

Returning to our study in John 6. We will finally be concluding this chapter today after several weeks of working our way through this remarkable event.

By way of review, so far in this chapter we have seen the account of the most prominent miracle detailed in the ministry of Christ Jesus.

The miraculous feeding of the 5,000, plus women and children. Most likely putting it more around 15,000-20,000.

Then in verses 16-21, we considered another very prominent miracle as Christ Jesus walked on water, on the tumultuous Sea of Galilee, pursuing His disciples in the wind-tossed conditions.

But unlike the feeding of the 5,000 earlier that day, that miracle was limited to just the disciples.

It was a private miracle for His own to help them understand who He is and reveal Himself to them as the I am. The self-affirmation of deity.

After these events, both the large crowd and Jesus have made their way back across the sea of Galilee to Capernaum, where He begins to teach this crowd. He engages this crowd of seekers.

And the more He teaches, the more He calls the crowd to turn away from their natural, earthly desires, and onto Him as the necessary and sufficient satisfaction of their souls, the more confused and disinterested and hostile they become.

This crowd represents the person of religion lacking regeneration. Those interested in Christ, associated with Christ, even many are disciples of Christ, but do not genuinely believe.

As we have been going through this account, each round of the crowd's response we have been identifying as a characteristic of the false convert.

**And we ended last week by looking at the 7<sup>th</sup> characteristic of the person of the false convert, the person of religion lacking regeneration.**

**They abandon Christ by failing to endure.**

Drawing your attention again to verse 66, **“As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore.”**

That is to say, as a result of His teaching, His doctrine, His *words*, many of His disciples. Many who had committed themselves and were devoted to following Him, went away to that which they had previously left.

Retreating back to the condition they were in before ever following the Lord. Back to the way they had always lived and thought, because they were never actually transformed by the Spirit.

Commentator FF Bruce put it this way: ‘What they wanted, he would not give; what he

offered, they would not receive.”

The person of religion lacking regeneration will tolerate Jesus, as long as they can control who He is and what He supposedly teaches.

But the more they understand what He actually taught, the harder to the truth they become. Until it becomes so intolerable that they make a decisive and final break from Him.

This is the principle behind the phrase: “Time and truth go hand in hand.” In other words, give it enough time, and the true condition of one’s soul will be revealed.

They will either persevere in their faith and commitment to Christ, or they will be hardened against the truth, hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, and be revealed as an unbeliever.

That brings us now this morning to the final few verses of this account, verses 67-71.

**John 6:67, “So Jesus said to the twelve, “You do not want to go away also, do you?” 68 Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life.”**

**69 We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.” 70 Jesus answered them, “Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?” 71 Now He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him.”**

Now, we we’re going to fame up this text by way outline from the standpoint of Jesus and His statements.

And the reason for doing so is because of that word at the beginning of verse 67, **“So, or therefore, Jesus said to the twelve.”**

It’s an inference. What happened in verse 66, with many disciples turning back to their old way of life and no longer following Him, that is the reason this question and this final section is included in the account.

Jesus is shepherding his true disciples in the wake of ministry discouragement. In the wake of mass defection.

And he’s going to minister to them in 2 ways:

**First, He encourages their commitment to Him.  
Secondly, He equips them for betrayal at the highest level.**

**Let’s look first at Jesus encourage their commitment to Him. Verse 67, “So Jesus said to the twelve, “You do not want to go away also, do you?”**

Considering that He narrows in and addresses only the 12 with this question, could mean that they are the only ones still around and interested in following Him at this point.

The crowd, once consisting of thousands, including a large group of disciples, has now dwindled down to the original 12 who were committed to him before any of this occurred.

And in the wake of that mass defection, He poses the question to them: Do you all want to follow the crowd? Do you find the willingness and ability to persevere in faith even in the face of mass defection?

Now, this question to them here in verse 67 is not because He is unaware of the answer and He needs to know where they stand.

No, He knows exactly where they are spiritually, He knows exactly how they're going to respond.

In fact, John has made a point of reminding his audience of this very truth. Just look back a few verses earlier in verse 64:

**“But there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him.**

And so, here in verse 67, this is not a question out of ignorance, rather it is a question in order to minister to them.

He's doing this to encourage them and strengthen their convictions.

Commentator Don Carson puts it this way: “they need to articulate a response more than He needs to hear it.”

