



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of Dan Duncan

John 13: 18-30

John

"Departure into Darkness"

TRANSCRIPT

This morning, we are in John chapter 13 verses 18 through 30. Chapter 13 begins a new section in the Book of John. We enter into what is commonly called the Upper Room Discourse or the Farewell Discourse. These are the final teachings that the Lord delivered to His disciples the night of His arrest. He has given them a lesson on service. He's illustrated that by washing their feet, and He has told them to do that for one another. And if they do that, He has said in verse 17, they're blessed. Verse 18:

"I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats My bread has lifted up his heel against Me.' From now on I am telling you before it comes to pass, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am He." Literally, that is "I am." We'll comment briefly upon that in our lesson, but believe that I am. "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."

When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me." The disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking. There was reclining on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. So Simon Peter gestured to him, and said to him, "Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking." He, leaning back thus on Jesus' bosom, said to Him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus then answered, "That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him." So when He had dipped the morsel, He took and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon

Iscariot. After the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Therefore Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly." Now no one of those reclining at the table knew for what purpose He had said this to him. For some were supposing, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus was saying to him, "Buy the things we have need of for the feast."

John is probably referring to the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The Feast of Passover, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread occurred one right after the other. As the Passover ended, the Feast of Unleavened Bread began and lasted for seven days. And so, they were evidently assuming that He was going to go out and buy provisions for that feast that would soon follow.

Or else, that he should give something to the poor. So after receiving the morsel he went out immediately; and it was night.

May the Lord bless this reading of His word and bless our time of study in it together. Let's bow in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we do thank You for Your goodness to us. We thank You for all that we have from Your hand, which is much. Material things, we're blessed Father, perhaps as no people in the history of mankind has been blessed. We have an abundance. We thank You for that. Thank You for all the good things that You give us in the material realm, but we thank You most of all, Lord, for what we have in the spiritual realm, which is life everlasting in Jesus Christ. And so as we come this morning to the text in which we study the things that unfolded that last evening of His life, before His betrayal, His arrest, His trial and crucifixion, we pray that You would bless our time of study and help us to gain the meaning of the text. May it have its proper effect upon us. Prepare us for the week to come.

Judas went out and it was night. We live in a world in which it is perpetual night, spiritually. Yet, we live in this realm not as a part of the world, not as men and women of the night, but as sons of light, and may we shine as light in the midst of a dark and an evil age. May our time together this morning be to that end. May it prepare us to be men and women who witness for Jesus Christ, who represent Him well in both word and deed throughout the week to come. So teach us this morning, Father, this text of Scripture. We are so thankful that we're not dependent upon ourselves, that we are not dependent ultimately on an individual who stands in a

pulpit and teaches Your truth. That is the way in which You have designed Your church to be built up in the faith through gifted men who teach the Scriptures and preach the word faithfully. And we, by Your grace, have sought to do that in this place for so many years. And by Your grace, we will continue to do it. And yet, Father, it's not us in and of ourselves that are able to accomplish that and produce a good work. It is the Spirit of God who takes the truth and opens our hearts to receive it, and applies it to our lives, and gives us understanding. It helps us to see the meaning, enables us to do that, and applies it properly. We pray for that ministry above all things this morning, that it would take place within us. May the Spirit of God move among us, the Spirit of God whom You have placed within the hearts of every believer in Jesus Christ, and may He teach us Your truth. May we be receptive to Your truth, be receptive to His ministry in our hearts.

We pray for those who are sick, those who are discouraged, those who are experiencing trials in life, Father. We pray that You would give healing, give encouragement, use this time of difficulty as a time of recourse to You, of coming to the throne of grace, of seeking help in time of need and receiving it. We pray for those who are out of town during this time of spring break. We pray that You would bless them with a good time with their families and safe time. Bring them back safely to us. Give them protection wherever they are. And bless us, Father, as we are here not only in this hour, but this evening when we return, and we remember the Lord. What a privilege it is, Father, to come every Sunday evening, gather around Your table, partake of the elements, and in so doing, remember the Lord and what He's done, give testimony that we are dependent on Him daily for the spiritual nourishment that we have.

