

Judas Monologue
Palm Sunday
April 17, 2011
Pastor Vern Christopherson

Anybody want some silver coins?

I don't want them.
This is blood money.

He's on the cross now

The one I called *Rabbi, Master, Lord* is on the cross.
Maybe he would have gotten there anyway. Maybe not.
But there's no use denying it...I put him there.

I suppose I'll be remembered as the one who betrayed him.

Judas. The name has quite a ring to it, doesn't it?
Traitor, turncoat, deceiver. *Judas.*
My kiss will go down in history as the kiss of death.

I wasn't the only one who turned against him, you know.

Peter—good old, proud Peter—denied him in the courtyard. Three times.
Peter, James and John fell asleep while he was praying in the garden. Three times.
Even the crowd turned against him.
On Sunday they praised him with their palm branches and shouted *Hosanna!*
By Friday they cried out for his death: *Crucify him!*
No, I'm not the only one who turned against him. Everybody did.
When it came down to the last few hours, Jesus walked alone.

Our time with Jesus started out much different.

We were his followers, his disciples.
It was a heady time.
We trudged along from village to village.
We often couldn't remember the last time we ate a decent meal or slept in a bed, but we didn't care.
We were going to change the world.
We followed him because we believed in him.
We followed him through all the insults, all the tension, all the heartache.
We followed him even though at times we secretly wondered, "Is he the One we've been waiting for...really?"

You can call me the betrayer, but I did pick up my cross and follow him—just like Jesus asked us to do.

Would you have done that?
Would you have suffered the fear and the doubts?

Would you have followed him even for a day?
When was the last time you stuck your neck out for anything—much less for Jesus?

What amazes me is that Jesus picked me in the first place?

I'm nobody special.
My heart is far from pure.
My blood runs hot.
But for some unknown reason, he came walking by one day and said, "Judas, I want you to come and follow me." And I did.
I followed him. I believed in him. We were going to change the world.

What also amazes me that Jesus included me in his last supper.

Funny, but he already seemed to know what I'd done. Was it obvious?
I'd gone to the chief priests.
They didn't proposition me. *I* propositioned them.
I would deliver up Jesus to them.
And the agreed upon price? Thirty pieces of silver.

At we sat at table eating the bread and drinking the wine, my mind was a million miles away.
Suddenly Jesus had a sobering announcement to make: "One of you is going betray me."
I almost choked on my bread. How did he know?
One by one we went around the table...everyone denied it, including me.
Not I, Lord, not I!
For a split second, I wasn't sure if I could go through with it.

Besides picking me to be a disciple, besides including me in the last supper, what's most amazing to me is what he said in the garden.

He'd just finished praying.
I approached him with a large mob of people.
They were armed with swords and clubs.
I planted my kiss firmly on his cheek.

Of all the names Jesus could have called me just then, what he did call me was *friend*.
"Friend, do what you came to do."
My heart sank.
I couldn't look him in the eye.
There was a sting of truth to his words.
After all, betrayal doesn't happen at the hands of an enemy; it happens at the hands of a friend.
It's a violation of trust.
It's a promise made with fingers crossed.
It's an inside job.

I had followed him. I had believed in him. We were going to change the world. And now our friendship had come to this.

Where there's an opportunity for love, I guess, there's an opportunity for hurt as well, tremendous hurt.

I had loved him. And I believe he loved me too. But I turned my back on that love.

You might be wondering *why...why did I do it?*

I wish I could give you a simple answer, but I can't.

1) Was it for the money? Maybe.

I was the treasurer of our little group.

I kept a close eye on the purse strings.

Money is important to me.

But thirty pieces of silver? It's just not that much.

Why did I do it?

2) Was I trying to force his hand? Maybe.

My people have suffered long and hard at the hands of the Romans.

What they've done to our proud heritage is humiliating.

What they demand in taxes is highway robbery.

On the flip side, I'd seen Jesus' power.

I'd seen him still the storm and heal the sick and even raise the dead.

Surely we could have used some of that awesome, word-changing power against our enemies.

But to what end?

Nobody beats Rome.

Why did I do it?

3) This might sound funny, but if truth be told, *I* felt betrayed by *him*.

Oh, it's not as if he slighted me, or neglected me, or called me a fool.

It was more like this:

His cause was not exactly *my* cause.

His hopes and dreams for the kingdom were not exactly *my* hopes and dreams.

I had followed him. I had believed in him. We were going to change the world.

But the longer I was with him, the more I began to see that the way we were changing the world—one heart at a time—was clearly not enough for me.

So one fateful day I went to the chief priests and the elders...and I sold him out.

When all is said and done, does it really matter why I did it?

If I could pin point a definite reason, would it make it any less a betrayal? Any less a sin?

If I try to excuse my actions by giving you some good reason,

“Not my fault. He hit me first.”

“Don’t blame me. It’s a dog-eat-dog world.”

...then I’ve got it exactly backwards.

Sooner or later, I have to own up to what I’ve done.

My rabbi, my master, my Lord...my friend...is on the cross.

I put him there.

And I’m ashamed of myself.

I don’t want this money.

It’s got blood all over it.

The only thing that matters to me now—the only thing—is this:

Can he ever forgive me?