

**LORD JESUS,  
ABIDE  
WITH ME**

## **LENTEN DEVOTION #1**

**JUDAS BETRAYED JESUS AND FOUND NO JOY**

**MARCH 12-13, 2019**

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### **Morning Devotion**

#### **OPENING RESPONSE**

L: God, our Father, each day is a gift of Your grace.

**G: Your mercies are new every morning.**

L: Guide our steps by the light of Your Word.

**G: Shield us from harm and keep us from evil.**

L: Better than life is Your love.

**G: Put joy in our hearts and praise on our lips.  
Amen.**

#### **PRAYER FOR GRACE**

L: O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, You have brought us safely to this new day. Defend us with Your mighty power, and grant that this day we neither fall into sin nor run into any kind of danger; and in all we do, direct us to what is right in Your sight, through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord.

**G: Amen.**

### **Evening Devotion**

#### **OPENING RESPONSE**

L: Lord Jesus, You are the light of the world,

**G: The light no darkness can overcome.**

L: Stay with us, for it is evening,

**G: And the day is almost over.**

L: Let Your light scatter the darkness.

**G: Let it shine in our hearts and lives. Amen.**

#### **PRAYER FOR PEACE**

L: Lord God, all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works come from You. Give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments. Defend us also from the fear of our enemies, that we may live in peace and quietness, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**G: Amen.**

**1 Behold the Lamb of God For guilty sinners slain; Let it not be in vain That you have died!  
You for my Savior let me take; My only refuge let me make Your pierced side.**

**2 Behold the Lamb of God! Into the sacred flood Of your most precious blood My soul I cast.  
Wash me and make me pure and clean; Uphold me through life's changing scene Till all is past.**

**3 Behold the Lamb of God! All hail, incarnate Word! O everlasting Lord, Purge out our leav'n.  
Clothe us with godliness and good; Feed us with your celestial food, Manna from heav'n.**

**4 Behold the Lamb of God! Worthy is he alone To sit upon the throne Of God above,  
One with the Ancient of all days, One with the Comforter in praise, All light, all love!**

Text: Matthew Bridges, 1800–94, abr., alt.

**PASSION HISTORY READING**

**Plot, Passover, and Lord's Supper - Luke 22:1-38**

**TODAY'S SCRIPTURE**

**Matthew 26:47-50; 27:3-5 (NIV)**

<sup>26:47</sup> While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. <sup>48</sup> Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: “The one I kiss is the man; arrest him.” <sup>49</sup> Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed him.

<sup>50</sup> Jesus replied, “Do what you came for, friend.”

<sup>27:3</sup> When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. <sup>4</sup> “I have sinned,” he said, “for I have betrayed innocent blood.”

“What is that to us?” they replied. “That’s your responsibility.”

<sup>5</sup> So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

## DEVOTION - JUDAS BETRAYED JESUS BUT FOUND NO JOY

We're all familiar with the incident that took place while Jesus ate the Passover with His disciples. While they were eating the meal, Jesus said, "**Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.**" **They were very sad and began to say to Him one after the other, "Surely you don't mean me, Lord?"** (Matthew 26:21-22). Judas asked the same question, even though he already knew the answer. He knew that he was going to betray Jesus. In fact, the arrangements had already been made. Just before the account of the Lord's Supper we're told, **Judas went to the chief priests and asked, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him over to you?" So they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver. From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand Him over** (Matthew 26:14-16).

Judas tried to cover up his intended sin and pretended to be as horror-stricken as the other disciples when Jesus announced that one of them would betray Him. Since they each were asking Him, **Lord, is it I?**, Judas had to follow suit or else face exposure.

But Judas was exposed, His sin was bare and apparent before the Son of God. Jesus looked him in the eye and said, **What you are about to do, do quickly** (John 13:27). When He had said this, Judas went out, And it was night (John 13:30).

On Sunday we heard about Achan hiding the plunder that he stole from the ruins of Jericho. Today we hear how Judas tried to cover up his sin as well.

What lesson can we take to heart from each of those cases?

In what ways are we eerily similar to both Achan and to Judas?

How did Judas go about betraying his Master? We learn that he, the superb actor and cheater that he was, used a kiss. The kiss has always been a sign of love and affection and was used by people to greet dear friends. When Joseph made himself known to his brothers, he kissed them as a sign that he still loved them and held nothing against them. In the apostles' day Christians often greeted one another with a kiss. Yes, the kiss was a sign of love and affection.