We thank You for His coming into this world and for the death that He died on our behalf, and thank You Father that He's coming again, His reward will be with Him, and He may come soon. We pray that that day will come soon, Father. In the meantime, we'll live lives of service for You and to one another. We would live lives in the meantime in a way that's faithful and helpful. Father we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

[Message] We live in a time and a day when tolerance is advocated. It's an odd kind of tolerance, one that accepts conflicting ideas and bad behavior. The word

"sin" for the most part has been banished from our vocabulary. It's a day in which anything goes. But there is, I think, one act that is still considered scandalous enough, even today to be thoroughly unacceptable, and that is the act of betrayal. British novelist EM Forster, whose novels have been turned into movies in the past few years, wrote an essay in 1939 entitled, "What I Believe," in which he stated, "If I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country." That is a despicable statement, but it's one that I quote because it shows that even among people with a twisted sense of virtue, there is a line that should not be crossed. Even with them, there is a sense of right and wrong about some things, and there is that line that they believe should not be crossed, which is the betrayal of a friend.

I think it has always been that way. Back in the Middle Ages when Dante wrote his divine comedy. In the "Inferno," he put traitors in the last circle of hell, those who betrayed their benefactors. They're pictured as frozen in ice. And among them are Lucifer and Judas. We come to Judas in our study this morning, and his final decision to depart from Christ to go out into the darkness and commit the worse betrayal of the best friend.

It is an astounding fact, isn't it? That a man could spend three years with Christ as Judas did, talk to Him, learn from Him, even see His glory, as John said the disciples did. Glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth, and then turn on Him. That is what Judas did. Took the other disciples completely by surprise. They never suspected Judas to be that kind of person, ever suspected such a deed from him, and that is one aspect of betrayal that makes it so ugly, that makes it so heinous, that makes it so shocking. It is unexpected because it occurs under the cover of friendship. When Caesar was betrayed and lay dying on the senate floor, his famous response was: "Et tu, Brute?" You too, Brutus? He was the last person Caesar expected to put a knife in him, but that is the nature of treason. That's the nature of betrayal. It is unexpected. It is a deception. It is committed by those who are trusted. And the betrayal of the Lord was unexpected by everyone.

Everyone but the Lord Himself. He knew it was coming and exposed it not to save Himself, but to strengthen His disciples. They were all gathered in the upper room in Jerusalem. They were celebrating the Passover feast. And He has been teaching them on humble service. He had washed their feet as an example, told them

that that was what they ought to do for each other and assured them that as they served one another, they would be blessed.

From the lesson on service, He moves almost imperceptibly though into a warning that there was one among them for whom the lesson was meaningless. He's already warned them that not everything was right within their circle of disciples. Back in chapter 6, He said, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil." Chapter 13 verse 10, just a few moments before the events that we study in our text, He said that, "All of them were clean," but then added, "not all of you." There was someone in their midst who was not like them. He was a disciple, but he was a devil. He had his feet washed, but he was not clean.

Now having instructed them to be servants of one another, He says, "I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen." He knew each one of them. He knew their hearts. The fact that one of them was a spiritual stranger, one of them would become a traitor, was not due to a mistake on His part. It was not because of some oversight by our Lord. He knew Judas from the beginning and explains that the reason He was among them was to fulfill Scripture. This was all part of God's plan. But it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled. "He who eats My bread has lifted up his heel against Me." That is a quote from Psalm 41 verse 9. A psalm of David, a psalm about betrayal in which David recounts the painful experience of being mocked by his enemies during a life threatening illness. It was a very painful experience for him, but the worst of it was the treason of a friend, a particular friend, a trusted friend, a person who he said had eaten his bread, who had received hospitality from the king of Israel.

