

Quitting Is For Cowards

Matthew 26:14-16

Father's Day Sermon - Bob Tucker

Preface

A lot of men from my generation are named "Bob." Many TV commercials like to use the unnoticeable name of "Bob." Of course we've all seen the silly one of the grinning Bob who takes some kind of "all natural male enhancement pills."

I often joke that back in the 50s and 60s, the nurse would come in the hospital room with the birth papers and ask a mother what she wanted to name her newborn son. If the exhausted mother said I don't care what you name it, they had a checkbox on the form beside the name "Bob."

Of course, my name is Bob but it could be a lot worse. My mother could have named me Judas. But no one names their child Judas because of the stigma associated with that name.

When we think of the name Judas, we immediately think of his betrayal of Jesus. Let's revisit the sad truth about Judas.

Scripture

¹⁴ Then one of the Twelve—the one called Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests ¹⁵ and asked, "What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" So they counted out for him thirty silver coins. ¹⁶From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over. Matthew 26:14-16 NIV

Introduction

Illus: In 1982 the United Kingdom and Argentina fought a 74 day war over the Falkland Islands. The British won the brief conflict but not without substantial embarrassment. During the conflict, the 3,500 ton destroyer HMS Sheffield was sunk by a French made Exocet missile. The Sheffield's anti-missile system detected the incoming Exocet missile. However, it did not respond with an alarm because the computer system had been programmed to see French Expcets as friendly fire missiles. **The Sheffield was sunk by a missile that it saw coming and could have evaded but it mistook an enemy for a friend.**

Sometimes in our lives, we mistake the enemy for a friend. We believe someone is supportive of us but we later discover they desire to undermine our efforts. The consequences are often severe and the hurt can last a lifetime.

Perhaps you are thinking of someone now who betrayed your trust; a "back-stabber" if you will. Like Judas, they presented a supportive front but behind the scene they were really not your friend. No one likes a betraying Judas.

But wait a moment. Just how good of a friend are we to Jesus?

Illus: Pam and I have a couple with whom we have been friends for many years. They invited us to go to Pensacola Friday night to celebrate their anniversary with them at some new fangled expensive restaurant. It is a fondue restaurant. Their slogan is "Dip into something different." **It was different alright.** We had to do all the cooking (and I use that term loosely) right at the table; ourselves. They bring out the courses and you use these little spears to stick your food in the pot. We had little dabs of chicken, steak, pork and lobster. Of course once you stuck them in that same boiling pot of seasoning, they all tasted the same. **I felt like I was at a weenie roast.** Since we were doing all the work ourselves, I asked the waitress if we were going to **have to wash our own dishes.** The desert was nice, they bring you all these different things and you dip them in chocolate. My friend dripped chocolate all down his shirt and I said, **"Hey look, you fondued all over yourself."**

We dipped into something different alright. We wasted a lot of money at a **"do-it-yourself" restaurant.** But you know what, **we had a blast!** We had a great time laughing at ourselves and the process. The reason it was so enjoyable was that we were with friends; good Christian friends.

I believe God wants our relationship with Christ to be that way; a joy! Our relationship with Christ should be so special that it is like a strong friendship. Our relationship with Christ should be rewarding and downright fun.

We live in a day when too many men are selling out Jesus Christ. Like Judas, many of us are not loyal friends to Christ. Like Judas, too many quit on God and find their relationship with Christ distant at best.

I would like for you to consider two important questions.

1. Do you honor Christ with your life?

Too often we profess to be a Christian but very little about our life reflects Christ as Lord.

Judas was afforded all the benefits of being a disciple. Like the others, he was privy to the private and intimate conversations with Jesus. Like the other disciples, Judas did not live a life of luxury or wealth but always had food to eat and clothes to wear. He was treated with the same respect as the other disciples.

Yet Judas chose to betray our Lord. Perhaps Judas could have been a great preacher like Peter or missionary like Paul. Like John and Mark, he could have written a gospel of his time with Jesus. Instead, Judas chose to betray the friendship and trust of Jesus.

The Bible says it would have been better if he had never been born. In other words, his life was so extremely counterproductive that it was of negative impact for Christ.

Could Judas have become like one of the Sons of Thunder (James & John)? We will never know because Judas quit. And quitting is the cowardly thing to do. Too often, Christians quit on God when they don't get the immediate results they want.

Illus: When our children were young and first started participating in sports, they sometimes wanted to quit because it was challenging and they felt inferior to the other kids. We would not allow them to quit. We would agree if they didn't want to play next year that would be their choice. But they had to finish whatever they started.

Quitting is for cowards. Standing in the pocket and delivering the pass at the last second when you have six 300 pound linebackers charging to tackle you is God's way.

