoring Jesus as a cause rather than worshiping Him as a person.

“Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was approaching, 2 and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some way to get rid of Jesus, for they were afraid of the people. 3 Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve. 4 And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus. 5 They were delighted and agreed to give him money. 6 He consented, and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present.” (Luke 22:1-6)

Judas not only saw Jesus as a cause but he had expectations of Jesus that didn’t align with God’s plans. He grew increasingly frustrated that Jesus wasn’t moving toward where he thought Jesus should be going and doing what he should be doing.

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Judas tried to *bargain* with Jesus; “if you do this I will do that”. Before we condemn Judas, we at times in our lives have all done this. Whether it involved a business deal, relationally, giving, etc.

“3 While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. 4 Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, “Why this waste of perfume? 5 It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages and the money given to the poor.” And they rebuked her harshly. 6 “Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. 7 The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. 8 She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. 9 Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.” 10 Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. 11 They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.” (Mark 14:3-11)

John will also tell us this story, but will name Judas and inform us that Judas really wasn’t concerned about the poor. In fact he was stealing from the groups moneybag.

Jesus accepted her worship as a beautiful act but on the other hand this act disgusted Judas.

Ultimately Judas traded his relationship with Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. The silver seemed so valuable at the moment, but hours later were of no value and the result was a feeling tremendous regret.

When we bargain with God or resist him this is what happens and we end up regretting it. Instead of bargaining, we need to surrender everything to him...because what seems so valuable at the moment can become something detestable later.

Sadly we also see the difference between these two men who failed. One returned to Jesus to be restored and one didn’t.

“47 While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, 48 but Jesus asked him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?” 49 When Jesus’ followers saw what was going to happen, they said, “Lord, should we strike with our swords?” 50 And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. 51 But Jesus answered, “No more of this!” And he touched the man’s ear and healed him.” (Luke 22:47-51)

Peter: *Knowing Jesus as the means of transformation rather than a point of transaction.*

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“Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.” 33 But he replied, “Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death.” 34 Jesus answered, “I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me.” (Luke 22:31-34)

“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat...” (NASV)

As seen above in some translations the word “permission” is used. This refers to a courtroom term and a demand of a legal right. But Jesus prayed for him and continues to pray for us.

Jesus gave Peter a great promise that he will would be restored and even used to strengthen and encourage the brothers. But this would not happen because he was flawless or even strong. In reality these strengths can become blind spots.

In contrast Randy told us about a statement made by Pastor Dick Scott that he would never fall into sexual immorality. But unlike Peter, “Lord everyone else may desert you but I never...” Dick is honest about the potential of sin and like all of us he is capable of sin and this knowledge keeps him on his knees before God.

Randy told us of many he has met with over the last 30 years of pastoral ministry who were in tears saying “I never thought I would be the one who...” Besides the blind spots, this type of thing happens very slowly and over time.

So here are three suggestions on overcoming:

1) Put Down the Sword

“Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant’s name was Malchus.) 11 Jesus commanded Peter, “Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?” (John 18:10-11)

“But Jesus answered, ‘No more of this!’ And he touché the man’s ear and healed him.” (Luke 22:51)

2) Take responsibility for your behavior and quit blaming other people.

“54 Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. 55 And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. 56 A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight.

high priest. Peter followed at a distance. 55 And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. 56 A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him." 57 But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said. 58 A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." "Man, I am not!" Peter replied. 59 About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean." 60 Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. 61 The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." 62 And he went outside and wept bitterly." (Luke 22:54-62)

3) Believe that you are forgiven and that Jesus has removed the sin and shame.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1:9)

Confess = same/words – say what God is saying about your behavior and He will take away your sin.

In the end Judas ended in pure despair, but Peter in the midst of his bitter devastation came to a place of repentance.

Discussion Questions

- 1) What are your thoughts about this statement: "Judas: Honoring Jesus as a cause rather than worshiping Him as a person"? Also was there a time (or are you experiencing a season now) where God is not meeting your expectations?
- 2) Judas tried to bargain with Jesus. Have you ever bargained with God before? Maybe it was a job, a business deal, a sick child, a want, a need or a thousand other things. What seemed so valuable to Judas, (30 pieces of silver) only hours later had no value at all? During these times of bargaining has something that seemed so valuable turned into regret, even detestable?
- 3) Now looking at Peter what does this statement mean to you: "Peter: Knowing Jesus as the means of transformation rather than a point of transaction"?
- 4) Jesus told Peter that Satan was demanding his legal right to sift him like wheat. Jesus not only told him that he was praying for him so that his faith would be strengthened but also assured him that he would be restored from his failure. Please look back at your notes on page 4 and discuss the pitfalls of our strengths and what should our perspective be to remain free from falling into sin?

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5) Please discuss the three ways to overcome:

- a) “Put down the sword”
- b) “Take responsibility for your behavior and quit blaming other people”
- c) “Believe that you are forgiven and that Jesus has removed the sin and shame”