Now in the Orient, hospitality was considered sacred. To receive it from the king was an especially great privilege. To be admitted to the king's table was to come under his special protection. It was to be counted among his friends, and to have his confidence. But this man had not only accepted David's hospitality; he then repaid it with ingratitude of the worst kind. David said he has lifted up his heel against me, which literally means he has made his heel great against me. It describes a violent kick, that of a beast, like a horse or a cow.

The other night, we had our dinner over here. One of our elders was limping around. I asked him what happened. He was out at his farm and one of the cows kicked him. He was feeling the pain from it. It happened suddenly. It happened out of nowhere, and that seems to be the picture that David is presenting to us here. This

kick, as he describes it, that came out of nowhere, was a surprise, and it gave him a terrible fall. The picture David gives is betrayal. It's like that. And it's a hard thing to recover from. It's like a hard kick in the stomach. It happened to David. It's not uncommon, is it? Happens in business when a man is cheated by his partner or an associate tries to undermine the influence of another person in the office in order to gain his position there. It happens in families when one spouse is unfaithful, and when children, in the midst of that, are hurt. It happens to the best of people. It happens to godly people. It happened to David. It happened to our Lord.

So the Lord understands when a wife is betrayed, when children suffer in a divorce. He understands when a friend turns on you. He's been there Himself and is sympathetic. He is a merciful and a faithful great high priest, the author of Hebrews tells us. Because of that, He can be relied upon to give help in such times of need. He won't abandon you. He did not abandon David. David prayed for grace in that psalm, and the psalm concludes with the confidence that God would deliver him, that God would vindicate him. But the psalm is more than an account of man's treachery and God's faithfulness. It's certainly that, and it gives that great encouragement, but the Lord interprets it beyond that, and He interpreted that psalm as a prophecy about himself. It foreshadowed events that would occur in His own life.

Now that's important in describing this text, this verse in Psalm 41 as a prophecy. We must understand that it is not a prophecy in the same sense that we normally think of prophecy, as an oracle given in an utterance of speech. This was prophecy in picture form, in what is usually referred to as typology. A type is a person or a thing or an event that has some correspondence to a future person or event. And in that resemblance, gives an illustration of what is to come. We have many, many types in the Old Testament. The Tabernacle, we're told in Hebrews chapter 8 and verse 5, is a type, is a shadow of heaven. You see the work of Christ portrayed in that, foreshadowed in that structure. You enter by the one door. There's only one way into the Tabernacle, which pictures heaven. Only one way into heaven, and that's through Jesus Christ, the door. And entering that one door, the first thing a person comes to is the altar of sacrifice, where the lamb was laid upon the altar, slain. That's a picture of the cross. We only enter through the blood of Christ. And from there, there's the brazen of washing filled with water. Priests would clean themselves.

And so the picture unfolds, a foreshadowing of the Lord Jesus Christ. Many, many types in the Old Testament of our Lord and His work. And here, the Lord recognized Himself and recognized His betrayal in this psalm. He identified with David because He too is a king. He is the ultimate king. He is the Messiah. He is Israel's hope. In fact, He is the hope of the world, the king of kings. The fact that David was betrayed by a person close to him signaled that the Lord would be betrayed by a person close to Him. A person in David's life who corresponds with Judas is probably the man, Ahithophel, who was David's trusted counselor, his brilliant advisor. And if that is the case, then the historical context of Psalm 41 is most likely the rebellion of Absalom, David's son. The account of it is given in 2 Samuel chapters 15 through 18. Early in the revolt, Ahithophel joined Absalom against his friend David. And as you read the account in those early chapters of it, you see that it grew in strength. Men from all over Israel came to join Absalom in his revolt against his father David. And the revolt, the rebellion would have succeeded except that at the critical moment, the counsel of Ahithophel was rejected. He gave the correct counsel, but God frustrated it through the counsel of another, through Hushai. At that moment, Ahithophel knew that the rebellion was a lost cause, and so he quit. He left.

We read, the text says that he saddled his donkey, he went to his home, he put his house in order, and hanged himself. Correspondence with Judas is obvious. He was a close associate with our Lord. He ate His bread. He ate the Passover meal with Him, and Judas also had a bad end. He too hanged himself. The story of Judas was written in the life of Ahithophel. He was a type of Judas. There were remarkable resemblances between these two men.