It's a test, an opportunity to demonstrate where they're at. They have witnessed the same miracles as the crowd, they have heard the same message.

Jesus was saying, ‘Do you want to remain with me and continue to receive the food which doesn't perish, or do you want to go away with the crowd to find another source of knowledge, another source of benefits and deliverances?’

Remember also what He had just said in verse 65, **“And He was saying, “For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father.”**

Both the Jews and false disciples in this crowd are the visible proof of that statement. No one can come to me unless it has been granted him from the Father.

They are unable to come to Christ, and that is why they refuse to believe and walk away.

But what about the 12? Has the Father drawn them, granted them new life, given them the gift of faith so that they would come savingly to Christ?

Verse 68 is the answer, **“Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life.”**

Peter, as he is accustomed to doing, acts as the spokesperson in answering this question that was posed to all of them.

After all, Peter is the “first among equals,” in the group of the disciples. The leader among the leaders.

Often the first to speak, the first to take initiative. Which means, in comparison to the other disciples, his *lowest* moments are recorded and well known.

But also, his *highest* moments are recorded and well known. And one of those highest moments is in this very account as Peter proclaims the truth about Christ.

Jesus just asked him a question. Peter actually answers with a question of his own. **“Lord, to whom shall we go?”**

In other words, there’s no one to go away to. There is only one like you. There are no alternatives. There are no other options. There’s no hope apart from you.

What’s behind this confidence and commitment? Middle of verse 68, **“You have words of eternal life.”**

There are no options other than death, when one departs from Christ. You have salvation and the message of salvation.

We can’t hear your words, see them for what they are, believe them, and then ever forsake them.

Implicit in this confession is the exclusivity of Christ, both his work and his words. **There is no one else to go to, because you *alone* have words of eternal life.**

Notice what Peter is doing here: He is believing and agreeing and reaffirming what Jesus just said in verse 63: **the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.**

Now Peter is saying, **“you have the words of eternal life.”** This is a genuine confession, this is genuine belief. It’s *agreeing* with Christ.

Adopting the words of Jesus as your own.

What’s also critical to note is the difference between Peter’s confession here and what has characterized the crowd of artificial faith and would-be disciples.

Notice again what Peter highlights in his response: “**You have *words of eternal life.***”

Notice where the focus is. We’re not in it for your works, your miracles. We’re attached you and unwilling to budge from you because you have *words* of the eternal life.

This is the difference between the genuine convert and the religious person lacking regeneration, the false convert.

It is the *words* of Christ, the response to the words of Christ, the attitude toward the words of Christ.

Listen to Luke 9:26, “**For whoever is ashamed of Me *and My words*, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.**”

The words of Christ and the person of Christ are inseparable. As one commentator wrote: “There is no Christ other than the Christ of the Scriptures.”

Again, this is always the difference between the false convert and the genuine believer. An inability and unwillingness to submit to the Word of God.

And it’s always been that way throughout redemptive history.

I want to show you just a few references regarding the nation of Judah and Jeremiah’s ministry to that nation.

As he warned the nation of impending Babylonian invasion and exile. Why was Judah being judged? What characterized that nation?

Look at Jeremiah 5:31, “**The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule on their own authority;**”

An erroneous message and self-willed leadership. Then this statement: “**And My people love it so!**”

The prefer the word of man, they prefer error, they prefer man’s wisdom ruling and leading, rather than the Lord’s word, and the Lord’s authority.

6:10, “**To whom shall I speak and give warning That they may hear? Behold, their ears are closed And they cannot listen. Behold, the word of the Lord has become a reproach to them; They have no delight in it.**”

Notice that: the ears of their heart are closed, they are unable to accept the Word. it becomes a reproach, an object of scorn to them.

6:19, **“Hear, O earth: behold, I am bringing disaster on this people, The fruit of their plans, Because they have not listened to My words, And as for My law, they have rejected it also.**

The apostate nation preferred lies, preferred falsehood, refusing to accept the Word of the Lord.

What was true then, was true in the ministry of Christ, and will be true throughout the church age.

Even thinking of 2 Timothy 4:2, **“2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine;**

There it is, they will not tolerate it. They will not remain under it.

**but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, 4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.”**

There is the consistent testimony of false converts. No appetite for the Word of God, no ability to receive the Word of God.

Rather, they will gravitate toward preachers and ministries that cater to their own natural and fallen desires, the desires of the flesh, preferring fiction to the truth.

