

Series: John

Title: Lord, Is it I?

Text: John 13: 18, 21-22

Date: April 24, 2022

Place: SGBC, NJ

John 14: 18: I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me...21: When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. 22: Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

The night of the passover the Lord said the same again.

Matthew 26:22: And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?...

Matthew 26: 25: Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, [teacher] is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

In our text, after the Lord made this announcement that one would betray him notice what happened.

John 14: 23: Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. 24: Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. 25: He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

Try to imagine if you were eating with the Lord and heard him make this statement, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.*" He did not say, "Somebody shall betray me." That would have meant it could be somebody outside of that circle. He said, "*One of you shall betray me.*"

Each looked at the other, one-by-one, "doubting of whom he spake." Peter looked at James; Peter thought, "It can't be James." Then he looked to John; Peter thought, "It can't be John." Then to Andrew, "It can't be Andrew." On down the line, even to Judas Iscariot—"It can't be Judas." Each one did this and each doubted it could be the other.

Then as it set in that one of them would betray the Lord, it made them each "*exceeding sorrowful.*" To think their Lord would be betrayed and to think *one of them* would betray him made them each "*exceeding sorrowful.*"

Divisions: Then three questions were asked: 1) Each asked a question 2) Then Judas Iscariot's question 3) Last, John's question. We will use these for our divisions.

THE QUESTION EACH ASKED

Matthew 26:22: And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?...

Here we see an example of something good. This is something the Spirit of God creates in those born of God. It is a distrust in self. Not one said, "Lord, is it Judas?" Not one named one of the others. They each doubted it could be one of their brethren. But by grace—by the Spirit of God—"everyone" asked "*Lord, is it I?*" This is what the Spirit of God works in his child:

Philippians 3:3: For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

When something is wrong, the Spirit of God makes us question self, first. Why this good suspicion of self? It is because those born of the Spirit of God are taught of God that we have two-natures. We have a holy nature born of the Spirit of God called the new man. And we have a sin-nature born of Adam called the old man. Knowing we have a sin-nature, God teaches us that we should never have confidence in self so as to say the sin my brother commits is impossible for me to commit.

Each of us has different temperaments. There are sins we are each more inclined to and sins we are less inclined to. Yet, this should never give us confidence in self. We each have a sin-nature which is the fountain of all sin.

Matthew 15: 19: For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: 20: These are *the things* which defile a man:

Besides this, to break God's law in one sin is to be guilty of all.

James 2:10: For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all.

Every sin is in one sin, even the least sin. The law was given at Sinai—"that the offense might abound" (Rom 5:20). It shows God's people that every law was broken and every sin committed in Adam's one transgression in the garden by which we all became guilty before God. The law shows the same in each of us due to our sin-nature. No one commits only one kind of transgression.

Romans 3:23: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

The same sin is in the believer's sin-nature as is in the reprobate. One reason Judas betrayed the Lord Jesus is because he was covetous. Cain killed his brother from jealousy. And David—the man after God's own heart—sinned because of pride and lust coming from his sin-nature. These sins, as well as every other, come from the sin-nature which is in every believer. For this reason, the Spirit of our Lord teaches us to not trust in self.

Isaiah 2:22: Cease ye from man, whose breath *is* in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?

1 Corinthians 10:12: Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

The man who trusts in his own heart or his own strength is a fool. Under the present circumstances, we may not be inclined to some sin. But let the circumstances change and we find out we are capable of the same sin as any other.

Therefore, knowing this, we cry, "*Lord, is it I?*" The Lord teaches us better than to speak of some sin and say, "I'll *never* do that!" But instead to call upon our Lord, our sovereign Savior! Believers are capable of any sin in ourselves. It is an amazing contrast to see the apostles here, each questioning self. Then a little later, all made the same mistake saying they would never be offended and would never deny the Lord. Peter led them but they all said it. The devil can do nothing but what God permits. And God only permits him to sift us to teach us our salvation is by the Lord's preserving us. He said to Peter, "I have prayed for you that your faith fail not." But the devil appeals to the pride of our sinful flesh. He put betrayal in Judas heart. And the devil had begun to sift Peter when Peter boasted he would never deny the Lord.

Matthew 26: 31: Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. 32: But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. 33: Peter answered and said unto him, Though all *men* shall be offended because of thee, *yet* will I never be offended. 34: Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. 35: Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

Judas went out and betrayed the Lord. And Peter denied the Lord and went out. Peter was set on leaving the ministry and returning to his fishing. Judas and Peter both sinned. Who made the difference between Peter and Judas Iscariot? Who made the difference between Job and Judas Iscariot? God permitted the same devil to be at work in each one. The same sinful lusts of the flesh were in each one. Each one sinned. Who made the difference in Job and Peter as opposed to Judas? The Lord graciously came to Peter and Job recovered them. The Lord taught Peter and his apostles that *in our flesh dwells no good thing*. We are saved by the grace of God by the righteous obedience of Christ Jesus alone. He put away all the sin of all his people by his precious blood and robed us in his righteousness. He says to those he has sanctified, "Ye are clean every whit." It is the Spirit of God who regenerates us—and continues to cleanse us by the blood of Christ and recover us.

