

Called to Remember

Matt 26:1-13
SS Lesson for 04/14/2019

Devotional Scripture: 1 Cor 11:23-26

OUTLINE

LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Key Verse: Matt 26:13

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

REMEMBERING THE BETRAYAL THROUGH TREACHERY (MATT 26:1-5)

Treachery always wants company (1-3)

Company so that judgment will be shared (1 Peter 4:3-5)

Company to carry out wicked plans (Prov 24:1-2)

The wicked lie in wait for the company and lives of the righteous (Ps 37:32)

Company in conspiracy (Ps 64:2)

Company in evilness and cruelty (Ps 71:4)

Sometimes the righteous envy the company of the wicked because it seems they have prosperity (Ps 73:3-5)

Treachery requires plotting (4)

Plots against the righteous (Ps 37:12)

Plots of injustice (Ps 64:6)

Plots of deception and evil (Prov 12:20)

Plots of iniquity and defrauding (Mic 2:1-2)

Treachery causes fear (5)

Fear of the influence of people (1 Sam 15:24)

Fear of rejection and ridicule (John 7:13)

Fear of people revolting (Matt 14:5)

Fear of people's opinions (Matt 21:26)

REMEMBERING THE INCIDENT OF THE ANOINTING (MATT 26:6-7)

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An unusual place that many times was criticized because of who was there (Luke 7:34-37)

An unusual place, but Jesus had to go to places where He could seek and save the lost (Luke 19:7-10)

An unusual place that helped identify the Deity of Jesus (Matt 11:2-6)

An offering of anointing above and beyond (7)

An offering beyond ability (2 Cor 8:3)

An offering that was all one had (Mark 12:43-44)

An offering that is given, even though it is the last (1 Kings 17:8-13)

An offering of a life of service that is almost to death (Phil 2:29-30)

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An indignation using human logic (8)

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A motive of delighting oneself in God (Ps 37:4)

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Lesson Background and Key Verse

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Back in 1912 (so an oft-told story goes), President William Howard Taft was attending a Washington Senators baseball game. After the top of the seventh inning was completed, Taft (a rather large man) was feeling a bit tired, so he stood up to stretch. On seeing the President of the United States stand, those nearby did the same. Soon everyone in the ball park was standing. Thus began a tradition still observed at baseball games yet today: the seventh-inning stretch. President Taft had no intention of creating a tradition. All he wanted to do was take a break from sitting. Yet his simple act had enduring consequences. The same is true of the woman in today's lesson. She did not intend her act to "go down in history," but it did. Today is Palm Sunday, the day we remember Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (John 12:13). That event occurred early in the time frame of what has come to be called passion week or Jesus' final week. So important are the teachings and events of this week that more than a third of Matthew's Gospel focuses on just these few days. Our lesson today takes us about midway into this week, after Jesus and many others have arrived in Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. On the origin of this single-day observance and the week-long Feast of Unleavened Bread that accompanies it, see Exodus 12:6, 15–20, 43–49; Leviticus 23:5, 6; Numbers 28:16, 17; Deuteronomy 16:1–4.

Part of our lesson considers the attitudes and actions of the Jewish ruling council, which was based in Jerusalem. Some students trace the beginnings of this council to the body of elders who returned from exile in about 536 BC per Ezra 5:5, 9; 6:7, 8, 14. The line is then said to be traceable to the priests, nobles, and rulers of Nehemiah 2:16; 5:7. A key figure among the nobles was Zerubbabel (Ezra 4:3; 5:2). He was of David's royal line (1 Chronicles 3:1–19), but Zerubbabel's authority was certainly not that of a king. As the royal authority of the house of David faded away, the priesthood gained more and more power. The high priest became, in effect, the head of state in the time between the Old and New Testaments. Serving with him was a council of elders. A record of Jewish history of about 187 to 162 BC notes the recognition of this council by a certain king (see nonbiblical 2 Maccabees 11:27). The power of the high priest continued to increase with time (see nonbiblical 1 Maccabees 12:6; 14:24–49).