But there is also a significant difference. David was taken by surprise. He writes of that in Psalm 41 verse 9. Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me. But in quoting that, the Lord does not say, "My close friend in whom I trusted," but simply, "He who eats My bread." He left off that portion of the quotation because He did not trust Judas. He knew Judas' heart from the beginning. He knew how all of these events would occur, how all of it would unfold. In fact, He was in complete control of those events all evening long, and they would all work to the benefit of His disciples and the strengthening of their faith.

His statement in verse 19 makes that clear. He told them about the coming betrayal before it happened so that, He said, "when it does occur, you may believe that I am He." Or literally, that I am, which calls to mind the name of God. I am who I am. It's found in Exodus chapter 3 and verse 14. We've seen it throughout our study of the Gospel of John, the great I am statements. And here He comes back to that again so that you may know that I am, that I am Yahweh, that I am Jehovah, that I am the Messiah. Christ's knowledge of the future was proof of that, proof that He was the Messiah, that He is the very one whom John has written this book to demonstrate that He is the Son of God, and that believing in Him, you might have life and have it eternally. He demonstrates that, gives proof of that by the fact that He knows the future. He was not surprised by the betrayal. And when later on that evening the soldiers came and they arrested Him, He was not surprised by that either. He did not fall helplessly into the hands of His captors. He saw it all. It was all part of the plan. And so, even Judas' treachery would be made to serve the Lord's purpose, and ultimately strengthen the faith of the disciples, which was about to be shaken to its foundation.

Later on in the evening, the Lord will quote from Zechariah chapter 13 and verse 7. John does not cite that, but Mark does in chapter 14 where God commands the sword to smite the shepherd. When the Lord quotes it, He quotes it as God doing it. I will smite the shepherd and scatter the sheep. That was about to happen a few hours hence. Everything of the world would be put in disarray. The sheep would be scattered, the shepherd would be taken away, and they would be greatly confused. But they would have this to go back on. This would remind them throughout their lives of who the Lord Jesus Christ is when they come into difficulty. He is the one who told them the things that would happen before they ever happened. He knows the end from the beginning because of who He is. And everything unfolded just as He planned. This would strengthen their faith in moments of weakness.

Then He encouraged them in verse 20 by speaking of the future beyond the cross. Betrayal would not bring things to an end. God's work cannot be frustrated. "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me." In other words, the Lord's mission would not fail. The mission would go on. It would go forward. They would be sent out, and they would have great honor. They would be God's ambassadors. Those who

receive them would be as though they were receive Christ Himself because they were Christ's ambassadors. And in receiving Christ Himself and receiving them, those people were receiving God Himself. 'Cause to receive Christ is to receive the Father. What a great privilege that is. So in saying that to these men, before this great disturbance takes place, before they are scattered as sheep, He is saying them: all is not lost. Just as David was vindicated in Psalm 41, the Lord will be vindicated, and there is a glorious future of service ahead for these disciples.

Now, that's the encouraging news that He gives. And it was encouraging news. But having given that, the concern of the moment, the concern of that evening weighed heavily on the Lord, and John writes that when He had said this, He became troubled in spirit. Jesus is the I am. But He was not only God, He was God manifest in the flesh. He was also man, and in His human spirit, He was deeply grieved over what He had revealed. One of His own, one of the twelve was a traitor. Up to this point in the evening, He had spoken to them rather indirectly about this subject. He had indicated that something was wrong among them. One of them was not clean, that there was some treachery afoot within the circle of the twelve. But now, the Lord tightens the circle, so to speak, around the traitor. He becomes much more specific. He said, "One of you will betray Me." The disciples were stunned. They began looking at one another, John writes, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking. Matthew records the response of the disciples also and he writes that they were deeply grieved. And each one said, "Surely not I, Lord." What is significant about that, about what Matthew records is that they had self-doubt. When they heard the news, they didn't begin to look across the table and point at the other one and say, "I suspect you." They suspected themselves. They questioned themselves. They were concerned about themselves because they knew that they were weak in faith, so they didn't trust themselves.

