



but we *can* be sure of this: That God is able to save to the utmost (Heb 7:25), and there is no sin too great that His grace cannot forgive! Paul testified of this using himself as an example (1 Tim. 1:15,16). We must also remember and take comfort in Peter's story. When the Lord turned and looked at Peter after he had denied the Lord

for the third time, could Peter have reacted the same way that Judas would? He certainly could have, but what made Peter great is not that he never made a mistake, or that he always got things right. It is the fact that he never stopped *trying* to do the right thing. No matter how terrible the mistake, he always repented. So, with Judas, even after accepting thirty pieces of silver, even after the kiss of betrayal, and even after breaking his Master's heart; things could have been different for Judas, he could have chosen a different way. What a tragedy that he didn't! Yet, just as Judas ruined his potential by succumbing to his lust for money, our potential can be ruined also if we at any moment betray our Lord and turn our back on Him for worldly things (Matt. 6:24). What a tragedy that would be!



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ISSUE

12.34

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

August 22
2010



Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM
10:20 AM
6:00 PM
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Kyle Pope

Deacons:

Dean Bowers
Eddie Cook
Bill Davis
Steve Dixon
Pat Goguen
Jack Langley
Neil Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott

Evangelists:

Kyle Pope
Jason Garcia

The Potential of Judas Iscariot

By Jason Garcia

In the passages where we find the twelve disciples named, Judas always appears last, and attached to his name is a brief characterization: “...the one who betrayed Him” (Matt. 10:4 NASB), “...who also betrayed Him” (Mark 3:19), “...who became a traitor” (Luke 6:16). The apostle John further describes Judas Iscariot as “a devil” (John 6:70) and a “thief” (John 12:6), as one who was motivated by Satan (John 13:2, 27), and as “the son of perdition” (John 17:12). As one of the disciples who was hand-picked by Jesus, Judas will be forever remembered for having done one thing: betraying Christ. However, due to many false, pervasive teachings in the religious world about predestination, predeterminism, and the freewill of man, I fear that as Christians we might be tempted to erroneously think that there was never any potential for spiritual greatness in the disciple Judas. We might be tempted to think that, regardless of any conflicting intentions he may have had, his eternal destiny had been sealed before he was ever born and he was powerless to change it. The Scripture says Jesus “summoned those whom HE HIMSELF WANT-

ED” (Mark 3:13, emphasis mine). Do you suppose that Jesus *desired* to have a traitor in the midst of His closest followers—men with whom He would spend the last three years of His life on earth? Were all the other disciples “tried and true” men when He called them (see Luke 5:8)? When we consider that each of the other disciples had personal failings, and how they went on to lead faithful lives in



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service to the Lord even after His ascension, is it so far-fetched to believe that Judas could have done the same? Isn't it interesting that the Scriptures give no indication that Judas was a failure in the early part of Jesus' ministry? In fact, we find just the opposite (cf. Mark 3:13-15; Luke 9:1-6, 10). Scripture indicates that Judas was a faithful, obedient disciple, diligent in preaching the Good News and confirming the Word with miracles, and made the same personal sacrifices as the other disciples did. From these Scriptures we can conclude that there definitely seemed to be something of worth in the man Judas Iscariot, and he *did* have great potential.

However, Judas had a weakness, as does each of us, and it was his failure to overcome his weakness that led him to betray the Lord. Scripture tells us that Judas was the group treasurer, or the man in charge of all the funds given to the disciples (John 12:6; John 13:29) since there seemed to be a good number of people supporting the men financially (Luke 8:3). Unfortunately, Judas allowed the temptation of his greed and love for money to get the best of him, and he stole money from the collection (John 12:6). Judas' own words confirm what John says of him: **“What are you willing to GIVE ME to betray Him to you?”** (Matt. 26:15, emphasis mine) and the Scriptures say they weighed out for him thirty pieces of silver. Judas' love for money drove him to commit terrible things (1 Tim. 6:10). He became a coward, and sought how he could betray Jesus **“apart from the crowd”** (Luke 22:6) and chose to deliver Him by *night* (John 13:30). He acted hyp-

ocritically and calculatingly: He sought an “opportune time” to betray Christ, did so during the Passover feast, and acted so well that none of the disciples suspected him (John 13:27-29). He was also callous in his betrayal. Remember, he chose to identify Jesus for the conspirators by *kissing* Him (Matt. 26:48-49).

How could a man with so much potential turn into such a terrible villain, especially when all the while the men who were his brethren were succeeding under the same Master? Just as Judas' sin can be directly attributed to his failure in weakness, so can our sin be linked to the weaknesses we fail to overcome. Each of us as Christians has the potential to achieve great things in service to the Lord, or to fail Him and crucify Him anew (Heb. 6:6). As free moral agents, our choices play a significant part in determining our destiny. This was no less true with Judas. James tells us, **“But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by HIS OWN lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death”** (James 1:14-15, emphasis mine).

Lastly, consider Judas' response when he realized what he had done. In Matthew 27 we read that Judas **“felt remorse”** and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders saying, **“I have sinned by betraying innocent blood”**

(Matt. 27:3-4; cf. Deut. 27:25). Then Judas decided to go from there and end his own life by hanging himself. The Greek word translated “felt remorse” or “regret” is μεταμέλομαι (*metamelomai*) which actually means “to care afterwards” (Strong). It is significant that this word is used to describe Judas' reaction and gives us insight into his disposition. We can understand from the text that upon realizing the full extent of his actions, he simply wished them to be undone and felt distressed because of how things turned out. This attitude differs from “repentance” (μετάνοια – *metanoia*) which suggests a sincere change in heart and mind. Scholars have long debated as to which best describes the state of Judas' heart and mind, and I'm not sure if we can ever truly know,