



Good News for Betrayers and Deniers

John 13:18-30

January 18, 2026

Tips and Tricks:

The sermon notes are designed to be used as a guide for discussion. Don't feel like you have to use every question. Some questions will take a while to work through and others will be over in a few seconds.

1. Don't teach the lesson. The sermon was just preached. Just ask the questions and let everyone else talk.
2. Let other people ask questions. It's OK to go "off topic" for a while. Sometimes those conversations are more interesting anyway!
3. Have fun. Don't forget to laugh and crack up. Relationships, not curriculum, are the heartbeat of our ministry. Remember: We have to build a relational bridge strong enough to hold the truth!

Agenda for Group Time

1. Ice Breaker - Lighthearted ice breaker question (10 minutes)
2. Discussion - Bible study, sharing and application. (25 Minutes)
3. Prayer - Pray together (5 minutes)
4. Planning - Remember to talk about what's coming up.

Break the Ice!

When you think about betrayal or denial in everyday life (not church), what's the first situation that comes to mind — friendships, work, sports, family, something else?

Talk it Over!

Read John 13:18–30

Jesus says the betrayal will come from someone who eats his bread.

What stands out to you about the setting of this betrayal — a table, shared food, shared life — rather than a battlefield or confrontation?

Betrayal often hurts most because it comes from closeness. Where have you seen this to be true in real life?

Jesus offers Judas a dipped morsel of bread — an act of honor and blessing. Which of these best captures your reaction to that moment?

- It's shocking
- It feels unfair
- It shows Jesus' patience
- It makes Judas' betrayal even sadder
- I've never noticed how significant that moment is

The sermon suggested that Judas' story is not just his story, but ours.

In what ways do we still turn away from Jesus in ordinary, everyday life?

Read John 13:31–35

Right after Judas leaves, Jesus talks about glory and gives the command to love one another.

Why do you think Jesus talks about love in the middle of betrayal instead of after it?

What would it look like for the church to be known primarily for love rather than loyalty tests, moral performance, or having the right answers?

Which of these feels hardest for you personally?

- Loving people who disappoint you
- Loving people who hurt you
- Loving people who fail repeatedly
- Letting others love you when you've failed
- Loving feels easy... trusting does not

Read John 13:36–38

Peter sincerely believes he will never deny Jesus — and yet he does.

What does Peter's confidence teach us about spiritual strength and self-awareness?

Which statement feels closest to your experience?

- I often overestimate my spiritual strength
- I rely too much on willpower
- I relate more to Peter than Judas
- I see myself in both
- I'd rather not think about this 😊

Grace That Does Not Turn Away

Both Judas and Peter fail — but only one receives forgiveness.

What makes the difference between repentance and turning away?

Why is it important that salvation is not a comeback story, but an act of grace toward people who cannot rescue themselves?

Which of these phrases best describes how you usually approach God?

- "I'll come to God once I've cleaned things up"
- "I try to prove I'm serious first"
- "I know I need help, but asking is hard"
- "I'm learning to come empty-handed"
- "I'm still figuring this out"

Work It Out!

In what area of your life do you need to believe again that Jesus offers bread even to betrayers and deniers?