That can be a healthy attitude. It can also be an unhealthy attitude if it's not arrested properly and proper response is not given to it. But I think it is a healthy attitude when we recognize our weakness. And in recognizing our weakness, recognizing that, as Abraham said, we are dust and ashes, we're nothing in and of ourselves, that we then draw nearer to the Lord. That's a healthy response to such a thing. These men all recognize that they were weak, as we all should. But what also is significant is that when the Lord said, "One of you will be tray Me." All eyes did

not turn to Judas. No one suspected him. We might image Judas to have been sort of dark, nefarious looking figure sitting at the end of the table. Not really a part of things, always sort of on the outside. That's the way he's often pictured in paintings of the medieval days and the renaissance. Just the other day, I looked at Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting of this, the fresco in Milan of the Last Supper, and it's a complete misrepresentation of what happened. They aren't reclining at the table; they're all sitting up and they're sitting on one side rather than around the table. And at the end of the table is Judas and you can recognize Judas because he's the ugliest one of the bunch. He has a hook nose and he's obviously Judas.

That was not the case. That's not the reality. He was very much a part of things. He was very well thought of. In fact, I imagine he was the most handsome of the bunch. He was the most sophisticated. Iscariot means "son of Keriyioth," which was a village south of Hebron, which would put him in the tribe of Judah. He was a man of Judah. He was from the sophisticated south. South is sophisticated, isn't it? That's where he was from. He was the sophisticated one among this circle of Galilean fishermen and tax collectors, and so they looked up to him. That's very obvious from the fact that he was their treasurer. He was the one who carried the money box. He was a man that they all trusted with their finances, a man who appeared to be reliable, who didn't realize at the time, as John says in chapter 12, that he was pilfering from the box. He was a thief.

That's the flaw in his character. He was a thief. The god that he worshipped was the god Mammon, not the Lord Jesus Christ. But he appeared to them to be a genuine follower of Jesus. What that shows is that the false exists among the true. Or as the Lord put it in a parable in Matthew 13, there are tares among the wheat. Unbelievers will exist in a local church. They don't exist as unbelievers. Maybe some of those, but the problem is: there are men and women who exist within the church, who profess faith, who truly aren't of the faithful. Now, it's not for us to weed them out. The Lord warns against that in that parable. We can't see into the hearts of people. The danger is, as the Lord warns, that in trying to do that, the good will be uprooted with the bad. The good will be injured in the process. What we are to do as a church is to be pure in doctrine and pure in practice. Preach the gospel to the congregation as well as to the world because there are those in the congregation that

aren't truly born again, and perhaps by the grace of God, they'll be quick with the gospel and come to faith.

God will cleanse His church, as the Lord did His disciples. They could not see into Judas' heart. From all outward appearances, he seemed real. He acted as shocked as they were and seemed to project the same devotion to Jesus as the other disciples did. But he couldn't quite do it. There was a difference. Each of the other disciples, according to Matthew, said surely not I, Lord. Judas said, "Surely, it is not I, rabbi." It was as though he couldn't call Jesus, Lord. His response was a mask. He was a hypocrite speaking from under that mask. And while the other disciples couldn't see under it, couldn't see the traitor inside, the Lord could. The Lord did. Judas couldn't deceive Him. He sees under every mask and would now unmask Judas, though not directly. You might've expected the Lord to say, "No, it's not you. No, it's not you. It's him." He doesn't do that. He doesn't answer their question, "Lord, is it I?" And so Peter tried an indirect approach. Peter always manages to appear in these kinds of circumstances, and he gestured to John to find out from the Lord who this traitor was.

