

Great Good Out of Great Evil

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Preacher: Kevin Smith, Senior Pastor

[0 : 00] Amen. John chapter 13, verses 18 through 30. Hear now the word of God. Oh, on the wrong page, if I can find it.

There we go. I am not speaking of all of you. Jesus is speaking. I know whom I have chosen, but the scriptures will be fulfilled. He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.

I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place, you may believe that I am he. Truly, truly, amen, amen. I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.

After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit and testified, Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me. The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke.

One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side. So Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking.

[1 : 09] So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.

So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered him.

Jesus said to him, What you are going to do, do quickly. Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. Some thought that because Judas had the money bag, Jesus was telling him, Buy what we need for the feast, or that he should go give something to the poor.

So after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night. That is the word of the Lord.

Please be seated. Thank you, Pracy. Thank you, sir. Beautiful music once again. A name that will be unfamiliar to many of us is that of George Lyle.

[2 : 22] Anybody ever hear of George Lyle? I thought so. I know you know because you told me. Lyle was born a slave in Virginia in 1750.

This was after the great awakening of the 1730s and 40s, which was kind of a revival that swept the colonies. His master, Henry Sharp, was a Baptist deacon and a man of some Christian character.

He is reputed to have treated his slaves with some Christian compassion. This led him, along with his pastor, to ordain George Lyle to preach the gospel while still a slave, making him not only the first ordained African-American Baptist minister, but also the first ordained African-American minister in America, which unprecedented, which was not uncommon, which is uncommon enough, but he was allowed to preach to the whites in his church as well as the slaves.

That did make a lot of folk happy. God was with him in a very powerful way. He is said to have a deep devotion to Jesus, great faith in the Lord, a remarkable memory, and a profound skill to articulate the scriptures.

A life verse for him and a key to his theology is found above our passage in John 13, 13. This was key to him. You call me teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am.

[4 : 04] That impacted him deeply. Deacon Sharp emancipated Reverend Lyle just before the Revolutionary War began in 1775, so he could preach the gospel more freely, which he did in South Carolina and Georgia, frequently in Savannah, where he started the first African Baptist church around 1777.

But when Sharp was killed, Sharp was a loyalist, by the way, that is to the British, when he was killed in battle during the Revolutionary War, George was betrayed.

Sharp's family, on trumped-up charges, unjustly tried to re-enslave him, which, by the way, he had a family at that time, wife and children, which would have meant enslaving his family, too.

But once again, God was at work, even in that betrayal. For the sake of his family and their well-being, he escaped to Kingston, Jamaica, as an indentured servant in 1783.

There, his ministry exploded in gospel power in 1784, September of 1784. Eventually, he began preaching to the enslaved and free in that country.

[5 : 28] His work became cross-cultural, the first of his kind, having Americans, Jamaicans, and British citizens worshipping together.

And by the way, he really went native. He adopted Jamaica and its customs and lifestyle as his own in the gospel.

He helped to start churches and schools there. God used him to launch a missionary movement that reached from Georgia to Jamaica, from Jamaica to Sierra Leone, and Nova Scotia.

Now listen to this. All before William Carey went to India, before Adoniram Judson went to Burma, before Richard Allen, African American, began the AME Church, and before Locke Carey, he was the first American missionary.

And he's unknown. But it happened because he was betrayed by people that he trusted.

[6 : 42] Has that ever happened to you? Have you ever been betrayed? I didn't say felt betrayed. You know, and it was true, you were betrayed.

Have you ever been betrayed? Someone had to help you get the knife out of your back. Extremely painful. If you were a Christian, when it happened, you probably asked God questions.

Why did you have to let that happen? How are you going to get glory from something as horrible as this? Enter Judas.

Judas. A name that lives in infamy. But without Judas, God does not bring the greatest good out of the greatest evil.

And even today, God can bring great good out of great evil in the lives of those who trust in Jesus.

[7 : 53] Are you one of them? Jesus prophesies his betrayal. Verses 18 to 20. First of all, these verses should be taken.

Hope you have your Bible. First of all, these verses should be taken with verses 10 and 11, which we looked at last time. Jesus said to him, The one who has bathed does not need to wash except for his feet, but is completely clean.

And you are clean. Watch this. But not every one of you. For he knew who was to betray him. And that's why he said, Now all of you are clean.

Even as our Lord washed his disciples' feet, including Judas, he was displaying the fact that the Father had given all things into his hands.

