

SEEING JESUS IN JOHN

WEEK TWENTY-SEVEN: JESUS PREDICTS HIS BETRAYAL

READING

21 Now Jesus was deeply troubled, and he exclaimed, “I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me!” 22 The disciples looked at each other, wondering whom he could mean. 23 The disciple Jesus loved was sitting next to Jesus at the table. 24 Simon Peter motioned to him to ask, “Who’s he talking about?” 25 So that disciple leaned over to Jesus and asked, “Lord, who is it?” 26 Jesus responded, “It is the one to whom I give the bread I dip in the bowl.” And when he had dipped it, he gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. 27 When Judas had eaten the bread, Satan entered into him. Then Jesus told him, “Hurry and do what you’re going to do.” 28 None of the others at the table knew what Jesus meant. 29 Since Judas was their treasurer, some thought Jesus was telling him to go and pay for the food or to give some money to the poor. 30 So Judas left at once, going out into the night. John 13 (NLT)

TEACHING

Have you ever been eating a meal with family or with friends when suddenly things got awkward because of something someone said? Imagine how uncomfortable it must have been when Jesus said someone in the room would betray him. (Parent: You may need to explain the word “betray” to your children.) The disciples immediately began to suspect each other, wondering who it could be. Peter asked the disciple seated closest to Jesus to get more information – this person is identified as “the disciple Jesus loved.” Who was this person? “The disciple Jesus loved” is a phrase that John uses in his gospel to refer to himself. This isn’t a statement of pride; John isn’t bragging. This is how John experienced and remembered Jesus – as being deeply loved by him! This deep sense of being loved should be the experience of every disciple of Jesus.

Somehow Judas had a very different experience with Jesus. We don’t know all of the motivations behind his actions, but Judas decided to betray Jesus for money. Maybe Judas just loved money more than Jesus. Maybe he believed that accelerating the conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders would result in Jesus acting like the Messiah Judas hoped he would be.

We should note that Judas and John spent the same amount of time with Jesus. They saw the same miracles and heard the same teachings. But only one understood and experienced his love. This is a warning to all of us. Just being around Jesus doesn’t mean we are following him. We need to love him more than money (or anything else) and we need to trust his plans and purposes more than our own.

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RESPONSE

OPENING QUESTION(S):

- Have you ever felt betrayed (disappointed or lied to) by a friend? What happened?

TODDLERS/PRE-K:

- What did Jesus say that surprised his friends?
- Why did John call himself “the disciple Jesus loved?”

CHILDREN:

- What did Jesus say that surprised his friends?
- Why did John call himself “the disciple Jesus loved?”
- How were Judas and John different? What can we learn from them?

TEENAGERS:

- Why did John call himself “the disciple Jesus loved?”
- How were Judas and John different? What can we learn from them?

ADULTS:

- What does this story teach you about the danger of simply being around Jesus?
- How is God leading you to trust his plans and purposes in new ways?

PRAYER

God, help me to know and experience your love. Keep me from simply being around Jesus and give me the grace I need to love and follow Jesus. Help me to love and treasure Jesus more than anything else in my life. Help me to trust his plans and his timing more than my preferences. Help me not to betray you with my thoughts, my words or my actions. Thank you that you love me and forgive me when I come to you with my sin. Help me to always run to you and not to run from you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

NEXT LEVEL (ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL TEACHING)

Earlier in this chapter (verse 2), we read “It was time for supper, and the devil had already prompted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus.” After supper, it says that “Satan entered into him (Judas).” There was progression of influence from the enemy in the life of Judas. First, he was prompted then he was possessed. It’s unwise to build any doctrine of demon oppression or possession around this narrative, but we should note that there is a real enemy who can use the opportunities we give him to influence and direct us. Our best strategy against the evil one is to be continually filled with the Spirit of God.