John, we read, was reclining with his head on Jesus' chest, which means that he would've been on the Lord's right side while Peter was evidently some distance away across the table. John identifies himself not by name. We never read of John's name in the Gospel of John. He's the one disciple whose name isn't mentioned, which suggests that he's the author of this book. He identifies himself as the one whom Jesus loved, not because he was arrogant, not because Jesus loved him more than the others. In fact, all of what John indicates about himself is that he was humble. He doesn't mention his name. It's as though he's saying, "My name's not important. I'm not important. The only thing that's important about me is my voice because I proclaim the one who is important, and that's the Lord Jesus Christ." And here, he speaks of himself as the one whom Jesus loved, because he's amazed at the grace that he's received. He's the one that Jesus loved. As we all should be amazed. And Jesus certainly did love him. He gave him a special place at His right side.

And taking advantage of his nearness to the Lord, he leaned his head back and he said, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered, apparently in a voice quiet enough for only John to hear. "It is the one whom I give the morsel." Then we read, when He had dipped the morsel, He took and gave it to Judas the son of Simon Iscariot. It was

a custom to do that. It was a custom for the host of a feast to dip a sop or dip a morsel of bread in the common bowl. There would be bowls on the table and they would each dip into it. And the host would do that and give it to a guest at the table to honor that person, or to show a mark of friendship to that individual.

In this case, a morsel was probably a piece of matzo, what we partake of Sunday evening at the Lord's supper, or the unleavened bread, dipped in the bitter herbs of the Passover meal. The fact that Judas was close enough that the Lord was able to easily give him the morsel and close enough so that the Lord could speak to him privately without being overheard indicates that He was very close to the Lord, probably at His left side, which is the place of honor. John was at the right side, which is the place of intimacy, next to the Lord's heart. Judas, interestingly enough, was at His back, but in the place of honor.

And so, it seems that all of this, the place that was given to him at the table, the morsel that was given to him as a sign of friendship. All of that was done as a last appeal by the Lord to Judas to turn him from his treachery.

Now, if that is so, and I believe that it is, then this is an example of the love and the patience of the Lord Jesus Christ. We speak a lot about tolerance today. But true tolerance is seen in Jesus Christ in what He did. He wasn't indifferent towards sin. He wasn't indifferent toward errors. We go into chapter 14. We'll come to that great statement in verse 6. I am the way and the truth and the life. No man comes into the Father but through Me. There's only one way to the Father. Now, that is not a kind of tolerance that we hear of today, that says there is only one way to God, and that's through Christ. Not many ways. He was intolerant of error. He was intolerant of other religions. He was intolerant of sin. When He saw it, He dealt with it. When He saw those self-righteous Pharisees filling the temple with a bizarre and selling and exchanging money and all of that, He whipped them out of the place. He was intolerant of sin.

But, He was tolerant of sinners. He was long suffering and patient with evil men, dealing with them in grace, and kindness, and giving them truth, just as He does with each of us, who are His own. We disobey constantly. We continually go astray. We continually go our own way, but the Lord is patient with us. And we see His patience here. His patience with one who was not His own. If He is patient with one who is not His own, how much more patient will He be with us. Never lets us go.

Never gives up on us. And here we see His kindness and His patience to Judas in giving this last opportunity for Him to turn from evil. It's done quietly. The other disciples probably didn't hear what He said to John. They would've understand the morsel to have been a gift of honor.

So, his identity as the traitor was kept from them. But Judas knew that Jesus knew. He was faced with a choice. This was a moment of decision for Judas. To go forward with his plan, or abandon it. Repent, and seek forgiveness from Christ. Judas received this final gesture of kindness from the Lord. He took the morsel. But rather than breaking his heart, it hardened him in his resolve. At that point, we read, "Satan entered into him." It's the first place in the Book of John that the name of the word "Satan" appears. And now he comes into Judas, and so knowing that Judas had chosen to go his own way, that repentance was an impossibility, Jesus said to him in a voice loud enough for everyone to hear, "What you do, do quickly."

