

KATY 1ST WARD
SPIRITUAL MESSAGE #29
THE TRUE STORY OF JUDAS OF ISCARIOT

The scriptures are filled with examples of two kinds of people. People whose lives serve as examples and people whose lives serve as WARNINGS. I hope that if any of our names ever end up in a history book like that, it will be because our life was an example and not a warning. There are two words in the scriptures that are very profound. They are BEHOLD and BEWARE. Behold is in the scriptures 3448 times. Beware is only there 47 times. That right there should tell us something. The beware warnings are very straight forward and to the point and do not need to be repeated to get the message. A few of those uses of beware are as follows:

Beware of covetousness.

Beware lest there shall arise contentions among you,
but beware of pride, lest thou shouldst enter into temptation.

Beware lest ye are deceived.

Beware and repent speedily.

And I now give unto you a commandment to beware concerning yourselves, to give diligent heed to the words of eternal life.

And this final one of note:

And he said unto Judas Iscariot, What thou doesn't, do quickly; but beware of innocent blood.

Now there is an interesting story. Let's talk about Judas Iscariot. We don't know much about him. We don't know why he did what he did. There is just a little written about him. The scriptures say that the Chief Priests offered to pay Judas to identify Jesus by kissing him on the cheek. But there seems to be more to the story than that. Look at this scripture:

Matthew 26:14-16

Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said [unto them], what will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

That has always seemed like a very shallow portrayal of what actually happened. Isn't that interesting that Judas went to them. They did not seek him out. There were no Chief Priests who did not know who Jesus was. They all hated him and wanted to kill him. So I think there is more in this story than just him identifying Jesus with a kiss. There is something in this story that says that Judas became a trusted Apostle of the Savior and then wanted something else very bad. Something so great in his sight that he was willing to do almost anything to get it. We are not told what that was. It seems that whatever it was that he did, that something was finalized by what he did in kissing him on the cheek to signify that he had accomplished his task. I don't know what it means when he said that he would "deliver him". I just know there is more to this story than is written. What did Judas expect to get from it? Just money? I don't think so. What did Jesus mean when he said to him, "Beware of innocent blood"?

That is the other part of the story that is interesting. They paid him 30 pieces of silver to do what he did. Historians now say that 30 pieces of silver in those days was worth about \$500 in our money. I don't know

how much but it was not a lot of money. Why would they pay him that much just to identify Jesus? There is something in that word "DELIVER" that we are not told. It says he sought opportunity to betray him. What does that mean? Doing something because he was an Apostle so they had evidence to crucify him? Did he testify in one of their courts against him and then agree to go kiss the man he was testifying against by kissing him on the cheek to show that he was actually bearing witness against him? Was the kiss testifying against him? We are not told. It has to be more than just identifying him to have been an unforgivable sin. There must be more to this story than that. They could have paid any street boy 10 mites to have pointed Jesus out to them if they did not know who he was. There is something here in this story about betrayal and becoming a traitor that is not told in the scriptures. There is something that Judas wanted to get that seemed very very valuable to him at the time. I think that what Judas thought he would get in the end was worth much more than the 30 pieces of silver. Again, notice in the scripture above that he went to them. They did not approach Judas. So he was after something. We are not told what that was that Judas thought he would gain, maybe he thought he would gain fame or maybe it was political power.

So now Judas has done his work, he has 30 pieces of silver. That is a success story if there ever was one in the scriptures. Right? No. No that is not a success story. He got the money but what did he do with it. He took it back to them and tried to get them to take it back. Why? Because he was unhappy with the money? No. No. He was not unhappy with the money, he was unhappy with himself. He did what he did and then he realized that having what he wanted was not worth it. He got what he wanted and then calculated the cost. It was too much. He paid too big of a price. So he tried to give the money back. But they would not take it. Judas knew that even if they had taken the money back it would not have changed what he did. The scriptures say he then threw the 30 pieces of silver on the floor and left. He did not want the money any more. He wanted to get back what he had lost. Why would he throw the money away? Was he unhappy with the money? No. No. He was unhappy with himself. He was unhappy with what he had done and how it made him feel. He was unhappy with what he had become. He had not counted on that when he was offering to deliver Jesus to them. He did not count the costs. Even giving the money back was not enough. He was so unhappy with himself and what he had become that he went out and hanged himself. Why would he do that? Because he could see that even if he repented (gave the money back) he could never undo what he had done. He could not get back the gifts that he had traded for whatever it was that he thought he was going to gain that the scriptures do not tell us about. He wanted something so bad that he did not look at the cost. It was after he realized the cost that he could see that the price was too high. What he got was not worth it. And even when he had it he could not even give it back. Unhappiness does not come from without. It comes from within. It comes from our not doing all that we can do. It comes from our living less than we know to live. It comes from not counting the costs.

When we were children we used to touch hot things because we did not know they were hot and that it would hurt after. We did not know the cost to touch it. But once we had learned the touch burn lesson we did not touch hot things again because we knew the consequences before we did it. TOUCH BURN. That is a valuable lesson to learn spiritually as well as physically. COUNT THE COST. Before you do something that is not right think of Judas and the price he paid because he did not count the cost beforehand. If Judas could send a message back to us across time, I think that message would simply be, "BEWARE - count the costs!"

The message of this Sunday Sermon is the life's lesson of leaning to look at what we are about to do before we do it and consider the outcome. Stephen Covey said, "Begin with the end in mind". If what we are about to do will affect our eternal salvation, even our happiness in this life then count the cost.

I would also like to tie this life's lesson into something that is very real in our extended family of late. There have been a few hurt feelings over some family matters with some of the members of our family in the recent past. If you have any of those kinds of bad feelings about any other person in our family, I ask you to count the cost. I ask you to look at the long term result of how that will make you feel. How that will cause you to talk in a way that your children and grandchildren will hear and be influenced by it. I ask you to look forward in time, to the day after day conditioning that will form into your attitude in general as you harbor those feelings. When we are bitter about things we tend to talk to others about them. Our children family and friends hear us talking about those things. I ask you to ask yourself if the outcome is what you will want then, when everything is said and done. Is it worth it to have bad feelings and be upset with others over anything that could cost you your happiness both in this life and maybe even in the life to come? How happy can we be in the years to come if we perpetuate those bad feelings in our daily talk and it passes to the next generation? What will it do to the generations to come? What will be their cost? If they hear us talking and multiply those bad feelings (and that is normally what happens from generation to generation) then what will be the cost to them?

I hope that we will each remember the message of Judas who did not count the cost of what he did before he started and look where it lead him.

Hear his message from across the pages of history "BEWARE"!

Cordell Vail

(Taken from a concept presented in a talk by Jim Rhon)

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