The council's power was sharply curtailed by Herod when he began to rule from Jerusalem in 37 BC as a client-king of Rome. When the Romans changed their governing system after Herod's death, the council again increased in power. Council membership numbered 70 plus the high priest, for a total of 71. Support for this 70+1 arrangement was drawn from Numbers 11:16 after the fact. The power of the council and the limits of that power are seen by comparing Mark 10:33; 14:55; Luke 24:20; John 9:22; 18:31; Acts 4:1–22; 5:17–42. The NIV usually refers to this council as the Sanhedrin. That designation is just a transliteration of the underlying Greek word, which occurs 22 times in the ancient manuscripts of the New Testament. A transliteration is a simple process whereby the letters of a Greek or Hebrew word are merely swapped with English letters that sound the same. There are many transliterations in the Bible (examples: apostle, baptism, and Christ).

Key Verse: Matt 26:13

Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

26:1-5. The words, **When Jesus had finished saying all these things**, are the last of five such turning points in the book (cf. 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1). As soon as Jesus completed the Olivet Discourse, He reminded the **disciples** that **the Passover** feast was only **two days away** and that He would be **handed over to be crucified**. The events in 26:1-16 occurred on Wednesday. Though there is no record of the disciples' reactions to the Lord's words, Matthew did record the plot that developed among the religious leaders to **kill Him. In the palace of the high priest... Caiaphas**, the plan was begun **to arrest Jesus in some sly way** but **not until the Feast** had passed. Their thinking was to wait until the many pilgrims who had converged on Jerusalem for the Passover had gone home. Then they would dispose of Jesus in a quiet way. Their timing was not God's timing, however, and the advancement in the timetable was due in part to the willingness of Judas Iscariot who volunteered to betray the Lord.

26:6-9. During the final week of His life before the Cross, the Lord spent the nights in **Bethany**, east of Jerusalem on the south slopes of the Mount of Olives. Matthew recorded an event that took place one evening **in the home of... Simon the Leper**. John described the same event in greater detail (John 12:1-8), giving the names of the individuals. The **woman** who **poured** the oil **on Jesus' head** was Mary (John 12:3), and the disciple who first objected to the action was Judas Iscariot (John 12:4). The **perfume** was **very expensive** (Matt. 26:7), worth "a year's wages" (John 12:5; lit., "300 denarii"). Obviously this act of love was costly for Mary.

26:10-13. The Lord was aware of the disciples' comments ("Why this waste?" v. 8) and their heart attitude ("they were indignant," v. 8; cf. 20:24; 21:15) behind their words. Judas Iscariot was not motivated by his concern for **the poor** (John 12:6). He was a thief and was concerned about the money not being put in their common purse which he controlled. Jesus reminded them that because **the poor** would **always be with** them they would have many opportunities to show kindness, but He would **not always** be among them. Mary's **beautiful** act prepared His body **for burial** (Matt. 26:12). Jesus had spoken several times of His coming death (e.g., 16:21; 17:22; 20:18), but the disciples did not seem to believe His words. Mary believed and performed this act as a testimony of her devotion to Him. As a result her sacrificial act is often proclaimed **throughout the world**. Perhaps it was this act and the Lord's approval of it that made Judas willing to betray the Lord. From this scene Judas went to the chief priests and offered to betray Jesus.

26:14-16. **Judas Iscariot** must have been viewed by the religious leaders as an answer to their prayers. Judas' offer **to the chief priests** to betray Jesus Christ was more than agreeing to point out Jesus to arresting officers. Judas was offering his services as a witness against Jesus when He would be brought to trial. He would do anything to gain more money (cf. John 12:6). The offer was made in exchange for funds, probably paid out immediately to Judas. **Thirty silver coins** were the redemption price paid for a slave (Ex. 21:32). This same amount was also prophesied as the price for the services of the rejected Shepherd (Zech. 11:12). The exact value of the agreed price cannot be determined because the coinage was not identified; it was simply called "silver" (*argyria*; cf. Matt. 25:18). But it could have been a substantial amount. The bargain had been struck and **Judas** was now being looked to by the religious leaders as their deliverer from their biggest problem, Jesus of Nazareth. Judas knew he had to follow through, for his word had been given and money had been exchanged.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Remembering the Betrayal through Treachery (Matt 26:1-5)