Verse 3. Even though Judas was the betrayer and chosen for this purpose, Jesus taught him, protected him, and provided for him.

[8 : 50] And in the end, does him service. Judas. He was setting up, I think Jesus was setting up this discussion on this betrayal and his betrayer.

Now he isn't saying these things to out Judas. That's the strange part. He wasn't trying to out Judas. The disciples still didn't get it. After all he's saying, they still don't get it.

But our Lord gives two reasons for the betrayal in this passage. Right here in verses 18 and 19. He gives two reasons why Judas is necessary.

First thing, that scripture might be fulfilled. Don't ever miss that. It's striking, first of all, that the name Judas is merely the Greek form of the name Judah.

Judah is one of the 12 tribes of Israel. Jesus is called, in Revelation 5, 5, the lion of the tribe of Judah. And yet it is a man named Judah who betrays the lion.

[9 : 56] Irony. But the scripture must be fulfilled. One of the reasons we know that the Bible is the word of God is because of all the prophecies that are fulfilled in it.

The Bible has the incredible ability because God has the incredible ability to predict future happenings. Why does God give us prophecy?

Isaiah 46. God is speaking. Remember the former things of old. For I am God. And there is no other. I am God. And there is none like me.

Declaring the end from the beginning. And from ancient times, things not yet done. Saying, my counsel shall stand and I will accomplish all my purpose.

I have spoken. And I will bring it to pass. I have purposed. And I will do it. That's a statement of that God can, that God speaks things not yet happening.

[11 : 02] That we will know that his will will not be thwarted. No one and no thing can stop what he has planned. Prophecy reveals his plans before they happen.

That we might know he alone is God. And therefore worship and obey him and trust him. According to one source, there are over 1,800 prophecies in the Bible.

And some say that at least 300 prophecies were fulfilled by Jesus. One mathematician of yesteryear, Peter Stoner, had his students do a math problem.

A math study. And what they found out, for Jesus to fulfill only eight prophecies, the odds of that were 1 and 10 to the 23rd power.

I can't do that math. So those of you who are smart with math, 10 to the 23rd. Yeah. That's only eight.

[12 : 09] God has spoken. Now, Jesus refers to one of the prophecies, doesn't he? He refers to Psalms 41.9, which says, Even my close friend, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.

Listen to verses 4 through 9 in that psalm. Well, read it. Is it on the screen? Ah! That one is. Okay. In verses 4 through 9, though, David was sick.

But he was surrounded by enemies who pretended to support him. Oh, King David, we hope you get better. We're praying for you. Oh, yes. Oh, we love you.

Just get better. Praise Jesus. Praise God. But in their hearts, they wanted him dead. One of those he trusted the most, ate at his table, is the one who betrays him.

That's why David wrote the psalm. And now, though it was true of David, it spoke of one to come. It had a greater significance. David's life and that particular moment had a greater significance because it pointed to the Messiah, who would experience the greater betrayal by one of his own chosen disciples.

[13 : 28] Jesus always knew who Judas was. Back in chapter 7 of John, when many of his disciples left Jesus, he asked the 12, the 12 disciples, he asked them a question in John 6.

Jesus said to the 12, do you want to go away as well? Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life and we have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God.

Jesus answered them, did I not choose you, the 12, and yet one of you is a devil? He spoke of Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the 12, was going to betray him.

He always knew. The apostles will also speak of this betrayal in Acts chapter 1. I'm going to just give you the address for sake of time. Acts chapter 1, 15 through 20.

Write that down and you can check that out yourself. How the apostles also used scripture to point back to the fact that Judas would betray Jesus and it was necessary.

[14 : 44] Second reason for Jesus predicting Judas' betrayal, he says in that passage, that you may believe that I am he. And this is the main reason for this entire revelation about Judas.

One of the reasons we believe that Jesus of Nazareth was more than a man, but the God-man is his uncanny ability to predict the future and fulfill the scriptures with his life.

Just like God said in Isaiah 46. Jesus now says, I am he.

It's funny. That's a good English translation. But in the actual wording of the Greek, he only says, I am.

Ego amy. He only says, I am the bread of life. All those I am statements in John. He only says, I am. The I am of the burning bush.

[15 : 50] You know this story. Jesus once again is telling them, I'm telling this before it happens, that you may know that once again, I am. Woo!

Only God knows the future. Jesus has to be God in human flesh, the Messiah, the Son of God. But then Jesus goes further, and he identifies his betrayer.

