

Title and Scripture: *The Disciples: Judas, not Iscariot, also called Thaddaeus* (John 14:22 and selected Scriptures)

Theme: Jesus will reveal Truth to believers who follow Him.

I know of a former pastor who is a leader in our denomination. As he was leading a church the numbers grew. Many came to know Christ as their Lord and Savior. But eventually the small church grew from around 70 people to 150 or so. Then the leaders of the church, or a few of them, came to him and said, “We don’t need to grow anymore. You can stop growing the church.”

Do you ever think about eternal life?

Do you ever think about where you would be today if it weren’t for your relationship with Christ?

Why would you rather be here than out golfing or fishing?

Or, why do you know that this is better for you spiritually than golfing or fishing?

I think about the exciting things of life, or of my life lately, and I want to think about these things. Of course, this includes my wife and girls. How exciting it was when Mercedes and Abigail were born. What if someone said, you can’t share that you are a daddy? Would that bother me? Of course it would. It is exciting being a dad. But isn’t it exciting being a Christian? Why don’t we share that?

In the movie “Hook” an adult Peter Pan needed a happy thought to be able to fly. His happy thought was that he was a daddy.

Now, I wonder if being a Christian is a happy thought. I wonder what would happen in our spiritual life if we kept our mind focused on the happy thought of knowing Christ. I wonder what would happen if our thoughts were focused on how exciting it is to not have to worry about

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death, how exciting it is to know that we have life unending in this place of eternity and we have a relationship with God.

Today, I want to tell you about the disciple named Judas, but this is not the Judas who betrayed Jesus. This is Judas the son of James. What you will see is that to Judas, the son of James, it was a joy to know Jesus. It was so exciting that he didn't think this could only be for the disciples, but for many more people. This is a message about growing in your faith and sharing your faith.

Let's start by reading

John 14:16-24:

¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰ On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. ²¹ Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."

²² Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?"

²³ Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. ²⁴ Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

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- I. Now, we are talking about the disciples and applying things that we know about them to our Christian journey. So, who was Judas?
 - a. There were two disciples named Judas. This is Judas the son of James and the other is Judas Iscariot. Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus.
 - b. Judas means “Jehovah Leads.”¹ In the passage we are using, John 14:22, it says “Judas, not Iscariot” This is because Judas Iscariot ruined the name. People reading this may think of the disciple who betrayed Jesus.
 - c. This Judas actually had three names. In Matthew 10:3 he is called Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus. This is the same man.
 - d. Judas was probably his name given at birth. Lebbaeus and Thaddaeus were nick names
 - e. Thaddaeus means breast child.
 - f. Lebbaeus comes from a root in Hebrew that literally means “heart child.” His nick names suggest a tender person, yet he had to hang around Simon the Zealot. Remember, we talked about Simon the zealot. Simon was a rough man. Here we likely have a very tender man.

¹ Some of the following info comes from: MacArthur, John. *Twelve Ordinary Men, How the Master Shaped His Disciples for Greatness, and What He Wants to Do with You*. Thomas Nelson, Inc. Nashville, Dallas, Mexico City, Rio De Janeiro, Beijing. 2002. Pages 178-180

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II. Now, let's talk about the passage at hand.

a. In John 14:21-23 the Bible reveals someone who is humble and wants the gospel to go to all people. We really don't know much about this disciple beyond this statement. Verse 22 says:

Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?"

- i. But the statement here reveals a very pious, humble person.
- ii. Now, in this passage, Jesus had already revealed to them that He was going to die. He was going to leave them. They had been following Him and now He will be gone. So, now Jesus starts talking about the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a benefit in the Christian life. The Holy Spirit means we are not alone and we have eternal life now and a fuller life later.
- iii. So, this disciple Judas is thinking, "This disciple opportunity is pretty awesome, but who am I to receive such a thing?" So He asks Jesus: *"But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?"*
- iv. This reveals humility, but this also reveals that Judas is not about keeping this to Himself. He is excited and happy about the Truth of the Gospel and He wants to share it. This is a happy thought.

b. Traditions say that he took the gospel north to Edessa, in the area of Mesopotamia which is modern day Turkey.

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- c. In the 4th century the church historian Eusebius said the archives of Edessa (now destroyed) contained full records of Thaddaeus's visit and the healing of Abgar.
 - d. Symbol is a club as tradition says that he was clubbed to death for his faith
 - e. Some say another symbol is a gold ship with silver sails before a red horizon, which is a reference to a ship he took on missionary journeys
- III. So, an application: evangelism, why evangelism again? Because that is what the disciples were about and that is what Judas' statement was about. But also, we need to hear it. You and I both need continually challenged by the Scriptures and by God that the Gospel is most important.
- a. Evangelism is about sharing the good news of eternal life and a fuller life with everyone. This must be shared; we must be challenged. I will be preaching on evangelism and with an evangelical mindset until I die, or Jesus comes again. We must hear the gospel and we must be challenged by the gospel.
 - b. Do you ever think about eternal life?
 - c. Do you ever think about where you would be today if it weren't for your relationship with Christ?
 - d. Why would you rather be here than out golfing or fishing?
 - e. Hebrews 5:12

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In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!

f. Notice the writer says: You should be on meat, but you are stuck on milk.

g. I got another Scripture:

2 Timothy 4:2-3

² Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage —with great patience and careful instruction. ³ For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.

- i.* It takes time to build habits. When I started running it took a while before my body got used to it. At first I did not push myself enough, but then once I pushed myself I could run further.
- ii.* In the Christian life you will never reach fulfillment if you are only doing the minimal. If you don't get beyond the milk you will not reach fulfillment. Okay, what am I saying? If in your Christian walk, you are doing the minimal and you are stopping when it hurts, just like I did when jogging, you will not grow in your relationship with Christ. In this case this may not be a happy thought and

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you may not be motivated to share Christ with other people.

- iii.* But if you go deeper, if you get into the Scriptures and get into prayer and spiritual activities and grow in Christ (and you may have to make yourself do this at first), then you will realize how exciting this spiritual life is. This will be a happy thought.
- iv.* I believe if your Christian life was and is a happy thought, you will fly. Of course, you will not literally fly, but it is exciting to grow in your relationship with Christ. It was for me, and it is for me. You will have ups and downs, we all do, but growing in Christ will be exciting.

Close:

In the Old Testament there is a short letter called Jonah. In the book of Jonah God calls Jonah to preach repentance to this wicked city of Nineveh. But Jonah didn't want to go. Many of you know the story. Jonah resisted and went the other way until he was swallowed by a great fish and eventually, but still reluctantly, he took the message of repentance to Nineveh, and they repented. Jonah was a missionary. But Jonah didn't want the good news of repentance to go to Nineveh.

Are you a Jonah or are you a Thaddaeus? Judas/Thaddaeus, in humility, cared that others heard the Gospel. I pray you do, but don't stop there. Go to the Truth; go deeper in your spiritual journey so that you are spiritually fit and ready to share the Gospel with your life and with your words.

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