

"LORD, IS IT I?"

Matthew 26:20-25: "Now when the evening was come, He sat down with the twelve. And as they did eat, He said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to said unto Him, Lord, is it I? And He answered and said, he that dippeth his hand with Me in the dish, the same shall betray Me. The Son of Man goeth as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It had been good for that man if he had not been born. Then Judas, which betrayed Him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said."

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. Setting: Jerusalem, Last Supper, Thursday Night Before Crucifixion.

B. This Question Was Asked Eleven Times, Judas made the Twelfth.

C. In Accusing Them of Betrayal, Jesus Gave:

1. Judas a Chance to Repent.

2. The Other Disciples a Chance to Examine Their Own Lives.

(a) Philip Brooks has said that:

"It must have been that their life with Him had deepened the sense of the mystery of their lives. They had seen themselves, in their intercourse with Him, as capable of such more profound and various spiritual experience than they had thought possible before. And this possible life, this possible experience, had run in both directions, up and down. They had recognized a before unknown capacity for holiness, and they had seen also a before unknown power of wickedness. Their sluggishness had been broken up, and they had seen that they were capable of divine things. Their self-satisfied pride had been broken up, and they had seen that they were capable of brutal things. Heaven and hell had opened above their heads and under their feet." (Sermons p. 248).

D. This Question Brings Home the Possibility of Sin in Our Own Lives:

1. When we see deep and flagrant sin in some other man.

2. When we do some small sin and recognize the deep power of sinfulness, by which we do it.

3. When someone suspicions sin in our own lives.

4. When men say we are good, because we realize how bad we have the power to be.

5. When temptation opens to us our capacity to sin,

(a) "To resist temptation is never, I think, an exhilarating experience. We remember too vividly how near we came to yielding ... Job, as his wealth rolls back to him, takes it with thankful hands, but he cannot laugh over it

when he remembers how from the height of his misery he looked over into the possibility of cursing God." Philip Brooks, Ibid. p. 255.

E. This Question Tells of the Ignorance of Ourselves:

1. Sin can be entrenched in the heart and the heart be ignorant of it.

(a) Nathan was forced to say to David: "Thou art the man" I'm talking about.

(b) Macartney in his *Great Questions of the Bible* has said:

Q "The dim eye, the shaking arm, the declining strength, the vibrations of pain, betray the fact of physical sickness; but there is a strange secrecy and inscrutableness about the way sin works in the human heart. The rapidly flowing stream does not betray its power and speed until it strikes some obstruction. So the presence of sin and its powers are not recognized until they are resisted. No bad character is formed in a moment, and no man falls suddenly, however it may appear to outward observation." (page 147)

F. This Question Teaches the Need of Self-Examination:

1. Peter who was shocked and said, "Lord, Is It I?" betrayed his Lord in hours.

2. The Apostles didn't say "Is it he" or he, or he. But "Is It I?"

Q (a) "When you see others fall into sin, when you see others drifting away from Christ and out of His church, and bowing down to the idols of this world, pass no quick judgments upon them, but say to yourself: "Lord, Is It I?"

II. THIS IS A LESSON IN LOVE BETRAYED.

A. It is the Most Dastardly Act of All Time.

1. Judas sold his friend for 16 Dollars and Betrayed Him with a kiss.

(a) Is it possible that I could do the same?

III. MANKIND REACHES HIS GREATEST HEIGHTS IN LOVE RETURNED AND NOT BETRAYED.

A. Husband's Love - Example of Hosea in his great love for Gomer.

1. But think of the husbands who detest and betray their wives.

2. Fidelity is a thing of the past in parts of the world - What about America?

B. Mother's Love - The great example is Rizpah and her sons. (II Sam. 21:1-14)

1. II Sam. 21:10: "And Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered

neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night."

2. The author of *Chariots of Fire* has said:

"Rizpah left her home and journeyed to the barren hillside near Gibeon where the bodies of her two sons were hanging, exposed to the weather and to the birds and the beasts. There, hard by the tree or gallows upon which the bodies were hanging, Rizpah spread sackcloth on a great rock for a tent and took up her sad and lonely vigil, a vigil which lasted from the beginning of barley harvest until the first rain came at the end of the summer. Day and night she took her stand to defend the bodies of her sons. By day her waving cudgel drove off the circling birds and vultures, and by night her waving torch drove off the prowling jackal and wolf."

(a) As long as the world stands, people will remember the love of Rizpah.

(b) This great story of a mother's love may have inspired Kipling's:

If I were hanged on the highest hill,  
Mother o' mine, O Mother o' mine.  
I know whose love would follow me still,  
Mother o' mine, O Mother o' mine.

3. But, think of the mothers who betray the real meaning of the word.

4. Gibeonites asked that seven of Saul's sons be hanged. II Sam. 21:1-9

C. Daughter's Love - Is well illustrated in Ruth's love for Naomi.

1. Ruth 1:16-18: "And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me and more also, if ought but death part thee and me."

2. Think about the daughters who betray their trust and desert their mothers.

(Fay - Marion - Jim - Kathy - Leonard - Muriel - JoAnn - Helen)

(a) For a mother's love they return vinegar and gall.

D. Son's Love - The greatest example of all times is that of Jesus.

1. John 19:26-27: "When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, 'Woman, behold thy son.' Then saith He to the disciple, 'Behold, thy mother.' And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home."

NOTE: Even in the act of His crucifixion, Jesus still remembered His mother. No doubt

remembering what a wonderful mother she had been.

2. Think of the sons today who betray their parents and shame them by behavior.
- E. A Father's Love - Depicted in Luke 15: Love for the Prodigal. (Ran to meet him.)
1. David's love for Absalom - A son who betrayed his father.
    - (a) II Samuel 18:33: "And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom, would God I had died for thee, O Absalom my son, my son."
  2. Such a contrast between <sup>MANY</sup> modern-day fathers who betray their families.

IV. LET US NEVER BE GUILTY OF BETRAYING OUR MASTER TODAY.

- A. By Ungodly living.
- B. By shirking our obligations in His church.

V. CHRIST WHEN HE SAID ONE WOULD BETRAY HIM COULD HAVE TRACED THE OTHER'S FUTURE THAT NIGHT.

- A. Only One of the Twelve betrayed Him.
- B. The others, in spite of misunderstanding, lapses and falls, finally won.

Q "Suppose that Jesus that very night had sketched the future of all those disciples; suppose He had told them how James the brother of John, would stand fast, and be the first to win the martyr's crown when he laid down his head on Herod's gory block; suppose He had told them how Peter, in spite of the fall which He predicted for him that night, would repent, be restored, strengthen the faith of his brethren, go out to become the heroic leader of the early church, and win at length the martyr's crown; suppose He had told them how John, leaning there on His breast at the supper, would be the bravest among the apostles, would not love his life unto the death but would suffer banishment and imprisonment on the lonely Isle of Patmos, and there would be granted a vision of the future triumph of the church, and that he would write the five books which will guide and comfort the church until Christ shall come again; and suppose He had sketched the to us unknown history of the other eight apostles, what labors they would perform, what churches they would build; and that all the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, with only one missing, would be written on the foundation walls of the holy city - suppose He had done that; how each disciple then would have started with joy and wonder, and said, "Lord, Is It I?" (Macartney)

Though my cross may be hard to bear,  
Though my life may be filled with care,  
Though misfortune be mine to share,  
I'll never forsake my Lord."