

Sept. 4, 2022; “Follow Me” - Week 15

Judas... the disciple with 3 names.

Opening Prayer...

- **“The Lord’s lamp (God’s Word) sheds light on a person’s life, searching the innermost parts.”**
Proverbs 20:27

When mom used my three names, it was not good! “Timothy Christian Bistline!!!!” My first name means, one who honors God and my middle name is the name of the religion that follows Jesus. No pressure whatsoever to live up to the meaning of my names!?!?

Do you know the meaning of your name? Names mean something and they matter; the naming of children is very important! It can become part of their identity; positive or negative. As disciples, our identity is interconnected with Jesus.

Today’s sermon is about Judas, NOT the disciple who betrayed Jesus. He was known by 3 names... Judas, son of James; Lebbaeus; Thaddeus.

- Judas... Greek name for the Hebrew name Judah; the “praised one” Also, “Jehovah leads”;
Thaddeus (heart child); Lebbaeus (breast child/momma's boy)

He was tender hearted, child-like; a gentle soul. We encounter him one time in the New Testament apart from the various times we read his name in the list of called disciples.

Read John 14:15-31... Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit

15 “If you love me, obey my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. 17 He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. 18 No, I will not abandon you as orphans —I will come to you. 19 Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Since I live, you also will live. 20 When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.

21 Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them.” 22 Judas (not Judas Iscariot, but the other disciple with that name) said to him, “Lord, why are you going to reveal yourself only to us and not to the world at large?” 23 Jesus replied, “All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them. 24 Anyone who doesn’t love me will not obey me. And remember, my words are not my own. What I am telling you is from the Father who sent me. 25 I am telling you these things now while I am still with you. 26 But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.

27 “I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid. 28 Remember what I told you: I am going away, but I will come back to you again. If you really loved me, you would be happy that I am going to the Father, who is greater than I am. 29 I have told you these things before they happen so that when they do happen, you will believe. 30 “I don’t have much more time to talk to you, because the ruler of this world approaches. He has no power over me, 31 but I will do what the Father requires of me, so that the world will know that I love the Father. Come, let’s be going.

Judas seems concerned about the world knowing about Jesus. Had his life been so changed by Jesus that he wanted others to experience the same salvation transformation? It seems that way. Judas was gentle, tender heart, concerned for those who had not met Jesus. Thaddeus wanted everyone to see and know Jesus for who He was... God revealed to humanity in the flesh!

A gentle question deserves a gentle answer with a dose of reality mixed in... 23 Jesus replied, “All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them. 24 Anyone who doesn’t love me will not obey me.”

Judas might have been wondering why Jesus wasn’t going to take over the world... Jesus’ plan was to take over a person’s heart, one heart at a time, using us as His disciples; His leaders; His influencers! After Pentecost, ancient records record Judas traveling north to Edessa, a royal city in Mesopotamia (modern day Turkey). There, records indicate he healed the king of Edessa, Abgar. Abgar V is said to be one of the first Christian kings in history, having been converted to the faith by Thaddeus of Edessa, one of the seventy disciples.

The symbol in the church that represents Judas, son of James = a club because he was clubbed to death for his devotion to Jesus.

Jesus’ disciples were followers, apostles (missionaries), leaders. Basic, simple, accurate definition of leadership... “Leadership is influence, nothing more and nothing less.” John Maxwell.

They all had a passion to live into and up to their new names and represent Jesus well in the places they were going to go!

- 11 of the disciples used their influence to build Jesus up among others.
- 1 disciple used his influence to tear Jesus down before others.
- 11 disciples created a world-wide multiplying movement, built on love and hope.
- 1 disciple will be forever known as the betrayer.
- Sometimes you only have one shot to make a positive influence / good first impression. We can influence others in positive or negative ways. We can build others up or tear them down; we can

choose to make situations and people better or worse. We have the power to influence / lead people. Which way are you leading?

For reflection What are you discovering about being a disciple of Jesus, and about making disciples with Jesus?

Read 2 Corinthians 3:16-18... 16 But whenever someone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.

Application - You... as a disciple of Jesus,

- You have a name to honor.
- You have a reputation to uphold.
- You will have many opportunities to influence people; in doing so, you will lead them to follow Jesus.

Further reflection and study - Ephesians 5:15-20... Living by the Spirit's Power

15 So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. **16 Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. (KJV... redeem the time for the days are evil)** 17 Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. 18 Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, 19 singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. 20 And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sticky Statement

Disciples of Jesus have a new name to honor and the ability to influence others and lead them to follow Jesus.

Alternate ending - Disciples of Jesus...

- Represent (describe, display, illustrate, mirror, portray, suggest) God in the world by creating new life.
- Reveal (disclose, display, expose, unveil) God to the world by demonstrating unwavering love.
- Rely (have confidence in) personally on God to sustain us through this world by committing to live in community.