

The Many Faces of Betrayal

John 18:1-11

Midweek of Lent 2

Introduction

Betrayal—the act of exposing or delivering someone to an enemy through treachery or disloyalty. The two most well-known examples of this are Benedict Arnold and Judas Iscariot. They are both so infamous, that a traitor today may still be referred to as a “Benedict Arnold” or a “Judas.” But let’s take a closer look at Judas and his betrayal of Jesus.

Judas Was not the Only Sinner

When we read the story of the night of Jesus’ arrest, we find that there was plenty of guilt to go around. While it’s true the others didn’t betray Jesus through treachery, no one supported Him that night. His friends all turned their backs. **Matthew** and **Mark** tell us that they all fled (**Matthew 26:56**; **Mark 14:50**). Later, we read that Peter denies His Lord three times, just as Jesus predicted. Peter also betrayed Jesus in another way. When they came to arrest Jesus, he cut off the right ear of Malchus, the high priest’s servant. He was acting contrary to the teachings of His Lord and standing in the way of God’s plan, just as he did when he rebuked Jesus when He told His disciples that He must suffer and die in **Matthew 16** (Read **Matthew 16:21-23**). Notice what Jesus said to Peter after he cut off Malchus’ ear. Jesus said, *“Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?”* (**John 18:11**). Judas was the betrayer, but the plan was always for Jesus to go to the cross. He had to die to pay the price of sin.

We Are Betrayers

Whose sin did Jesus die for? It was the sin of humanity, your sin and mine. Ultimately, He was handed over to the enemy because of our sin. In short, we are betrayers, just as guilty as Judas. We have betrayed and continue to betray Jesus with our sinfulness.

Forgiven

What’s to be done? Is there any hope for a betrayer? Betrayal is a violation of one’s trust and is probably the most difficult sin to forgive and recover from. In fact, our two prime examples of betrayal, Judas and Arnold, never did find healing. Arnold went on to fight for the British, even going so far as to burn an entire town, torching 70 houses, and killing 20 minutemen who had already surrendered. Judas felt remorse but went and hanged himself. We all know about Peter’s reinstatement in **John 21**. All the other disciples were welcomed back by Jesus after His resurrection. What was the difference?

Return

The difference was they returned. They ran away that night, but they came back. They were penitent. The call is for us to **RETURN TO THE LORD**, repent and be forgiven. Every Divine Service begins with a return to the Lord in **CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**. The forgiveness is free. Jesus has already paid the price. The life of a Christian is one of continual turning and returning to Jesus. We sin every day in

thought, word, and deed. Every day, we must return in penitence and be forgiven. [RETURN TO THE LORD.](#)
[RETURN FROM BETRAYAL.](#)

*And the peace of God,
Which surpasses all understanding,
Will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