We can understand why Judas used a kiss to betray Jesus. He wanted to appear as one who loved Him and held Him in high esteem. Thus, if he used a kiss, none of the disciples would ever suspect the true meaning behind that. Then, too, a kiss would be an unmistakable sign for the enemies of Jesus. Judas had told them, **The one I kiss is the man; arrest Him.** Perhaps Judas was thinking, "even if I do betray Jesus, the enemies can do Him no harm. Look at the miracles He's done. He is very powerful and will provide a way of escape, and I will be the richer by thirty pieces of silver." So he thought he had a foolproof scheme.

How revolting and shocking it is to see Judas standing there, playing both sides, one against the other. We may have read and heard of this horrible, hypocritical deed a thousand times, and yet as often as it is repeated, we're astonished by it all over again.

Judas, one of the Lord's disciples, one of the twelve who had been with Jesus day after day, was the traitor! He gave Jesus into the hands of the enemy! All he was concerned about was, **What are you willing to give me?** That became the ruling passion of his life—how much can I get from this, what benefit is there for *me*? His actions and his attitude grieve us, don't they? Today and always, we'll think of and be reminded of his hypocritical act when we gather for the Lord's Supper and hear the words, "On the night He was betrayed...".

But even today, are there not many who are guilty of the same terrible sin? Sad to say, there are countless many who confess Jesus with their lips, but betray Him with their lives. Many together with Judas go through life with the ruling attitude, "What's in it for me?" without being concerned in the least what they have to do or the means which they must employ to accomplish what their hearts desire—more joy and pleasure for themselves in *this* life. No scheme is too low to try. No excuse is too poor to offer. No warnings or pleas will help. The love of money, possessions, power, or human favor means more than submitting to the will of the Lord.

Remember, the downfall of Judas was a gradual process—little sins, little amounts, small deceptions at first. If Judas had been asked in the beginning, "Would you betray Jesus, if we pay you well?", he likely would have been shocked that someone could even suggest such a thing. But with a little more practice and the gradual numbing of his conscience, giving in to greed became easier and easier. His conscience no longer hounded him nearly as much and finally, the betrayal of Jesus was a comparatively easy thing for him to do.

What vital lessons are there to be learned by us from Judas and his situation?

**The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful**  
How can we take to heart this warning of Jesus from Matthew 13:22?

Judas shamefully betrayed Jesus. Now what were the results of that betrayal? Did he experience joy and satisfaction, did he find the additional gain to be a real profit to him?

No, Judas found no joy, no gain, no satisfaction. Judas found only misery. After he betrayed Jesus, he went out into the night, and not only out into the physical night but into the night of the blackness of death and despair. The greatness of his sin began to dawn upon him and to weigh heavily upon his soul. When Judas saw that Jesus was condemned and that things were not going as he may have thought they would go, he brought the money back to the chief priests and elders. His foolish scheme had not worked. The money which had meant so much to him was now burning his hand so painfully that he threw it down on the temple floor. When he realized what he had done and sought to give it back to the chief priests and elders, they scornfully answered, **What is that to us? That's your responsibility!** (Matthew 27:4). It was as if to say, "Don't come to us with guilt ridden conscience, go deal with it on your own," and that from the men who were supposed to be serving as Judas' spiritual leaders.

As Judas lived, so he died. He felt that his sin was too great and that he could not be forgiven. He thought he would take the easy way out—suicide. He hanged himself. Ending his own life seemed a better prospect than facing God’s wrath over his great and shameful betrayal of Jesus’ trust. What had begun with simple greedy thoughts resulted in Judas leaving this life in anguish and despair. Acts 1:25 tells us that Judas went, **to his own place**, in other words, to the torments of hell and eternal punishment. It makes us shutter as we contemplate the eternal fate of Judas. Think of the far-reaching results of sin. Judas coveted money; he sought additional gain and earthly joy; he lost everything. The words Jesus spoke about Jesus at the Last Supper are haunting, **One who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born** (Matthew 26:23-24).

The betrayal of Jesus by Judas set into motion a chain of events that nothing could stop. True, it was the will of God that Jesus should suffer and die and thus make payment for the sins of the world, but consider how much it must have added to His suffering, knowing that it was one of His own disciples who had betrayed Him. From this moment on, Jesus had no relief. He was led before Annas and Caiaphas and accused of blasphemy because He claimed to be who He really was, the eternal son of God. Before Pilate, he was mocked, ridiculed, and finally condemned to death. He was beaten, tortured, and compelled to carry His own cross to Calvary where finally, He was crucified between two base criminals. All of this was to be His lot because of His great love for us. We as sinners deserve all of this and more. But in love, Jesus took our place and bore the torments of death and hell for us. Can there be any greater love than this?

