

JUDAS'S REMORSE

Matthew 27:1-10

In recent years, people...especially young people...have gained a fascination with death. This has led to an epidemic of *suicides*...with *suicide* ranking as the *10th leading cause of death* in the United States last year. Researchers who analyze human behavior list *seven reasons* for committing suicide:

- *Retaliation*...angry over an offense or having been mistreated. It's a means of hurting those who have hurt them.
- *Depression*.
- *Loss of hope*.
- *Personal failure*...in life...in love.
- *Fear of getting caught and humiliated*...either themselves or those they love.
- *Guilt...past regrets*. They consider their guilt to be unforgivable.
- *Self-destruction...to inflict one's self with torture and pain*...they think they deserve it. They sentence themselves to capital punishment.

Every human being is *created by God for God*...in the *image of God*...and *we belong to Him*. To take one's life...whether by *murder* or *suicide*...is *rebellion* against God's sovereign right over life and death. It's a *sin* and reveals *unbelief*.

I. THE TRIAL: (vs. 1-2)

Now when morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus to put Him to death; (vs. 1)...

Contrary to rabbinical law, Jesus' first two religious trials occurred *under the cover of darkness* and *away from the Temple*. Since Jewish law required trials to be *conducted during the day*...and a trial that *issued a death sentence* had to take place *in the Temple*...the **chief priests and the elders of the people** realized an *official trial* was necessary. The brief trial here in **verse 1** was simply for the court to reaffirm what had taken place earlier.

The court had decided that Jesus must die...but they didn't have the authority to put that decision into action.

"So Pilate said to them, 'Take Him yourselves, and judge Him according to your law.' The Jews said to him, 'We are not permitted to put anyone to death'..."

~John 18:31

To get a death sentence, they needed to take the case to **Pilate the governor**...the *procurator of Judea* and **Samaria (A.D. 26-36) (Luke 3:1)**...and convince the **Roman governor** to immediately give the required permission for Jesus' execution.

And they bound Him, and led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate the governor (vs. 2)...Jesus was **bound** and brought by the Jews to **Pilate**. Pilate's home was normally in **Caesarea**, but during most festivals, he would come and stay in his **Jerusalem** palace.

So, Jesus was taken to the **Praetorium**, the *official provincial residence of the governor*...and to keep from being ceremonially defiled and thereby prevented from celebrating the **Passover**, the Jewish leaders waited outside (**John 18:28**).

II. THE TRAITOR: (vs. 3-5)

Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders (vs. 3)...

When **Judas** realized the outcome of the trial...and **saw** that Jesus **had been condemned**, he **felt remorse**.

Saw...Gk. *horao*, was sometimes *used in a figurative sense of being aware of something* or *perceiving something*...but here it suggests *literal, physical sight*, which meant that **Judas** was in the courtyard during the trials.

He felt remorse...the *horror of his treason* was finally being felt as he began to *experience the intense and excruciating pain* that was unique to his profound *guilt*.

Only *eleven* other *men* in all of history have had the same *intimate, personal relationship* with the *incarnate Son of God* that **Judas** had. No man has ever been more exposed to God's *love, power, compassion, kindness, forgiveness*, and *grace*. Yet in those three years with Jesus, **Judas** persistently *resisted* and *rejected* God's *truth*...God's *grace*...and even God's *own Son*.

Judas' remorse was *not repentance of sin*! He only felt *regret* or *sorrow*...which led to *guilt* and *despair*. *Repentance* would lead to *forgiveness*.

He...returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders...While some of the Jewish religious leaders were *escorting* Jesus to **Pilate**, others *remained* in the Temple. It was there that **Judas** went hoping that by *returning* the **blood** money that he could *appease his guilt*.

Saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? See to that yourself!" (vs. 4)...Judas knew that he had **betrayed innocent blood**, which was an admission that Jesus wasn't worthy of death.

"Cursed is he who accepts a bribe to strike down an innocent person."

~Deuteronomy 27:25

The religious leaders *weren't sympathetic*...pointing out that it *wasn't their problem...it was his*.

Sin never brings the satisfaction it promises. Sin always...

- *Takes you farther than you wanted to go.*
- *Keeps you longer than you wanted to stay.*
- *Cost you more than you were willing to pay.*

The *basic essences of sin* is a *spirit of independence*.

What is that to us? See to that yourself!...The religious leaders of Israel were proficient at *laying heavy religious burdens* on the people...while *not lifting a finger to help relieve those burdens* (**Matthew 23:4**). They had no more concern for **Judas** than they had for Jesus. They were *cold-hearted* and *indifferent* to his remorse.

And he threw the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself (vs. 5)...

Temple sanctuary...Gk. *naos*, refers to the *inner holy place of the Temple* where *only priests were allowed to enter*. Judas intentionally threw the money into a place where *only the priests could retrieve it*. He threw it there *out of spite*...wanting them to feel guilty and *forcing the chief priests to handle* the **blood** money themselves.

He went away and hanged himself...Unlike **Peter**, Judas' remorse didn't lead him to *repentance*...so he took his own life as the *ultimate act of self-punishment*.

Death doesn't relieve guilt...it just makes it permanent. Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem.

III. THE TREACHERY: (vs. 6-10)

The chief priests took the pieces of silver and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the temple treasury, since it is the price of blood." (vs. 6)...

Judas' act of *throwing the betrayal money into the Temple* caused the religious leaders some problems. They didn't feel the money should be put back into the **Temple treasury** since it was **blood** money...money paid to bring about a man's death. But it's worth noting that they didn't have any hesitation about *taking the money out of the Temple treasury* in the first place in order to *give it to Judas to betray Jesus* (**Matthew 26:15**).

Also, by admitting that it was **blood** money...they were condemning themselves. By definition, **blood** money was *money illegitimately paid and received to falsely convict a man of a crime that led to his execution*.

And they conferred together and with the money bought the **Potter's Field** as a burial place for strangers (vs. 7)...To *appease their own conscience*, they came up with the idea of *buying a field* where potters had collected clay to use in their trade, and use it as a place to *bury strangers*. To separate the field from *any association with themselves*, they *dedicated the field* in **Judas'** name (**Acts 1:18**).

For this reason that field has been called the **Field of Blood** to this day (vs. 8)...It had come to be called this because it was *common knowledge* that it had been purchased with **blood** money. And by it being *known by that name*...the entire city *testified to Jesus' innocence...acknowledging* that He had been *falsely accused...falsely condemned...and falsely executed*.

Then that which was spoken through **Jeremiah** the prophet was fulfilled: "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one whose price had been set by the sons of Israel; And they gave them for the **Potter's Field**, as the Lord directed me." (vs.

9-10)...This is actually a quote from **Zachariah 13:11-12**...not from **Jeremiah**. The reason that **Matthew** would say that it **was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet** is found in the way the Old Testament was *divided* by the Jews. It was *divided into four sections... the Law...the History...the Psalms (poetry)...the Prophets*. In the rabbinical order of the prophetic books, **Jeremiah** was always *listed first*...with *the entire prophetic category* being *referred to as Jeremiah*.

LESSONS WE CAN LEARN:

- **No sin is beyond God's forgiveness**. God's *grace* leads us to *repentance*...and *repentance* brings *forgiveness*...and *forgiveness* brings *hope*.
- **How we respond to our sin shows our true heart**. Notice the different response of **Peter** verse **Judas**.