

Psalm 19:14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

1 Timothy 1:2 ...Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

“Money Motivation”

Introduction: Nobody Like Judas

No one in history has been equated with treachery more than Judas Iscariote. Judas is the traitor *par excellence*. Even though Judas is a common name in the Old Testament, Christians have shunned that name like Americans shun the name Benedict Arnold.

Today, I would like to look at who Judas is and what motivated him. Then, I will encourage you to check your motivations to make sure they are not like those of Judas.

Background on Judas

We don't know much about Judas. His history is vague. We can guess about him based on his name. His last name, Iscariote, may be a rough translation of Karioth which was a small village near Jerusalem. So his name probably means Judas from Karioth. This is the best solution to what his name means

because we know his father, Simon Iscariote, had the same surname.

If this is true, he would be the only disciple that was not from the region of Galilee. Both Nazareth (where Jesus grew up) and Capernaum (where he spent much of his ministry) are in Galilee. Galilee is one of the northernmost parts of Israel and people from there had a different accent than the people from Jerusalem.

What Motivated Judas

Judas is a real city-slicker compared to people from relatively rural Galilee. He seems to be drawn to money – one of the temptations that is most common to human beings. He wants to hold it and control it (and he could as Jesus' treasurer). It seems to be the driving force in his life. He is even willing to betray his friend for 30 pieces of silver – a small amount to betray a friend.

We all know people like Judas. They have to have the biggest and the best. They like to talk about all they have or flash it in an obvious way. They make more enemies than friends acting that way but they don't seem to see the big picture. They could win more friends with a nice smile than a fancy car but they just don't seem to get it.

What Motivates Me

We are now in Lent – a time introspection, a time of reflection, a time to ask hard questions about how we live our lives. Are we

living up to God's standards? Or are we hoping that God will overlook our sins? Are we using his grace as an excuse to sin?

The Apostle Paul had to address that problem in his congregation in Rome. He asked them point blank if they were abusing God's graciousness.

Romans 6:1 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? 2 By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

If your pet sin is to grow richer at the expense of God's Kingdom, I have to warn you. You will only prosper for a short time and then God's Kingdom will come without your money. Think of Luther's explanation to the second petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come."

What does this mean? The kingdom of God certainly comes by itself without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may come to us also.

God's Kingdom will advance with or without you, with or without your money. The only question is, "Do you want to participate in it?" As someone who has received the gift of faith apart from works, it is now in your reach to respond in the way that the Holy Spirit guides you.

Conclusion: Life Is Short

I think all of us have been in a state of shock for the last week. None of us expected Pastor Last's injuries to be so severe. We

are stunned when such a vicious disease strikes so close to home.

On a personal level, I can't help but take this as a wake-up call from our Judge. He is giving us a warning that we should put our house in order. We don't know when we will stand before his judgment throne. It may come sooner than we imagine.

God is gracious. He gives us time to repent but we can not think that this time will last forever. The money you have will be yours a short time. How do you want to use it? Like Judas? For a little bit of land that you might not even enjoy? Or do you want to invest it in a way that will have eternal dividends?

None of this is to imply that you can buy salvation. That is God's free gift to you through cross of Christ Jesus. But the time to use your talents in his service is short, so act now!

May that peace which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.