Back to the gospel of John - we know that this has been a major theme so far in this book. Those who prefer Christ's works to His Word. And the contrast between those two groups.

Those who are attracted to the *miracles* of Christ. In distinction from those who actually believe the *Word* of Christ.

And I think it's worth looking back a few passages that have contrasted these two kinds of responses to Christ.

Those who need to see in order to believe, those whose faith is contingent on signs and wonders. And those who simply believe the Word of Christ.

John 2:18, **“The Jews then said to Him, “What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?”**

There is the unbelief. Despite many miracles, unbelief is always demanding more to see in order to believe.

Notice the contrast of genuine belief in verse 22, **“So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.”**

Genuine faith believes the Word.

**2:23, “Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing.”**

But this is immediately followed by a clarification so that we don't misunderstand it to be referring to genuine faith.

**24 But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, 25 and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.”**

Another text demonstrating the danger of a faith that is attracted to Christ merely on the basis of His signs, His works.

**3:1, “Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” 3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”**

Nicodemus, as the representative of the group we just read about at the end of chapter 2. Attracted to Jesus because of His signs, willing to recognize that God's hand was on Him.

But Jesus clearly demonstrates He was lacking spiritual life. You need to be regenerated before you could actually believe and accept my words.

**4:40 So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. 41 Many more believed *because of His word*;**

There is a positive example of genuine faith. The Samaritans are held in contrast to the Galileans in the next account.

**4:45, “So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things that He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they themselves also went to the feast.”**

They received Him based on His miracles, His works at the feast. But notice how Jesus indicts this same group a few verses later.

Verse 48, “**So Jesus said to him, “Unless you *people* see <sup>lg</sup>signs and wonders, you *simply* will not believe.”**

This was a crowd of faithless enthusiasts who were not interested in His Word, but merely interested in His miracles.

But there was an exception John chooses to highlight in verse 49, “**The royal official \*said to Him, “Sir, come down before my child dies.”** <sup>50</sup> **Jesus \*said to him, “Go; your son lives.”** **The man *believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started off.***

So, back to chapter 6, we can see how John has repeatedly contrasted these two themes, these two groups.

Those with artificial faith, which ignores or rejects the Words of Christ. And those with genuine faith who believe on account of His Word, and are preoccupied with His Word.

And back in verse 68, Peter’s confession is highlighting that contrast once again. “**You have *words of eternal life.***”

Peter’s triumphant confession continues in verse 69: “**We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.**”

The verbs there are in the perfect tense, meaning this: We have believed, and continue in that belief. We have come to realize, and we remain convinced.

That is a description of actual faith, what is true in genuine conversion.

A decisive point in the past where one believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, and endures, perseveres in that belief until the present moment.

And in this context, notice the *content* of that belief and knowledge, as Peter refers to Christ Jesus as the “**Holy One of God.**”

This is a rare somewhat unusual description of Jesus. Only used to refer to Him on one other occasion, where the demon-possessed cried out: “**I know who you are – the Holy One of God.**” [[Mark 1:24, Luke 4:34]]

The one consecrated unto God, set apart, appointed by God. It’s also expressing the closest possible intimacy with God. Belonging to God and appointed by God.

In fact, the verb form of this word for “holy” [[ἀγιάζω]] is used over in 10:36 where Jesus says: “**36 do you say of Him, whom the Father *sanctified* and sent into the world,**

Notice the relationship between being sanctified by the Father and sent into the world.

Therefore, back in our passage, Peter is affirming the unique relationship to God and unique mission of Christ Jesus.

He is the Holy one of God. Set apart by God, and appointed by God for the task of accomplishing redemption.



Peter, speaking on behalf of the disciples, is embracing His truth claims, accepting and believing what He has revealed about Himself.

Trusting in His message, not His miracles.

And so, Jesus is encouraging their commitment. Giving them the opportunity to reaffirm and declare where they stand.

Demonstrating that they have been, or are being drawn by the Father to the Son.

This is the first way He ministers to His true disciples in the wake of mass defection.

**That brings us to the second way: He equips them for betrayal at the highest level.**

John Calvin captures this sense of the remaining verses with these words: "You twelve alone remain out of a large company. If your faith has not been shaken by the unbelief of many, prepare for a new contest; for this company, though small, will be still diminished by one man."

