

# "LESSONS FROM A LOSER"

## John 13:18-20

Sonya Jones was a top contestant on NBC's Reality TV Show, *The Biggest Loser*. She was a physical education teacher who should have been modeling health and fitness. She felt like a hypocrite as she weighed nearly 300 pounds in 2014. Six months later, she stepped onto the scales and she had dropped a whopping 144 pounds (50.88% of her total body weight). She came within a fraction of a pound of winning the competition and taking home the \$250,000 prize. Sonya wrote a best-selling book entitled, **44 Lessons From a Loser: Navigating Life Through Laughter, Prayer, and the Occasional Throat Punch**.

Judas Iscariot was a disciple of Jesus. I wish I could tell you that he is famous because he was a great preacher and a great missionary. However, he is famous today because he was a loser in every sense of the word. This is the man who betrayed the Son of God. Open your Bible to John 13. I want you to see how the

Holy Spirit inspired John to frame this story about Jesus and Judas.

John, the apostle of our Lord, wrote his gospel around 85 A.D. which was about 50 years after the life, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus took place. He revealed the character of Judas Iscariot that ultimately led up to his betrayal of Lord he professed to believe in...

**John 6:70–71... Jesus answered them, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?" 71 Now He meant Judas *the son* of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him.**

**John 12:4–6... But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, said, 5 "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and given to poor people?" 6 Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it.**

**John 13:1–2... Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to**

**the end. 2 During supper, *the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him...***

Today, I want to share with a message entitled,  
"Lessons From A Loser."

**John 13:18-20... "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.'* 19 "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*. 20 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."**

"I know the ones I have chosen"— Jesus wanted the disciples to know that He was not surprised by the betrayal that would soon happen.

"He who eats My bread has lifted up his heel against me"—Jesus was quoting from Psalm 41:9. In Hebrew culture, the code of hospitality meant that if one *eats bread with the host* and afterward *lifts up his heel against him*, it was considered a great betrayal, treachery, and disrespect.

"He who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me"— Jesus reminded His disciples that His work was *not* finished, and they would be sent out to complete His mission. He also wanted Judas to know that rejecting Him meant rejecting God the Father who sent Him.

**John 13:21... 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."**

"He became ***troubled*** in spirit"— This strong word speaks of severe emotional and spiritual turmoil. Jesus knew that...

- Judas would betray Him
- Peter would deny Him three times
- He would die on the cross for our sins.

No wonder He was troubled in spirit!

**"One of you will betray Me"**— By revealing that one of them was a traitor, Jesus showed that He was in total control of all that was taking place. He was not taken by surprise.

**John 13:22–25...** The disciples *began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking.* **23** There was reclining on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. **24** So Simon Peter gestured to him, and said to him, "Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking." **25** He, leaning back thus on Jesus' bosom, said to Him, "Lord, who is it?"

Reclining at the table was normal at important feasts like the Passover celebration. It was not obvious to the other disciples that Judas was the betrayer. Peter gestured to John in an attempt to obtain information about the identity of the traitor. So, John asked, "Lord, who is it?"

**John 13:26–27...** 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.* **27** After the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Therefore Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly."

Jesus took a morsel of bread and dipped it into a very special mixture of raisins, dates, and sour wine. In that culture, to receive this morsel from the host was to be highly honored.

The tragedy of rejecting Jesus was not a snap decision for Judas Iscariot. It's evident from John's revelation of his character that this momentous decision had been in the works for some time.

Even though Satan had entered Judas, it was Jesus who was fully in charge. Since Judas was the treasurer, it was logical for the disciples to assume that he had been sent on a special mission by the Lord.

Judas knew what he was doing and that he did it deliberately. He had already met with the Jewish religious leaders and agreed to lead them to Jesus in return for 30 pieces of silver (Luke 21:37–22:6). He heard Jesus say...

**Matthew 26:24...** "The Son of Man *is to go, just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.*"

Yet, he persisted in his unbelief and treachery. Jesus was not surprised by the betrayal of Judas.

Jesus is sovereign over everything that has ever happened and will happen, including His own betrayal. As the old spiritual says, *"He's got the whole world in his hands."* ■

**When someone mistreats you, Jesus has everything in his hands.**

- **When the doctor calls with bad news, Jesus has everything in his hands.**
- **When you lose your job, Jesus has everything in his hands.**
- **When your child rebels, Jesus has everything in his hands.**
- **When your spouse breaks your heart, Jesus has everything in his hands.**
- **When a loved one dies, Jesus has everything in his hands.**
- **When your finances take a nose dive, Jesus has everything in his hands.**
- **When a friend betrays you, Jesus has everything in his hands.**

Few truths can engage our affections, calm our hearts, and influence our decisions like the reality of the sovereign power of Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

**John 13:28–30... Now no one of those reclining *at the table* knew for what purpose He had said this to him. 29 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"; or else, that he should give something to the poor. 30 So after receiving the morsel he went out immediately; and it was night.**

In spite of all the Lord's warning about unbelief, Judas persisted in his rejection even though... ■ **He heard Jesus preach the Sermon on the**

**Mount**

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<sup>1</sup> Matt Carter and Josh Wredberg, [Exalting Jesus in John](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2017), 270–271.

- He saw Jesus raise the dead, heal the lame, and give sight to the blind.
- He participated in the feeding of 5000 men with 5 barley loaves and 2 fish.

*Jesus even washed Judas' feet!* Yet his hard heart did not yield.<sup>2</sup> With the acceptance of the morsel, the tragic case was closed.

**"And it was night"**— This statement carries a tremendous impact when you remember that light and darkness are important spiritual metaphors in this Gospel.

**John 3:19–21...** "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their

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deeds were evil. **20** "For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. **21** "But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

**John 8:12...** Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

When Judas walked out of the candlelit room into the dark street, he walked away from the Light of the World. As the door shut behind him, his fate was forever sealed. He was controlled by the prince of darkness, Satan.

On the other hand, Jesus, the Light of the World, shared love, hope, and truth with His beloved disciples. What a contrast!<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#), vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 348.

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## CONCLUSION

Judas Iscariot will go down in history as the biggest loser of all time. What are the lessons we can learn from this loser?

### 1. KNOW WHO JESUS IS

- He is the Son of God
- He is the Messiah
- He is the Savior ■ He is sovereign over all
- He is all powerful
- He is all knowing ■ He is the reigning Lord of all

### 2. BELIEVE IN JESUS NOW

John 20:30–31... Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; **31** but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

- Take advantage of your opportunities
- Choose light over darkness
- Receive the gifts of eternal & abundant life

### 3. GUARD YOUR HEART CAREFULLY

If only Judas had examined his heart, he could have seen the trajectory of his life and the condition of his soul. He could have noticed that his primary love was money and prestige.

Proverbs 4:23... Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it *flow* the springs of life.

Pay attention to spiritual markers. Which direction are they pointing.

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**Colossians 1:13...** For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son.

#### **4. WALK IN THE LIGHT**

**1 John 1:7...** but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Here's the bottom line...

**LEARN YOUR LESSONS WELL!**