- 1 Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, that He said to His disciples,
- 2 "You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."
- 3 Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas,
- 4 and they plotted to arrest Jesus in some sly way and kill him.
- 5 "But not during the Feast," they said, "or there may be a riot among the people."

Treachery always wants company (1-3)

Company so that judgment will be shared (1 Peter 4:3-5)

3 For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. 4 They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you. 5 But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

Company to carry out wicked plans (Prov 24:1-2)

Do not envy wicked men, do not desire their company; 2 for their hearts plot violence, and their lips talk about making trouble.

The wicked lie in wait for the company and lives of the righteous (Ps 37:32)

32 The wicked lie in wait for the righteous, seeking their very lives;

Company in conspiracy (Ps 64:2)

2 Hide me from the conspiracy of the wicked, from that noisy crowd of evildoers.

Company in evilness and cruelty (Ps 71:4)

4 Deliver me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of evil and cruel men.

Sometimes the righteous envy the company of the wicked because it seems they have prosperity (Ps 73:3-5)

3 For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. 4 They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. 5 They are free from the burdens common to man; they are not plagued by human ills.

Treachery requires plotting (4)

Plots against the righteous (Ps 37:12)

12 The wicked plot against the righteous and gnash their teeth at them;

Plots of injustice (Ps 64:6)

6 They plot injustice and say, "We have devised a perfect plan!" Surely the mind and heart of man are cunning.

Plots of deception and evil (Prov 12:20)

20 There is deceit in the hearts of those who plot evil, but joy for those who promote peace.

Plots of iniquity and defrauding (Mic 2:1-2)

Woe to those who plan iniquity, to those who plot evil on their beds! At morning's light they carry it out because it is in their power to do it. 2 They covet fields and seize them, and houses, and take them. They defraud a man of his home, a fellowman of his inheritance.

Treachery causes fear (5)

Fear of the influence of people (1 Sam 15:24)

24 Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned. I violated the LORD's command and your instructions. I was afraid of the people and so I gave in to them.

Fear of rejection and ridicule (John 7:13)

13 But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the Jews.

Fear of people revolting (Matt 14:5)

5 Herod wanted to kill John, but he was afraid of the people, because they considered him a prophet.

Fear of people's opinions (Matt 21:26)

26 But if we say, 'From men'-we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet."

Remembering the Incident of the Anointing (Matt 26:6-7)

6 And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper,
7 a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured it on His head as He sat at the table.

An anointing at an unusual place (6)

An unusual place, but Jesus is always willing to be with and help the sick (Matt 8:2-4)

2 A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." 3 Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cured of his leprosy.

An unusual place that many times was criticized because of who was there (Luke 7:34-37)

34 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and "sinners."' 35 But wisdom is proved right by all her children." 36 Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table.

An unusual place, but Jesus had to go to places where He could seek and save the lost (Luke 19:7-10)

7 All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner.'" 8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." 9 Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

An unusual place that helped identify the Deity of Jesus (Matt 11:2-6)

2 When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples 3 to ask him, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" 4 Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: 5 The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. 6 Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me."

An offering of anointing above and beyond (7)

An offering beyond ability (2 Cor 8:3)

3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own,

An offering that was all one had (Mark 12:43-44)

43 Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. 44 They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on."

An offering that is given, even though it is the last (1 Kings 17:8-13)

8 Then the word of the LORD came to him: 9 "Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food." 10 So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, "Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?" 11 As she was going to get it, he called, "And bring me, please, a piece of bread." 12 "As surely as the LORD your God lives," she replied, "I don't have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die." 13 Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son."