This is why they each addressed Christ as “Lord”—“Lord is it I?” We call on the name of the “**LORD**” Jesus Christ and doing so we confess we are utterly dependent upon our sovereign, conquering, never-failing Savior to keep us. To address him as “Lord” is to take our place at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ, depending upon the Lord to save. It is the spirit given of God that makes us pray to the Lord Jesus as the Psalmist

Psalm 19: 12: Who can understand *his* errors? cleanse thou me from secret *faults*. 13: Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous *sins*; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. 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.

Psalm 139: 23: Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: 24: And see if *there be any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

JUDAS ISCARIOT’S QUESTION

Matthew 26: 25: Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, [teacher] is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

“*Then*”—Judas only asked after the other disciples asked. Spurgeon said, “He who shall last ask the question [is it I] is just the man who ought to have asked it first.”

And notice how Judas addressed the Lord Jesus, “*Master, is it I?*” Two things in this. One, this was a title that showed familiarity rather than the title “Lord”. By this we see Judas’ crafty hypocrisy and disrespect. He betrayed the Lord with a kiss. Two, it was not the reverential, dependent title the others used. By the title, “Lord”, the other apostles took their place at Christ’s feet as sinners in need of Christ to save them by his mercy and grace. But Judas could not take that place.

1 Corinthians 12: 3: Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and *that* no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

This supper was in Simon’s house two days before the passover. Then again at the passover supper the Lord spoke to Judas. Judas heard the Lord Jesus describe his sin in the plainest terms. The Lord Jesus giving him the sop was a gesture of friendship. In other words, the Lord gave Judas ample time to repent. Yet, he was unmoved—he willingly set his heart to betray the Lord Jesus.

Brethren, let us thank God for his grace in revealing our sin to us in the power of his Spirit. Let us thank him for giving us a heart constrained by his love so that it is the desire of our new man to obey him. And thank him for teaching us to have no confidence in our flesh. And let us thank him that when we sin as Peter and the apostles did, he comes to us and breaks our hearts and renews us, granting us repentance.

JOHN’S QUESTION

John 14: 23: Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. 24: Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. 25: He then lying on Jesus’ breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

John was lying closer to the Lord Jesus than Peter. So Peter beckoned to him to “Ask him, who is it?”

John’s position is where we all need to stay—*he was lying on the Lord’s breast*. John writes of this later, again, in *John 21: 20: Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?*” He shows the importance of this position.

John’s confidence was in Christ’s love for him. When writing his gospel, John never refers to himself as the “one who loved Jesus” but only as “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” It not that God loves some of his elect more than others. God’s love is perfect toward all his people. But John’s confidence and our

confidence is not our love to the Lord but his love to us. It is God's love for us that set his affection on his elect entrusting us to Christ his Son in eternity and sent him to save us.

1 John 4: 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

It is Christ's love for us that made him lay down his life on the cross to make us the righteousness of God

John 15:13: Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. [that preeminent Man is Christ who laid down life for his people]

It was God's love that sent the Spirit and regenerated us to life and faith in Christ. It is the love of Christ that constrains us in the inward man—to trust him—to lay all upon him. By his love Christ continues to keep us and grow us ever more dependent upon Christ and less trusting of self. It was the love of Christ for John that made John know he could draw close and stay close to the Savior—in close communion with the Lord Jesus. The Lord answered John privately—he revealed something to John because John was close. Do you ever ask the question:

“Do I love the Lord or no?
Am I his, or am I not?”

Draw near and ask the Lord Jesus Christ. Lay your head on his breast. He will not cast us out for coming to him and casting all upon him. He will reveal more of himself to us. Abraham was continually drawing near to the Lord and the Lord say, “Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?” (Gen 18: 17).

Also, when the Lord revealed it to John, John trusted the Lord to deal with Judas and keep his brethren safe. This is what nearness to Christ will do for us. This is why John walked behind the Lord and Peter when the Lord came to restore Peter. John trusted Christ as his Lord to be able to make him and his brethren stand. Christ and his love for us and the revelation of himself is our strength. He is our need who gives power to subdue our sinful flesh. Thirty pieces of silver would have not tempted John. A man will not go after imitation jewelry when he holds a fist full of diamonds.

Brethren, it is nothing in ourselves—not our religious experience or attainments of any kind—that secures us from temptation. It is Christ. Stay near to Christ. Lay upon his breast. Cast all into his hands. By our Lord's preserving, restoring grace we are continually reminded of his great love for us. Our confidence and security are to be held by incarnate Love himself. May God give us grace to lie upon the Lord's breast continually, casting all our care upon him.

Peter learned and he teaches us—we are no match for the devil. Peter said, “whom resist stedfast in the faith”—that is “humbling yourselves under the mighty hand of God, casting all your care on him for he careth for you.” (1 Pet 5: 6-9).

If we suffer—if we go out as Peter did—the Lord knows who he has chosen—he will rescue his child. A believer can do as Peter did—even go out from us—yet still be Christ's own. If we go out, we are on dangerous ground. Do not do it. Get under the gospel and stay under the gospel. But we ought never write another off if they go out. It is only if they go out and stay out that they are not of us. But concerning those the Lord bought his blood, Peter teaches us what he learned about the Lord's people who go out or who suffer in any way.

1 Peter 5:10: But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle *you*.

Having all our confidence in Christ and none in our flesh—this is where we need to be continually—“*lying upon the Lord's breast.*”

Jude 24: Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, 25: To the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”