Notice verse 70, **“Jesus answered them, “Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve?”**

This is an interesting response and it actually follows the same pattern we find in Matthew 16. Matthew 16 records another high point in Peter’s ministry and confessions. Matthew 16:13:

**“Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 14 And they said, “Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” 15 He \*said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”**

Just like John 6, a slam dunk confession, as accurate as one could get.

We’re not like others, confused, lacking insight, who say you are John the Baptist, nor others who say Elijah, or others Jeremiah, or one of the other prophets.

No, you are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.

How does Jesus respond in verse 17? “Peter great job, you put two and two together. You rightly evaluated my works and the evidences and came to the only rational conclusion possible.”

No, responds by drawing attention to *why* Peter identifies Him this way, *how* Peter is able to identify Him this way.

**“And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.”**

God opened your eyes Peter. This belief and confession was made possible by the supernatural work of God in your heart.

Christ Jesus wanted Peter and the disciples to understand that the difference between them and all others who wrongly assess Him, is the work of God in their hearts.

So that no spiritual pride or spiritual superiority could have any oxygen to survive in their hearts.

And back in John 6:70, we find this same pattern. Peter had just triumphantly, confidently, accurately, declared in verse 69: **We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.**”

And we didn't highlight it a minute ago, but Peter even uses an emphatic pronoun. Literally, and we, we *ourselves* have believed.

In *distinction* from everyone else, in distinction from these defectors, we aren't going anywhere. No need to worry about us. We are locked in.

But again, similar to Matthew 16, notice where Jesus draws their attention to in light of this truthful confession:

Verse 70, **“Jesus answered them, “Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve,**

Again, although Peter's confession was accurate, Jesus does not allow any sense of spiritual pride or superiority to develop in the disciples.

He draws attention to His selection of them, rather than their intellect, as the source behind this confession.

Explaining their insight and faith not in terms of their superior intellect, but in terms of His sovereign initiative.

I've done something for you, the twelve, that I haven't done for the crowd that just defected. I chose you.

Remember, even in this same account, these disciples had a spiritual advantage, a spiritual privilege that this crowd of defectors did not have.

The very evening before, the private miracle in verses 16-21. Jesus pursuing His disciples on the sea, revealing Himself as I am.

The way John frames up this narrative, this event is the only difference in this chapter between the 12 and the massive crowd.

He sought them out and revealed Himself to them as the I am. And He did so in a way that had an impact. [[see Matthew 14:32]]

That event, strengthened their convictions about who Jesus was. Not merely a prophet, a king, a miracle worker, but God's Son. God Himself.

And so, he's reminding Peter and the disciples here in verse 70 – let's not forget that I chose you and you've had some additional experiences and teaching that this crowd hasn't had.

But, we have to be careful that don't understand this "choosing" here [[ἐκλέγομαι]] to be referring to election unto salvation.

Rather, this is referring to these men who had been chosen by Christ to be in his inner circle of disciples. We know it's referring to this for a few reasons.

First of all, later on in John, Jesus does speak of election unto salvation when referring to these disciples. Using the act of physically washing their feet as symbol spiritual cleansing John 13:10:

**"Jesus \*said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." 11 For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, "Not all of you are clean."**

Not all of you have been justified and forgiven. Not all of you are saved.

Notice verse 18, **"I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats My bread has lifted up his heel against Me.'"**

And so, here in chapter 13 he will not identify Judas as one whom *He had chosen*. Because here is referring to salvation realities.

But in chapter 6, He does include Judas among those who chose. Because he did choose Judas to be a disciple, one of the original 12.

And it's very clear that this is the nature of the choosing back in 6:70: That it is not election unto salvation.

There are actually some who verse 70 and 71 to deny God's sovereignty in salvation. And to promote the idea that even though we are chosen we can still be lost. We can lose our salvation.

And one defense of that is that Jesus includes Judas here among those He has chosen, and Judas was chosen at the beginning, but clearly ends up losing that salvation status.

Well, the problem with that is we already clarified from John 13:18 where Jesus uses the same language of choosing, but that time referring to salvation. And doesn't include Judas.

But even if we didn't have that, there is a detail here in the text that proves Judas was never a believer.

Notice the language in the rest of verse 70: **"yet one of you is a devil."**

He doesn't say, one of you *will be* a devil, or will act like a devil *later*. No, one of you, right now, is a devil.