An offering of a life of service that is almost to death (Phil 2:29-30)

29 Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor men like him, 30 because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me.

Remembering the Indignation of the Anointing (Matt 26:8-9)

8 But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste?"

9 For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor."

An indignation using human logic (8)

Human logic and wisdom comes from Satan (James 3:13-17)

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. 14 But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. 15 Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. 16 For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. 17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

Human logic causes us to be carnal minded and immature in God's word (1 Cor 3:1-4)

3 Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly — mere infants in Christ. 2 I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. 3 You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? 4 For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere men?

Human logic causes envy (1 Tim 6:3-5)

3 If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, 4 he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions 5 and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.

Human logic hinders our spiritual growth (1 Peter 2:1-3)

2 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. 2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, 3 now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Human logic tries to use persuasive words that have no power (1 Cor 2:3-7)

3 I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. 4 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5 so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. 6 We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7 No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.

Human logic is foolishness in God's sight (1 Cor 3:18-20)

18 Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a "fool" so that he may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness"; 20 and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile."

Human logic causes our minds to be futile and darkened which in turn makes us into fools (Rom 1:21-22)

21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools

An indignation over the motive is defensible (9)

A motive that was not selfish (James 4:3)

3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

A motive that lays treasures in heaven (1 Tim 6:17-19)

17 Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. 18 Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. 19 In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

A motive of delighting oneself in God (Ps 37:4)

4 Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.

A motive of being a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1)

1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship.

Remembering the Implication of the Anointing (Matt 26:10-13)

10 But when Jesus was aware of it, He said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me.

11 For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always.

12 For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial.

13 Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her."

An implicated anointing accepted and honored (10-12)

Accepted because it is done willingly (2 Cor 8:12)

12 For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.

Accepted because it offered right (Gen 4:3-7)

3 In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. 4 But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. 6 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 7 If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it."

Accepted because of giving out of love (Eph 5:1-2)

5:1 Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children 2 and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Accepted because of sacrificial giving (Phil 4:16-18)

16 for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. 17 Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account. 18 I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

Accepted because of steadfast faith (2 Tim 4:6-8)

6 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day-and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Accepted because of being in the household of God (1 Peter 2:5)

5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

An implicated offering rewarded (13)

Rewarded because of being generous (Ps 112:5-6)

5 Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely, who conducts his affairs with justice. 6 Surely he will never be shaken; a righteous man will be remembered forever.

Rewarded by the commendation of God (2 Cor 10:18)

18 For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.

Rewarded because it survived the test (1 Cor 3:13-14)

13 his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. 14 If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward.

Rewarded because of giving in secret (Matt 6:2-4)

3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Rewarded because of providing for God's people (Matt 10:42)

42 And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward."

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh

The Biblical Responsibility for the Betrayal

Perhaps we have gained some insight into the reasons why Judas could ever contemplate such a heinous crime. But many are not content to leave the matter here. Who was ultimately responsible for this inconceivable crime against the Christ?

While it is clear that God ordained the betrayal, it is just as evident that He did not implant the idea of betrayal in the mind of Judas nor did He compel this disciple to sin. In the words of our Lord, "For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined; but woe to that man through whom He is betrayed!" (Luke 22:22).

Not only was the betrayal purposed by God, but it was also promoted by Satan. The thought of betrayal was, in some way, suggested by satanic influence (John 13:2). Having succumbed to this suggestion, Satan finally entered Judas during the Passover meal, and empowered him to carry out his own initiative, in harmony with the purpose of God and the prompting of Satan (John 13:27).

In the final analysis we must place the responsibility for the sin of Judas where the Scripture puts it—squarely on Judas himself. While God is sovereign and He utilizes the sins of men to accomplish His own purposes (cf. Psalm 76:10), He does not make men sin. Also, Judas can never say, "The Devil made me do it." The text is clear that Satan did not enter into Judas until the agreement had already been made with the religious leaders. Satan gained more and more control of Judas as he progressively gave in to his sinful intentions.