Courage in the midst of adversity is God's way.

Standing up for the truth is God's way.

Keeping your faith in the face of difficulty and fear is God's way.

Staying strong and honoring Jesus is God's way.

Not quitting is God's way!

Illus: I hear men speak all the time of their childhood relationship with God. They tell me where they were baptized and how their mother brought them to church when they were a child. I couldn't contain myself one day when a man was giving me that

spill. I responded, "There is only one problem. Everything you are telling me is past tense. What about your relationship with Christ today? Where does Christ stand in your life now?" I wanted to ask, "When did you become a quitter?"

The truth is that many people are quitters; cowards when it comes to living the Christian life. Because they do not get the instant response they expect, they give up and settle for quitting.

Paul says, "For me to live is Christ, to die is gain." We are called to live our lives to the glory of Jesus Christ. We are called to serve and glorify Him in everything we do.

Please ask yourself this simple question. When is the last time you sacrificed something for the glory of Christ? When have you sacrificed time, money or inconvenience for your Lord? For many of you, you couldn't even make it to Sunday School, let alone really participate in Bible study. For some, we are just lucky to have you here today.

Too many men today profess to be Christians but no longer is Christ Lord of their life. **We must not be quitters. We must not be cowards. We must live our lives in honor of our Lord!**

2. Are you living in a sea of regrets?

In some moment of twisted thinking, Judas thought 30 pieces of silver was fair compensation for betraying Jesus. It didn't take long for the regret to overcome Judas and lead him to suicide.

Illus: The famous writer Antoine De Saint-Exupery, author of such works as: The Little Prince, was called back into active duty with the French Air Force, on July 31, 1944. While flying an unarmed observation mission, his plane was shot down by a young German flyer, and the great French writer was killed. The young German pilot who shot down Saint-Exupery, had been in the process of writing his Doctoral dissertation, on the life and works of De Saint-Exupery. When the German learned who he had shot down, he suffered an emotional breakdown and had to be put into a psychiatric hospital. All he could do, was repeat over and over and over, "I have killed my master! I have killed my master!"

When we betray Christ; when we choose not to live for him, we betray the master. Too often we put the wrong things ahead of Christ and later wallow in our guilt and regrets of our actions.

Quote: John Whittier wrote, "Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: "What might have been!"

The tragedy of Judas' life is not that he betrayed Christ; the tragedy is that he did not repent. Judas missed the experience of forgiveness at the cross.

Many good people miss the whole point of the cross.

The cross is the place to bring our guilt and regrets.

The cross is the place where we leave the mistakes of the past and rise to a new life in Christ.

The cross is where the battle within gets won.

The cross is where real forgiveness can be found.

We need not allow regrets to consume our life. God has made provisions through the cross for a new start.

My wife likes to say, "We may get off to a bad start but with Christ in our life, we can have an amazing finish."

Another man in the New Testament betrayed or denied Christ, not once but three times. But Peter discovered the power of the cross. Peter repented, found forgiveness and became a great servant of the Lord.

Christ's love can penetrate right through our guilt and regrets. It can turn shame into glory for Him.

Illus: Matilda Kaye Crabtree was a typical fun-loving 14 year old girl, living in West Monroe, Louisiana. She loved to scare her Dad as a joke, but she made a tragic mistake a few years ago. She had planned to sleep over at a friend's house; but she got into an argument with her friend over the phone and stayed home. When she heard her parents drive into the driveway that night, she hid in a closet and when her parents came inside, she made scary noises from the closet, frightening her parents to death. Her father grabbed his pistol from a drawer and went to investigate. When she opened the door and shouted "Boo!" he fired the gun hitting Matilda in the neck. She died within 12 minutes. Her final words were: "I love you, daddy!"

God loves you in spite of anything you have done. God does not desire for us to live in a sea of regrets. Victory is ours for the seeking at the cross.

Conclusion

Illus: It's Father's Day and this is a man's sermon so I will allow my illustration to be a bit on the raw side. This past week I was sitting in rest room stall at the new Lowe's store. As I looked around, there was writing all over the stall walls. I thought to myself, "How could someone be so disgraceful to write all over the walls of this nice brand new store?" I reasoned that only the lowest of persons could be so disrespectful and write such filth.

Then I realized, we often do the same thing with our lives. While we claim to be Christians, our lives tell a different story. We shame God's love with disgraceful language and actions.

Perhaps you have not been loyal to Christ your savior.

Perhaps your life has betrayed or denied Jesus.

Are you living in a sea of regrets?

Jesus says to you today, "I love you my son."

Come to the cross and experience my cleansing.