Long before he would betray him, long before he would fall away from Christ and the disciples, Christ declares that he is, presently, a devil.

Furthermore, consider what we saw in verse 64, **“for Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him.”**

Judas never believed. He is, at this very point, long before the betrayal, a devil and an unbeliever.

Clearly, the choosing here can't be referring to election, choosing to be saved. Unless of course you want to believe that the devil was chosen to be saved.

Thinking about this label and being called a “devil,” that's pretty much the worse label anyone could receive.

There is no stronger language possible to use to describe the wickedness and the severity of evil in an individual.

What worse label could you give than the devil. The adversary, the opponent par excellence of God Himself.

The one whose existence is entirely devoted to opposing Christ and destroying the work of Christ.

JC Ryle, “The meaning is, one out of your number is so completely under the influence of the devil, such a servant of the devil, that he deserves to be called nothing less than a devil.”

Interestingly, the unbelieving crowd, the false disciples who turned away in verse 66, none of them this label. But Judas does.

Because nothing is so wicked as giving the impression you love Christ when in fact you hate Him.

Think about the Jews previously in the crowd, and the other disciples who turned back and no longer wanted to follow Him.

All of them refused to believe and turned away from Christ. *Making it clear where they stood.*

But Judas' unbelief is far worse. Because although he was unbelieving, just like the crowd, he was just as offended as the crowd...

He chose to remain with the disciples as if he was in full agreement with who Jesus was. That's demonic. [[see 2 Cor. 11:13ff]]

To give the impression you believe and are sincere, when in fact, you have an evil agenda.

John gives the commentary in verse 71, **“71 Now He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him.”**

Let me give you the literal word order of that last clause: for this one, was going to betray him, *one of the 12*.

That word order is putting emphasis on that phrase, **“One of the 12.”** Those are John’s last words to end this chapter.

Those words draw attention to the *enormity* of Judas’ sin.

This one with such experiences and teachings of Christ, with such spiritual privilege and advantage, that only 11 other men in human history could ever lay claim to.

His ultimate betrayer, came from *one of the twelve*.

Now, why does Jesus include these details here? Why does John choose to write the narrative in this fashion?

Isn’t this a horrible note to end this chapter on? If we were writing it, we probably we have ended on a high note, with Peter’s triumphant confession there in verse 69.

But instead, John goes out of his way in these verses to highlight for his audience that Jesus was well aware of Judas’ hypocrisy and unregenerate state.

**Why emphasize these details right here? Well, we know it is to equip his genuine disciples for betrayal at the highest level.**

**Let’s consider a few ways that these details accomplish that purpose. Why do these details appear right here?**

**First**, in order that Judas would never be able to say he wasn’t warned. He was standing there and heard these words, “one of you is a devil.”

Which means, He knew that Jesus knew. It should have led him to abandon the group right here, or repent and believe. Neither of which happened.

By extension, these details are included to warn anyone who is in and around the church, but is characterized by this same level of deceit.

The worst thing you can do is not commit murder, adultery, practice homosexuality, drink, use profanity.

No, the worst thing you can do in this life is what Judas did. Be around and among God's people, giving everyone the impression you love Christ, when in fact you know you hate Him.

The best thing to do would be to repent and believe in the Lord. But if you're not going to do that, the next best thing to do is to leave and make no claim on Christ, to make it plain where you stand.

**Secondly**, to teach His disciples and us that Christ Jesus is never fooled by men. Never surprised by a duplicitous life.

The disciples were fooled by Judas. They didn't know who He was speaking of here. Verse 71 is for us, the audience. That is John's commentary. Jesus didn't identify Judas at this point.

And so his disciples had no idea who he was talking about. And they still didn't know a year later.

Look over at John 13:21, **"When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit, and testified and said, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me.' 22 The disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking.**

Men can be fooled. Hypocrisy and unbelief can be so sophisticated that it can fool the best of men.

But, that is never the case with the Lord of the church.

In the book of Revelation, when Jesus ministers to the seven churches of Asia minor. He begins each of his addresses to the churches this way: I know.

The church is to take comfort that Christ sees everything and knows everything. Including Satan's minions in the church.

**Thirdly**, to caution Peter and the disciples to be more careful in their assumptions about the spiritual state of others.

Remember what Peter said in 6:69, **"We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."**

We, all of us, including Judas. We have believed.

