

Jesus Bible Study Series

Week #6 (Chapter Eleven)

The Gathering Storm

HMR
Men's Bible Study

Main Idea

Jesus was (and is) always about truth, even when telling the truth against the powers that be of His day resulted in His death. Not much has changed in 2000 years. Few men or women today are overly concerned with truth. Most Americans are content to *live and let live*. We allow murders to live, while murdering the unborn. Something is horribly wrong. In the Church where we should know better, we wield little power over the world, or our own lives for that matter, because of our preoccupation with personal sin and our desire for comfort. The only solution is complete commitment to Christ, a total surrender.

Deep Thoughts

The 3-year ministry of Jesus can be broken into three phases: *Year of Inauguration*, *Year of Popularity*, and *Year of Opposition*. While much of the world sees Jesus as a loving teacher bringing peace and good will to mankind, Scripture tells us the complete story. As Jesus said of Himself – *I came to bring a sword* (Matthew 10:34). As we have gone through this series, I have been painfully reminded of how much Jesus really expects of me. I am afraid that many of us seem content to give Him the leftovers of our lives: time, money, commitments, and love; while what He really asks is to be first in our lives. The leftovers should be for all others including family, friends, and employers. **The great irony is that if we were to give Him our “all” first, the “leftovers” would far exceed anything we are currently able to dispense to the world around us.** But that is how Jesus operates, isn't it? He never forces His will on us as the Elect, but allows us the opportunity to partner with Him in holy living. How many of us are content to live lives that are only a fraction of what He truly intends for us? As Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 2:9 - No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him. In this lesson we continue our focus on *abiding in Christ by understanding who He was, who He is, and who He calls us to be.*

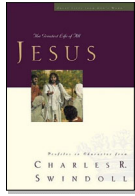
Supporting Scriptures Matthew 10:34-39; John 6:52-59, 60-70; and Luke 19:11-27, 28-48.

Questions for Consideration

1. Read Matthew 10:34-39. When Jesus said that He came to bring a sword, what did He mean? For you and me, what are the implications?
2. It is pretty clear that Jesus did not come to win a popularity contest. In this day and age we are unaccustomed to leaders who do not change their opinion when opposing voices cry loud enough. How many a politician has recanted a pithy and wise statement when their words were offensive and brought condemnation to the “wrong” party?
 - a) In John 6:52-59 we read some of the most controversial words spoken by Jesus in the New Testament. What was so offensive in the words that Jesus spoke?
 - b) In reading further (John 6:60-70), we see that many disciples left Jesus. For what reasons would they have left them? How about today – would these same teachings cause “self-proclaimed believers” to leave Jesus as well?
3. *The Parable of the Ten Minas* is told in Luke 19:11-27. Following the Parable of the Minas, Jesus experienced the Triumphant entry (Luke 19:28-44) and the clearing of the moneychangers in the Temple (Luke 19:45-48).
 - a) Is there any significance if the sequence of these three events? As a minimum, consider that for the first time Jesus entered Jerusalem not as one identified as a teacher, but as King.
 - b) There was likely a large crowd during the triumphant entry, yet there was not one who cried out at the injustice of Christ's death less than one week later. What are the similarities in the lack of commitment seen in the followers of Christ today, although there are large churches (even here in Houston) where people show up *en masse*?
 - c) What was at the core of the Jewish leader's hatred towards Jesus?

Take-away Points

Jesus came to bring Truth and certainly was the embodiment of it. If you and I choose to be on the side of Truth, where Jesus resides, rest assured we will experience persecution. If not by the world, we will certainly experience it from a spiritual opposition standpoint. Satan's number one desire is for you and me to fall. If he cannot get us to compromise our standards, he will entice us towards complacency that eventually results in our standing for nothing. A complete devotion to Christ is the only formidable plan against the forces of Satan.



Jesus Bible Study Series

Week #6 (Chapter Twelve)
Betrayed and Arrested

HMR
Men's Bible Study

Main Idea

Judas Iscariot is a picture of what happens when minor discretions give birth to sin that leads to death. Like many today, Judas is a picture of a man who was not willing to surrender his own will or agenda to Christ. It was always about Judas, even when Mary Magdalene honored Jesus by pouring perfume on His feet as a complete act of surrender. As Christians we must be extremely careful to ensure that sin never takes a foothold in our lives, but that by keep short accounts with God we keep our eyes focused on seeking Jesus.

Deep Thoughts

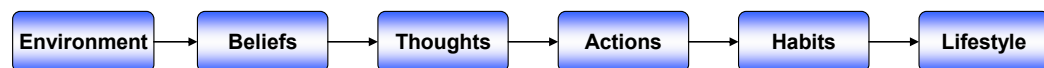
When we study the betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot, there are at least two character studies that take place. The first is the life of the betrayed, Jesus; the second is the life of the betrayer, Judas. It is hard to imagine what it was like for Jesus to be betrayed by someone who had spent the better part of three years with Him and had first-hand opportunity to witness the majesty of the Messiah. Jesus also knew that He would ultimately give His life for all mankind, including the one who would betray Him. However, Jesus' love was unconditional as is God's love for us. For us Jesus demonstrates that our love for others should not depend on how they treat us, an expectation that can often be quite challenging. As much as Jesus' actions are a positive example for us in how to love others, Judas is a model for what not to be. Over time sin crept in and corrupted Judas, much like the analogy of the frog in the boiling pot of water. **The greatest lesson for us in studying Judas is that we must be very careful to not allow sin to get a stronghold on our lives. Keep short accounts with God and stay close to Believers who will hold us accountable.** In this lesson we continue our focus on *abiding in Christ by understanding who He was, who He is, and who He calls us to be.*

Supporting Scriptures Luke 7:36-50; James 1:12-18; Luke 22:31-34, 54-62; Matthew 22:31-34, 54-62; and Matthew 27:1-5.

Questions for Consideration

1. Secret sins are the most deadly contributor to the downfall of a Believer. The problem with a secret sin is that typically no one knows about it except the sinner and God. Left unchecked, the secret sin will consume the Believer. Read James 1:12-18, consider the graphic provided below, and answer the following question: for what reasons do Believers fall prey to activities that lead to a lifestyle of sin?

The Sin Progression (James 1:12-18)



2. Unlike unrepentant Judas who betrayed Jesus, Peter responded differently. Read Luke 22:31-34 and 54-62.
 - a) What made Peter's response different than what we observe with Judas (Matthew 27:1-5)?
 - b) What is observed in the life of a Believer when they truly repent?
3. On page 175 Dr. Swindoll portrays a very telling prognosis on the progression of sin. Provide your thoughts on the following statement in regard to how sin makes you and me ineffective as Believers in serving as witnesses for Christ.

Secret sin has a way of warping the mind and twisting one's values grotesquely out of shape. Embezzlers rarely steal very much at first. Then as pilfering becomes habitual, and then ritualized, they must rationalize their sin in order to maintain some sense of dignity... When caught in their sin, embezzlers are almost always indignant, convinced that no one can see the true self they once chose to ignore and had long ago forgotten.

Take-away Points

Do you have areas in your life that do not reflect *full disclosure*? A good motto to live by is that **reputation is what we are in public, while character is what we are in private**. Rest assured, when congruity exists between reputation and character, we are living for Christ. As the Psalmist wrote: How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word (Psalm 119:9). May we be people who not only read the Book, but also live by it. We can learn a lot from the failure of Judas.