At that point, the Lord was finished with Judas. He sent him out to do the business that Judas was determined to do, showing that it was the Lord who was in control in this situation. The Lord could've stopped Judas. He could have prevented all of this from happening. He didn't do that, making it clear that no one would take the Lord's life from Him. He would freely, willingly, give it up. We see that here. We see it later in the garden when the arresting party comes in, and they seek Jesus, and He says, "I am." And when He says that, they fall down.

Those simple words made them fall down before Him. Now, had He wanted to, He could've spoken more words and eliminated them all together. As He told Peter, He could've called down legions of angels from heaven to stop that from happening. It was not His will to stop it. No one took His life from Him. He willingly gave it up. And so when He goes to the cross, He goes voluntarily, as a sacrifice for our sins.

So, at Christ's command, Judas went out to actually accomplish the Lord's will and serve God's purpose. That is the wisdom of God. You see the wisdom of God in such circumstances as this, that He even makes His enemies to serve Him. Nothing surprises the Lord. The God that we serve is in absolute, complete control. We may not understand things. They may surprise us. Nothing surprises Him. He makes His enemies serve Him. Nothing can frustrate His plan and purpose.

Now, the disciples were unaware of all of this. They were unaware of what was happening. Since Judas was the treasurer, they assumed that the Lord had sent him out on some mission, perhaps to give alms to the poor. That was commonly done during the Feast of Passover, or to buy the needed things for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which began on the night of the Passover, just as the Passover meal ended. John would've known, though. In fact, he followed Judas with his eyes as he left the room and went out into the night. His departure left an indelible impression on John's mind. Peter also probably knew, and so you wonder why neither of these men did anything to stop Judas. Why didn't they spring from the table and arrest him, keep him from going out the door?

The reason may have been because the Lord did nothing to stop him. They heard the Lord, perhaps, give the command, and Judas went forward, and so they weren't going to prevent what the Lord had instructed him to do. But also, they were probably shocked by the revelation that Judas was the traitor, and it takes a moment to recover from the unexpected.

Whatever the human reason was, this was the will of God. It had been prophesied. It had been ordained. It was part of God's plan. And so, Judas made his exit unhindered, and John gives a description of it. He writes, "He went out immediately and it was night." It was the Passover, remember, so the moon was full, but it wasn't the moonlight that John noticed. It was the darkness that quickly swallowed up Judas. And John didn't miss the symbolism in that. Not only was it night outside the room, but it was night inside the soul of Judas. He had joined the darkness. He had joined the forces of evil. He had gone back into his native element, as he was a child of the darkness. And in going into the darkness, he had departed into the outer darkness.

Augustin wrote, "It was, however, night, and he who departed was night." What a tragic end for a man so privileged, to be with the light of the world, receive kindness from Him, and then depart into the darkness of the world. And you wonder: how could that happen? Well, John prepares us for so much throughout this gospel. And as you go back to chapter 3, John writes that men love the darkness rather than the light, for their deeds were evil. It's not that they tolerate the darkness. They love the darkness. That is man, naturally. That is us in our natural state. We don't love the light. We don't love the truth. We love the darkness, and that means we need

grace to change our hearts, to give us a love for truth, to enable us to understand and believe. And grace is God's work. It's not ours. You can't manufacture grace. We must look to God and God alone for grace.

Well, someone might say, well, then obviously Judas wasn't given grace. God left him in his darkness. In fact, the Lord says, you'll remember in John chapter 6 and verse 44, "No one can come to Me unless the Father draws them, and I will raise them up in the last day." That's true. For Judas to come, he must be brought. He didn't come, so obviously he was not brought. He was not chosen. So in light of that, someone might say well then, can we really say this was Judas' fault? How can we fault Judas for being in the darkness when he wasn't brought out of it?

Someone might make that objection, and I'm sure many have thought that. But nowhere in the Bible does sovereign grace preclude human responsibility. They are both taught. Read the Word of God, the sovereign grace is clear. Read Romans 9, the sovereign grace is clear, and the responsibility of man is clear. Judas had many opportunities. He lived with the light of the world. Many opportunities all through those three years, and he had special opportunity that last night with that loving appeal from Jesus. He resisted it. Judas was no robot. He understood what was happening. He knew that Christ knew what was in him. He knew what he was going to do, and he did it deliberately because he wanted to do it. He was a man who was driven by greed. Some people try to assign a noble purpose to what Judas did. He went out to try to force Christ's hand and forming a revolution and bringing the kingdom. But it was nothing of the kind. At least, we have no evidence of that. That's pure speculation.