Verses 21 to 25. First, I want to offer some biblical explanation. I should say biblical speculation. Okay? I'm going to speculate for a minute here.

I'm going to speculate for a minute here. About why Judas betrayed Jesus. Why did he do it? The obvious reason was for money. 30 pieces of silver, which some believe was the price of a slave, was part of it.

He was already embezzling money from the disciples' bank account. Chapter 12, verses 5 and 6 says that. But I don't think that money is the true reason.

[17 : 01] That was the icing. Got paid. I believe more than anything, Judas was disillusioned. The Jesus move it wasn't proven to be what he expected.

When people expect something important of you, especially if it means their exaltation, benefit, or legacy in some way, and you don't come through, you are in danger.

Expectations are powerful. Remember how the disciples argued about who was the greatest in Jesus' kingdom? Who was sitting at his right hand and the left? This kind of argument happened likely twice.

Luke says in Luke 9 and Luke 22. Twice they had that argument. And the last time, according to Luke 22, the last time was at the Lord's Supper before Judas left.

Our Lord repeated himself to them that the greatest in his kingdom would be those who served the others. Judas was part of those arguments.

[18 : 13] That would make sense, though, wouldn't it, if the Last Supper was the last time, because that's when Jesus, as we saw, washed the disciples' feet. That would have been a powerful illustration of his teaching them that the greatest of you will be your servant.

Judas thought he would be elevated through the Jesus movement. But then he realized that Jesus was not going to start a worldly revolution of physical violence to overthrow the oppressors.

But Jesus said, love your enemies. And he wanted them to preach the gospel. That was too much! Are you kidding me?

Love the oppressors? Preach good news? Preach good news? Preach good news? Preach good news? To the oppressors? He hadn't signed up for that.

Which again shows his heart was never with Jesus. He had ulterior motives for joining the church. Not to exalt Jesus in his kingdom, but to further his own.

[19 : 20] Our Lord said of many who claim to worship God, Matthew 15, 8 and 9. He said this, These people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. This is also true of those who claim to be disciples of Jesus.

They honored, and even today, He is honored with our lips, but our hearts are far from Him. Judas is exhibit A.

Now, let's see how Jesus identifies his betrayer. Look at what he does. Our Lord is troubled in spirit, the text says. He's troubled in spirit. That's the third time John has used these words to describe Jesus.

He was greatly troubled at the tomb of Lazarus when he saw all the people weeping and grieving at Lazarus' death. His soul was troubled in John 12 when he first verbalized that his hour had come.

[20 : 27] And now here at the prospect of Judas' betrayal, He's troubled. He's troubled. Troubled means inner agitation, inner distress.

Amen. Amen. Truly, truly, one of you will betray me. The cross distressed him enough, but to be betrayed by one of his own, though he always knew, was still hard now that the time has come.

You ever know that something bad is coming and you try to prepare yourself for it, but when it gets here, it still hits you like a ton of bricks? Think of Jesus.

This shows his humanity. This entire scene shows our Lord's two natures, deity and humanity, and one being. You would think at this word of betrayal from Jesus, they would start looking at each other sideways.

You know, they're all sitting there going, one of us is going to betray you. I can imagine. That would have been us, man. We've been going, all right, which one of you going to do it?

[21 : 41] Which one of you? Is it going to be you, Dave? Is it going to be you, Alvin? Is it going to be you, Steve? We've been looking at each other sideways. I always never trusted that guy. But that's not what happened.

Believe it or not, it didn't happen that way. Matthew tells us what happened. Matthew 26, 22, 25. It says, And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him, one after another, Is it I, Lord?

Is it I? The rest of that passage says this. He said, Jesus answered, He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes and it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed.

It would have been better for that man if he had not been born. Judas, who would betray him, is one of the men who asked him, Is it I, Rabbi?

I mean the text. He said to him, You have said so. Is it I?

[23 : 03] R.C. Sproul makes this point. Most of them loved Jesus and they assumed that each of the others loved him too. Thus, none of them could be sure that he himself wasn't the betrayer.

each hoped that it would not be him, but they couldn't be sure as Jesus had not said who it would be. That's deep humility.

How many times do you point the finger at others and never at yourself? Do you distrust your own heart of commitment to Jesus?

Do you suspect yourself before suspecting others? We trust ourselves and we trust our feelings so much today. But the disciples, rightly so, looked at their own hearts.

Judas was being smug when he said, Is it I? The gospel, listen, should humble us and cause us to remember how frail we are.