And so Jesus brings up the case of Judas to show Peter and his disciples, actually, you have overstated your case.

You haven't all believed and have come to know that I am the Holy one of God. One of you doesn't believe, one of you is a devil.

Now, this isn't saying we are to suspicious of everyone, or can't ever speak of others as believing because after all, we can't see their hearts and don't know if they are genuine.

But it is to that we shouldn't automatically assume someone is a believer just because they are not only among God's people, but in leadership.

We shouldn't automatically assume that they are genuine because they remain with God's people for a long time.

Judas hadn't taken the opportunity to depart along with the other false disciples here in verse 66. Therefore, in Peter's mind, he must be genuine.

Be careful you don't assume that because someone is hanging around, even in ministry, affirming and teaching accurate truth about Christ, means one truly believes.

**Fourthly**, that their faith, and our faith, would not be shaken when we experience this betrayal.

God's people tend to not be shaken by mass unbelief. We know that we are the minority in the world. We know we believe a message that is not popular and will not be tolerable by the majority of the world.

And the fact that many hear the message but don't last long, the fact that many reject Christ, making it clear where they stand...

Yes, we're grieved by it, but we're not shaken, we're not rattled by it.

But there is one particular kind of unbelief that shakes us to the core. And it is a modern-day Judas. Where an individual has been living a double life and the Lord exposes it.

These details are here so that we will not be surprised when it happens.

The individual might surprise us. Just like the apostles didn't know which one of them it would be. But the *concept*, the *reality* should not surprise the church.

God's people will experience betrayal at the highest levels.

**Fifthly**, Christ Jesus is sovereign over this reality. He chose Judas to be among the 12 and knew from the beginning he did not and would not believe, and knew what he would do in his betrayal.

Judas did not sneak into this group of disciples. He was personally selected by Christ with full knowledge of who he was and what he would do.

And the Lord does not exercise His sovereignty arbitrarily, with no good purpose.

That leads us to the **seventh reason** these details are included here and important: What hypocrites mean for evil, Christ Jesus means for good.

In other words, He uses the wicked intentions of these individuals for His own holy purposes.

John 13:18, “**18 I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled, ‘He who eats My bread has lifted up his heel against Me.’ 19 From now on I am telling you before it comes to pass, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am.** ἐγὼ εἶμι

Divine self-affirmation.

When it happens, this will strengthen your faith. It will cause genuine believers to persevere and trust me all the more.

**Sixthly**, these details demonstrate for us that the Lord of the church is patient. He allowed one who would betray him to be among his inner circle for 3 years. [[1 Tim. 5:24]]

He allows the hypocrisy to go along undetected, until in His perfect timing and for His wise reasons, He chooses to expose it.

And so, we’ve seen Jesus minister to His true disciples in the wake of ministry discouragement. In the wake of mass defection.

**He encourages their commitment.  
He equips them to face betrayal at the highest level.**

For our remaining few minutes, I want to attempt to flesh out this final principle a little more. Equipping believers to face betrayal at the highest levels.

It could be a family member, a parent, a child, a spiritual leader, a mentor.

When someone has played the part so well, when their hypocrisy is at a level of sophistication that can, for a time, deceive anyone, how does the church respond when the Lord pulls the rug out and exposes it.

Many of you have probably experienced this firsthand. I remember in the ministry I was part of before we came here, there was a man in leadership who was living a double life and the Lord exposed it.

And that Sunday, Pastor Jerry Wragg gave a message entitled, “**Responding Righteously to Betrayal.**”

To this day, it is one of the most powerful and helpful sermons I’ve ever sat under. And I just wanted to share with you a few principles and highlights from that message.

How do we righteously respond to betrayal at the highest and most sophisticated levels.

**First, we remember that the CHURCH BELONGS TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST!**



Matt 16:18b - **"I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it."**

Jesus Christ is building His church in spite of insincere vessels, and He strengthens His church further when such deceit is unmasked.

In this passage He promises that nothing can thwart His glorious plan to redeem and sanctify His people, though all the fury of hell should come against it.

If the Lord allows hypocrisy to go undetected for a time, we know that He never makes a mistake with the purity of His people.

We will experience the fallout of sinful behavior, but the church is always more purified when the surgery is completed.