While we may never be able to solve the mystery of the relationship between the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man, the Scripture says that both are true: "This man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death" (Acts 2:23).

The Two Roads to Renown (26:6-13)

One cannot help but be deeply impressed with the contrast in Matthew 26:6-13 between Judas and Mary. Both are destined for renown, but by two completely different roads. Mary will earn fame, Judas infamy. And in the process we will learn some of the critical contrasts between those whose memory will become a blemish and those who will be a blessing. Of Judas our Lord can only say, "It would have been good for that man if he had not been born" (Matthew 26:24).

But of Mary, we read, "Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done shall also be spoken of in memory of her" (Matthew 26:13).

Let us give careful thought to the contrast of these two figures.

Both, I believe, were more sensitive and alert to our Lord's predictions of His coming death. The others still seemed to fail to grasp the urgency of the moment. But Judas perceived of the death of Christ as the burial of all that he had hoped for. Mary sensed that the death of Christ was the basis of hope.

Judas, save his last hypocritical act of devotion, had little affection for Jesus. He was not his Lord, but only a Rabbi. Jesus was more an opportunity to get ahead than the object of affection and worship. Not so with Mary. Jesus was her beloved Lord. Her anointing of Jesus was the abandon of deep affection and devotion. While Judas begrudged Jesus for His failure to seize His opportunity, Mary was filled only with gratitude.

To Judas money was something to be gained and grasped, even if it were done deceitfully. Money spent on Jesus was considered wasted (Matthew 26:8).

To Mary, money was simply one means of expressing her devotion and adoration of the Savior. She gladly gave of that which was her best.

The whole matter boils down to one simple issue, "What do you think of Jesus?" Judas did not value Him at all. He would dispose of Him for the price of a slave. Mary loved Him as no one else in her life. She would gladly dispose of what was most precious if it would bring pleasure to Him.

Men today frequently give Jesus a polite and dutiful tip of the hat, but are they willing to lay those things which mean the most to them at His feet? My friend, do you view the generous giving of some as foolishness? Do you look at those who give their lives in the service of the Savior as a tragic waste? That is the attitude of Judas.

Conclusion: Biblical Lessons From the Betrayal

Historically the last piece of the puzzle (of religious resistance) is in place. The religious leaders were in desperate straits. They must find a way to be rid of Jesus, but they are forced to make their move out of the sight of the masses (Matthew 26:3-5). Judas must have seemed like the answer to their prayers. He offered the assistance of one on the inside, one who could lead a task force to arrest the Savior at one of Jesus' secluded nighttime retreats.

For us the person of Judas is a warning of the danger and the destruction of unbelief. The unbelief of Judas did not hinder the purposes of God, but it brought this man to his own destruction. May I say to you, my unsaved friend, you can reject and resist the Savior, but you cannot defeat Him. Your rejection and rebellion are not only futile, but fatal.

Judas warns us that it is possible to be in very close proximity to the Savior without possessing salvation. You cannot judge one's spiritual state by his associations. Neither can you determine a man's eternal destiny on the basis of his activities. Judas was with the Lord Jesus, and he (I assume) performed the same signs and miracles that the other eleven did, but that did not make him a Christian. One's true spiritual condition is revealed by his affection and devotion for the Lord Jesus Christ, and by his estimate of His worth and the value of His atoning death. For the Christian Jesus is no mere teacher. He is his Lord and his God (John 20:28).

For the Christian I believe we find both a warning and an encouragement in the betrayal of Judas. We are warned of the danger of incubating sin in our lives. We are reminded that in spiritual things many (by human analogy) of our 'flat tires' are not blowouts, but slow leaks. Many of the sins which appear to occur so spontaneously, so unexpectedly, are really matters which we have long deliberated. Such was the case with Judas, and with David, and many other biblical personalities.

