

Thursday, April 9

MAUNDY THURSDAY

“For there to be betrayal, there would have to have been trust first.”

Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games*

“Stab the body and it heals, but injure the heart and the wound lasts a lifetime.”

Mineko Iwasaki

Luke 22:3-4 *Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve. He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them.*

Betrayal. What’s the first image that comes to mind? For those of us who are Christians, it no doubt is Judas. He represents to us the all-time definition of duplicity.

Betrayal is one the most devastating emotional losses a person can experience. To be betrayed means your trust in a friend was destroyed. An enemy doesn’t betray you, only a friend does.

It’s been written, “Rejection may cause a wound, but betrayal pours salt in it to make it sting. Failure may knock you off your feet, but betrayal kicks you while you are down. Criticism and insult hurt your pride, but betrayal breaks your heart.”

We’ve all had a time(s) when we thought a friend(s) had our back, only to find out the reason they had our back was to stab it. And the weapon they use could include criticism, gossip, a lie, failing to protect your reputation, questioning your motive and publicly sharing their concern to influence others, sabotaging a dream, withdrawing support, or becoming silent. Scripture records the very personal nature of betrayal.

Luke 22:47-48 *While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him, but Jesus said to him, “Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?”*

It’s easy for me to think that I wouldn’t have failed or abandoned Jesus. But is that true? Are there ways that Christians can betray Jesus today (and I don’t mean lose one’s salvation)? As I reflected, here’s what I discovered my *kiss* sometimes consists of:

I can trust in my good deeds/works/actions to add security to what Christ already accomplished on the cross. I think that my good behavior grants me favorable standing before the throne of God. And yet . . .

Ephesians 2:8-9 *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

I can sin because I assume that I can pray myself out of it. And yet . . .

Romans 6:1-2 *Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? Of course not!*

I can choose not to carry out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) or the Great Command (John 13:35) and not be much concerned. And yet . . .

John 14:15 *If you love me, you will obey what I command.*

I'm not suggesting you micromanage every detail of your life or self-quarantine until you're positive your motives are pure. The answer is simple: love Jesus. Judas didn't love Jesus, only the idea of what he thought Jesus should be. And when Jesus didn't fulfill his expectations he spiraled downward into betrayal.

We can't love Jesus because of what we want Him to do for us, we're to love Him because of who He is.

On this Maundy Thursday, ask yourself how your *kiss* might reflect something other than what Jesus would have you to be and do. And then . . .

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

And don't forget this: Jesus taught (John 15:13) *Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.* He then calls His disciples - you/us - His *friends* (John 15:14-15), and shortly thereafter He sacrificed His life for His friends - you/us.

By faith in Christ you are the blessed recipient of *greater love*.