**Secondly, we need to remind ourselves that GOD IS HOLY, AND HE DESIRES A PURE CHURCH!**

Psalm 51:6 - **"You desire truth in the innermost being"**

Numbers 32:23 - **"Be sure your sin will find you out"**

1 Peter 1:15-16 - **"Like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves in all your behavior; because it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'"**

If we tolerate sin and do not strive hard against it, we dishonor the Lord and invite His severe chastisement.

He will expose, in His timing, any sin that is threatening the unity and purity of the church.

Ananias and Saphira found this out the hard way.

The Corinthians also received the Lord's discipline because of their abuse of the Lord's Supper:

1 Cor. 11:29, **"For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. 30 For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number [s]leep. 31 But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world."**

God is Holy and He desires a pure church.

**Third, GUARDING THE CHURCH DEMANDS THAT WE GUARD OUR HEARTS!**

When this level of hypocrisy is exposed, it should serve as a sobering motivation to press on all the more in watching over our own hearts.

Proverbs 4:23 - "**Guard your heart with all diligence...**"

Proverbs 28:13 - "**He who conceals his sin will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes his sin will find compassion.**"

**How do we guard our hearts in the wake of these kinds of betrayals?**

We need to recognize where we will be vulnerable and be on the alert for temptations. What would be some common temptations we might experience during a time like that?

=**Sinful anger and vengeance** - Betrayal stirs up temptations toward bitterness through feelings of personal violation.

It is right to feel indignant about the evil of deceit and its destructiveness. We should hate what God despises (Psa 97:10; Prov 8:13)!

But we must never allow hatred of sin to mix with the sin of pride in us, turning us into hypocrites.

If we start to make them pay for their sin, if we start to take personal revenge, we are now acting hypocritically.

Romans 12:19 - "**Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord.**"

None of our attempts at revenge or making someone pay can improve on hell.

Our precious Savior understands our grief and pain; He felt the greatest betrayal of all from his closest friend!

And we must remember that the betrayal of friends or family or church leaders is nothing compared to the betrayal that our sin is to Christ!

=**Unchecked suspicion**. This is a huge vulnerability in the wake of betrayal.

Satan tries to use times of grief to expose and exploit our various weaknesses. In the wake of betrayed trust, we're tempted to relieve our confusion and discouragement by *speculation* instead of ministering truth to one another.

What would speculation sound like?

- the leadership was turning a blind eye. They must not have a culture of accountability.
- how could their family not see it, they must have been on it.
- God must be judging the church for allowing someone like this to infiltrate our ranks.

The church is very vulnerable to unchecked suspicion and speculation in the wake of ministry betrayal.

We have to refrain from connecting dots that we have no business connecting. And we need to remember passages like:

1 Corinthians 4:5 - **"Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God."**

**=Using another's sin as a license for your own –**

Some will be tempted to use the ministry failure of a leader or someone close to them, to justify their own sin.

If that guy couldn't have power over the flesh, then what hope is there for me? Or, look at that man's sin. My smaller sins and compromises are nothing compared to that.

And so we need to be on guard that this is not a righteous response to betrayal. It is never the Lord's purpose, in exposing a hypocrite, for those in the church to now use that hypocrite's sin as a license for their own.

We need to keep in mind: 2 Corinthians 5:10 - **"We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ..."**

And so the church should take the opportunity to warn one another of the deceitfulness of sin; that sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay!

**=Discouragement and disillusionment** - How could this happen? Is it going to happen again? Can I ever trust a spiritual leader?

These questions are quite natural when trust is breached. But we must trust Christ who is ever-faithful, and whose true servants will be affirmed over time.

Remember, time and truth go hand in hand. It works both ways. To affirm the true servant of God, and to expose the false teacher.

The church need not be disillusioned when this happens. We should be able to find our spiritual bearings.

Because the Lord Jesus has prepared His people for betrayal by informing them of the reality, and by first walking it through it Himself.

**=Fear of Reproach from those outside the church –**

The world will use these instances to criticize not only the church but also Christianity in general.

They will see it as vindication of their opinions and justification for their own unbelief.

See, I knew they were hypocrites.  
Look, the church can't even be holy.

How does the church respond to this?

Use the opportunity to let them know that the church loves truth, hates sin, and strive to obey Scripture.

We have removed the hypocrite from our midst, as we are called by God to do so.

Use the opportunity to tell them how holy God is, how serious Christ is about purity in His church, and how the church deals with sin when it is exposed.