The encouragement to me is found in the contrast between Judas and Peter. It is the difference between betrayal and denial. Satan wanted Judas and he got him. This was because Judas had rejected Jesus as Messiah and was 'on his own' with no divine enablement to resist Satan. Second, Judas' goals, attitudes, and desires were nearly synonymous with Satan's. Satan also desired Peter (Luke 22:31), but he could not have him. While Peter sometimes lapsed into thinking the thoughts of the world and of Satan (Matthew 16:23), he was one who belonged to the Savior, Who kept His own (John 17:12) and Who prays for His own (Luke 22:32). Judas was an unbeliever whose betrayal led to everlasting torment, while Peter, as a believer, fell only for a time, and was restored so that he could strengthen others by the grace he received (Luke 22:32). While the difference between a Judas and Peter at times seems hard for us to distinguish (cf. Matthew 26:8, John 12:4-5), the Lord knows His own and is able to keep them. What a comfort there is in this truth as revealed in this prayer of our Lord Jesus: "Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, the name which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We are" (John 17:11b).

(Adapted from URL:<https://bible.org/seriespage/biography-betrayer-matthew-261-16>)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Many followers of Jesus choose to serve him in dangerous or primitive settings, thousands of miles from home. They have exercised their devotion to the cause of Christ and his kingdom in what appears to be a radical manner. Because of their decision to do so, some of their family members and friends may look upon them as "wasting" their talents and education. As family and friends think and talk that way, they echo the criticisms of the disciples who viewed Mary's action toward Jesus as a waste. Sometimes the labor of those who invest their lives for Christ may not seem to be bearing much fruit. That can give skeptics even more cause to question what others have chosen to do with their lives. And let's face it: sometimes critics are right. But in those frequent cases where they're wrong, they can cause doubt. That's why people who invest their lives in kingdom work need encouragement. They need affirmation that what they are doing is the right thing. Think about it: What if Jesus had merely remained silent as the disciples voiced their criticism? What would that have done to Mary? As we ponder that question, we may also examine whether our own extravagant giving is being held back by what we imagine critics might say were we to make that potential gift a reality. To receive words of encouragement from others can be a great source of blessing to those who serve in difficult mission fields. Perhaps your class or your congregation is aware of an individual or family who has such a need. What can you do to keep in touch with them? How about keeping track of their birthdays or anniversaries? How about communicating with them on holidays? What gifts can the class or congregation provide to assist in the work being done? One great blessing can be to ask them what specific prayer needs exist. To know that others are praying for you can be one of the best sources of encouragement there is! Expressions of kindness and gratitude

will lift the spirits of both those who offer them and those who receive them. And Jesus, who sees such acts, will certainly not view them as “waste.”

Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary

Jesus' Love Expressed - Jesus explained to His disciples the events leading up to His crucifixion. His triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the people's exorbitant response may have filled their minds with false ideas. Jesus is the King, but He is also the Suffering Servant who ultimately dies on a cross. At the same time, Jesus prepared His disciples for the dark days ahead, while the religious leaders held a meeting of their own, conspiring against Him. The chief priests, scribes, and the elders gathered with Caiaphas, the high priest, and planned to convince the governing authorities to put the Messiah to death.

Mary's Excessive Love - Before Jesus' crucifixion, He traveled to the home in Bethany of a man named Simon, a former leper Jesus healed. While He was visiting, Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, entered the house (John 12:3) and broke an alabaster vessel releasing a pound of fine perfume oil, filling the entire house with a pleasant fragrance. She anointed Jesus publicly, displaying her love and worship. Initially, this act upset the disciples, especially Judas who managed their finances. They viewed it as a waste, since the perfume, worth nearly a year's wages, could have been sold and given to the disadvantaged. Jesus allowed the extravagance saying it symbolized His preparation for burial.

Surrender Demonstrates Love - The crucifixion of Christ demonstrates God's amazing love. In what ways can Christians express their love and appreciation for this precious gift of salvation—fasting, sacrificial giving, committing long hours to church work? Or like Mary, doing something very extravagant before the Lord? Believers return Christ's love by surrendering their lives to Him in total obedience.