[24 : 13] In the face of temptation, the Apostle Paul warns us, 1 Corinthians 10, 12, Therefore, let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

that's to us. You should all, we should all tremble in the face of temptation so that we will stay close to Jesus and close to prayer to God and close to dependence upon him.

Stop looking at them and look at yourself. Verse 25 here in that passage suggests that John is sitting close to Jesus and Peter, he's waving at him.

Got his attention. He probably went like this. He didn't say it out loud. John knew what he meant. Ask Jesus who it is.

D.A. Carson says, The host at a feast whose role is here fulfilled by Jesus, that is, might well dip into a common bowl and pull out a particularly tasty bit and pass it to a guest as a mark of honor or friendship.

[25 : 32] And this sop, Jesus passed to Judas Iscariot. That Jesus could pass it so easily suggests Judas was close by. Possibly on his left, the place of honor.

So Judas is right there. And Peter is saying, Ask Jesus who it is. And Jesus dips and hands it right next to himself, likely to Judas.

One last chance. One last gesture of love to turn from the darkness. But his heart is set.

His heart is set. Here we see the heart of our Lord. Though deeply hurt, he is not consumed with bitterness against Judas. If I knew that turkey was going to betray me, oh man, he would have got more than a sop.

You'd think so too. Don't even try it. But this passage is for us. It's for you. It's for me. That in the practice, presence, and power of Jesus, as we trust in his gospel that forgives our sins, we too can reach out in love to those we believe have hurt or betrayed us.

[27 : 00] Do you believe it? Are you in Christ? You've been betrayed by a friend, a spouse, a church member, a co-worker, and your heart is tempted to be filled with bitterness towards them.

Bitterness suggests unforgiveness. Bitterness says you're holding it against them. Here's the thing about bitterness. It's like drinking poison and expecting the other person to drop dead.

bitterness kills you and destroys you. Bitterness is death and Jesus came to give us life. Jesus sends his betrayer out now.

Verses 27 to 30. Once Judas receives the mark of the Lord's friendship, the devil enters him. Now, this is not a generic statement of being filled with evil.

And evil spiritual being has now entered Judas. Why not a demon? An emissary of Satan?

[28 : 19] No, Satan took over this work himself because it was personal. Our Lord had defeated him at the beginning of his ministry in the wilderness and by using scripture, he said, it is written three times and Satan had to leave him alone.

He had defeated Satan. All of his other attempts to have him killed, arrested, and discredited. He defeated him time and time again. Now, now he finally has a foolproof plan to get rid of Jesus.

He wanted to do this himself because if you want something done right, do it yourself. Our Lord's words were said tenderly, even quietly.

what you are about to do. Do quickly. Everyone heard him say it, but do you hear his broken heart in those words?

He didn't even name the deed. It's like he felt it was too horrible to speak. Because, listen, if he had said what Judas was going to do, the other disciples would have grabbed him and beat him up and held him.

[29 : 36] If he had said, Judas, you're going out to betray me, go ahead and do it, they would have jumped him like the crips on the bloods. God. No, this must happen.

As was said of Gollum and the Lord of the Rings, you know the story, Judas still has a part to play in this drama, and our Lord, the great director, is making sure he has his moment in the spotlight.

But here's the thing, it's a trippy thing. John seems to have known who Judas was. Remember, John asked him, who is it?

He tells John, quietly, just John, he tells John, he who I give the sop to is going to betray me. So John knows. He knows. But he didn't say anything.

I don't know why. It's because of the will of God. The disciples therefore assume the best about Judas. Only if that were true in our churches today, that we assume the best about each other.

[30 : 51] Now in their case, which is a special case, they were wrong. What does this tell us though? Judas was highly thought of. They knew he was the treasurer.

And they figured he was going to give something to the poor. He was highly thought of. He kept the money bag, not Matthew. Not Matthew. I always wondered about that, Carl.

Not Matthew? Matthew was the tax collector. He was an accountant. He was good with money. He knew how to keep ledgers and keep money tight. He knew, but they didn't give him the job.

Okay, that's another story. I don't know. They gave it to Judas. Speaks well of Judas. His supposed character, and they saw his supposed character and had respect for him.

He's going out to get something for the feast, maybe. That would make sense at Passover. Either way, no one questions Judas being sent out, but John knew, and he must have been stunned into silence.

[31 : 59] He must have been like, I can see John now shaking his head. not Judas. Judas? No, not Judas. Lord, are you?