This same love Jesus also extended to Judas. Jesus, who knows all things, who can read our innermost thoughts and desires, also knew everything Judas had done. He recognized the hypocrisy. He saw the greed. Yet after Judas betrayed him with a kiss, Jesus said to him, **Judas, My friend, why have you come? Do you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?** Instead of denouncing and condemning him immediately, Jesus dealt very graciously and tenderly with him, calling him “friend” in the hope that he might yet repent of his sin. Jesus dealt with him as just as Judas had seen him deal with tax collectors and sinners during the three years of His ministry, graciously inviting all those who recognize their sinfulness with words like **Come unto me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest** (Matthew 11:28-30).

What final, vital takeaways can we appropriate from the story of Judas?

There *is* hope for us. No matter what we have done, no matter how great our sin may be, no matter what lies in the past, let us turn to our Lord Jesus. If we confess our sins and shortcomings to Him, His grace and mercy will receive us. He will give us rest. But those who refuse to repent, who persist in their life of sin and wickedness, who love the “thirty pieces of silver” more than their Savior, must hear the dreadful condemnation of the Lord, **Depart from Me, it would be better for you if you had never been born.**

The germ of the sin of Judas lies in each one of us and can easily develop before we are aware of it. Satan has not yet ceased going about **like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour** (1 Peter 5:8). May we earnestly pray that the Lord will have mercy upon us and preserve us from the onslaughts of Satan. While we may be tempted to be filled with the joys and glories of this earth, remember that they have no lasting value. They will all disappear. Only that which our Lord Jesus Christ has done for us in love will last and have eternal value and grant us a joy and glory which has no bounds and will know no end.

Closing Prayer:

**Lord Jesus, abide in us with Your love and grace. Fill our hearts only with the joys and glories which you have purchased and won for us. Abide with us to the end of our day, and at the end of our lives graciously take us to Your home in heaven.**



2 Swift to its close ebbs out life's lit - tle day;



Earth's joys grow dim; its glo - ries pass a - way.



Change and de - cay in all a - round I see;



O thou who chang - est not, a - bide with me!

## CONFESSION OF SINS AND ABSOLUTION

**G: O Lord, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy, and in Your faithfulness, come to my relief. Do not bring Your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before you. Answer me quickly, O Lord; my spirit fails. Do not hide Your face from me, for I have put my trust in You. Show me the way I should go, for to You I lift up my soul. Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God.**

**Almighty God, merciful Father, I, a troubled and repentant sinner, confess that I have sinned against You in my thoughts, my words, and my actions. I have not loved You with my whole heart; I have not loved others as I should. I am distressed by the sins that trouble me and am deeply sorry for them.**

*Silence for private meditation and confession.*

**L: Jesus says to His people: “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven.” His death paid for the guilt of your sins and the sins of the whole world. Do you believe this?**

**G: Yes, I believe.**

**L: Because of the promise of our Savior Jesus, I forgive you all your sins. Be assured that you are a dear child of God and an heir of eternal life.**

## LUTHER’S MORNING PRAYER

**In the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger. Keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. Into Your hands I commend my body and soul and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.**

## BLESSING

May the love of the Lord Jesus draw us to Himself. May the power of the Lord Jesus make us strong to do His will. May the peace of the Lord Jesus fill our lives.

**Amen.**

## LUTHER’S EVENING PRAYER

**In the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day. Forgive me all my sins, and graciously keep me this night. Into Your hands I commend my body and soul and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.**

## BLESSING

May the blessing of the eternal God be upon us:  
His light to guide us,  
His presence to shelter us,  
His peace to unite us.

**Amen.**

**1 Glory be to Jesus, Who in bitter pains  
Poured for me the lifeblood From his sacred veins.**

**2 Grace and life eternal In that blood I find;  
Blest be his compassion, Infinitely kind.**

**3 Blest through endless ages Be the precious stream  
Which from endless torments Did the world redeem.**

**4 Abel's blood for vengeance Pleaded to the skies,  
But the blood of Jesus For our pardon cries.**

**5 Oft as earth exulting Lifts its praise on high,  
Angel hosts rejoicing Make their glad reply.**

**6 Lift we, then, our voices, Swell the mighty flood;  
Louder still and louder Praise the precious blood!**

Text: Italian hymn, 18th century, abr.; tr. Edward Caswall, 1814–78, alt.