The evidence that we have on Judas is he was a greedy man. He loved money. He was a thief. That's what drove him. He valued our Lord at 30 pieces of silver, and he wanted to cash in. So he hardened himself to Christ. And in so doing, he opened himself up to Satan, who took full possession of him. He rushed out into the darkness. The case of Judas reminds me somewhat of the legend of Faustus, who struck a bargain with the devil. The agreement in that legend was that for 24 years, the devil would be Faustus' servant, and he would give him his every wish. And so the story unfolds with him getting all the things that he wants. But the end comes, and at the end of that time, the bargain was the devil would come and claim his soul.

Christopher Marlowe's play, "Doctor Faustus," when the end does come, Faustus sees the terrible bargain that he has made, and he begins to grieve over it. He prays that time would stand still, that midnight, that fateful hour would not come, so that he might repent and save his soul. But it doesn't happen. And in despair, he says, "The stars move still. Time runs. The clock will strike. The devil will come. And Faustus must be damned."

The theology of the story is poor. But it does make a point, and that is: time does run out for everyone, and there is a day of reckoning. There are opportunities to repent. There are opportunities to believe, but there may come a time when repentance is impossible. There will come a time when time runs on and runs out.

A time came for Judas. There came a time when repentance for him was impossible. And those who come to the end unrepentant, they will depart into eternal night. They must be damned.

So what should a person do who, like Judas, is an unbeliever among believers? There's only one thing to do, and that is to seek the grace of God. Ask God for His mercy and believe in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not enough to be in the company of the saints. It's not enough to listen to the preaching of God's word. That is important. That is a blessing, but truth must be joined with faith.

Judas never did that. Judas never believed. And in the end, he willfully turned away from the truth and went out into the darkness. There will be people like that. There will be people who come through this place where the Word of God is taught, or come through other churches where the Word of God is taught, and they will listen for a time and they'll even show an interest for a time. But then they'll fall away. They'll turn away from it.

If you are here in that condition, don't do that. Recognize your unbelief, that you are a sinner in need of a Savior, and that the Savior is Jesus Christ, and turn to Him. This is an offer of the gospel, that Christ has died in the place of sinners, and all who believe in Him receive eternal life and forgiveness for Him. And if that is going out to you as an unbeliever, consider it to be the sop, the morsel that Christ offered to Judas. It may be the last opportunity to turn to Him. Don't refuse it. Trust in Christ, come to Him, and He will receive you. That's His promise. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me, I will certainly not cast out.

He cannot break His promises. He is the I am, the Son of God, the Godman. Those who come to Him receive forgiveness of sins and life everlasting. It is eternal life, and it is a secure life. No one can snatch us out of His hand. Eternally secure. And no enemy can defeat us in this life. He will never abandon us. He will never turn on us. He will never betray us or betray His promises. He is always faithful. Men will fail us. They certainly will, but Christ never does. May God help you to come to Him, and may He encourage all of us who have come to Him with the thought that this is a faithful Savior. This is an all-sufficient Savior, to live a life that's pleasing to Him. May God help us to do that, to go out into this world, which is night, spiritually, and shine as lights in the midst of it. Let's stand now for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we do thank You that You sent Your Son into this fallen world and that He came to do far more than be an example, though He certainly was a great example to us, an example of love, an example of patience, an example of the purest kind of tolerance, an example of perfection. We see what we are to be in Him. And yet, in seeing that, we see what we can never be in and of ourselves. We see Christ. And as we see Him as an example, we are condemned by that example. We don't measure up. So we thank You that You sent Your Son into the world not merely to be an example that condemns us, but to be our Savior, one who dies for us.