No. I can see Peter looking at John going, what? Who is it? And John's just going, and it was night.

night. Don't miss that. It doesn't make sense that he mentions it. Why mention it was dark? So what? It's ominous.

It was really dark. It was evening. This darkness, though, is more than physical. It speaks of the darkness and evil of the devil's plans coming to fruition.

It speaks of the devil itself, of the deed itself. It speaks of the heart of Judas. When Judas will bring the soldiers to finally arrest Jesus, our Lord will say, in Luke 22, 53, he will say it, when I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me, but this is your hour and the power of darkness.

[33 : 18] This darkness is spiritual as well as physical. He took the morsel of bread from Jesus.

He ate it. He licked his fingers, took one last look in the face of glory, and left faded to black.

But it was necessary. Jesus will send his disciples into the world to proclaim the gospel, but he first sends Judas out to betray him for your sake.

I wonder, the disciples thought about this when their master went to the cross. Didn't he say this was going to happen, but we didn't believe him? Judas? But then he rose from the dead.

God brought the greatest good out of the greatest evil in the life of Jesus and also in the lives of we who trust in him. Don't you know he'll do the same for you?

[34 : 32] You who are his people, you who are in Christ, you are his disciples, you who are God's children, who call Jesus Savior and Lord. don't you understand that he will do the same for you?

Bring good out of evil? Genesis 50 verse 20, when Isaac lay dying, Joseph lay dying, he says, as to his brothers who sold him to slavery, as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good to bring about that many people should be kept alive as they are today.

Paul understanding that. Romans 8, 28, and we know, not that we wonder, not that we think, not that we hope, and we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good for those who called according to his purpose.

Those are the promises of the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. So let me just point three things out and we're done.

in your life, God has promised to bring good out of evil, but that also means evil must occur. Wish I had a better story to tell you.

[35 : 49] On this side of glory, evil must occur in your life and mine. You don't go looking for evil, don't do that, but it will find you, believe me, it will find you, especially as we follow Jesus, evil will find us, but when it happens, we don't have to fall apart, we don't have to despair.

God is at work to do what is best for us through it. It's hard to hear, but it's true, and you gotta hang on to that. If Jesus was in control of his own betrayal and suffering, then surely he's in control of yours.

He controlled the situation, he controlled the person and the timing, and he's doing it in your life too. the person who is doing you the most evil right now, God is using them.

The devil is using them, but God is greater. Come on, somebody. The devil is using them to pick you apart, to cast your name out as evil, to hurt you, God.

But God is over all of it. And he's working to bring good out of that evil.

[37 : 12] They mean it for evil, but God means it for good. Jesus is at work. The good will come. You may not know how it's going to come. Listen to me. You will not know necessarily how it's going to come.

How is he going to make good? That's not your business. That's God's business. Trust him. Stop saying you have to know everything.

You got to figure it all out so you can believe. No. Trust him and you will believe. Trust him. He's at work in it.

New City Fellowship, he's at work in it. Our situation, your situation is under his control and he will accomplish his good pleasure because he said his purposes will stand.

He said his world will not return to him, but will accomplish his purposes. He will do it. Whatever it is, I know is painful and I can feel you.

[38 : 16] It's horrible. It's evil. But aren't you glad God is greater than evil? aren't you glad that Jesus died, that evil might not reign in you?

Aren't you glad? Pastor Rev, I don't feel good. How can any good come out of this situation? Aren't you glad that God is greater than your feelings?

Believe his word. God will keep his word. Listen, he must keep his word. His word represents him.

He is exalted even above his name, his word. His word represents him. And Jesus is the word made flesh.

If you are in Christ, I don't care what's happening. I do care, by the way. I do care, but I'm just saying, whatever is happening, trust Jesus.

[39 : 31] Keep walking with what did our Lord do? He kept going. All the way to the cross. All the way to set us free.

All the way back to glory that we may have life. father, father, I know many of my brothers and sisters are hurting in some way.

And Lord, I pray that this message would encourage them. I pray that you will not let the devil discourage them, but they would be encouraged because they hear from you. They hear from your truth.

They recognize who Jesus is, and they recognize that he was betrayed, that we might never be betrayed by you. You are faithful. We have found it so, and you will be faithful.

So, Lord, help us to trust in your faithfulness. Though we must walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we will fear no evil, for you are with us. Your rod and your staff, they comfort us.

[40 : 36] Thank you. In Jesus' name. Amen.