

INTRODUCTION

Last Sunday was our first Sunday to offer worship only by live streaming or on Channel 17 in Tyler. We were blown away by the response. We had more people participate in our Livestream service than we've ever had physically gather here on our main or south campus. Our physical attendance is limited by parking and seating capacity, but there's an unlimited opportunity for us to reach people with the Gospel by providing church online.

We had people watching last week from several different nations. We had viewers from Columbia, India, Italy, and even Alabama. If you're watching on Livestream, there's a little text bubble on the top right of the screen. Please let us know if you're watching from somewhere other than East Texas. And most of you are good at multitasking by now. So feel free to make comments or send in prayer requests. It won't distract me because I won't see it, but we have some ministers who are taking note of the comments.

One thing I have been amazed to see is how so many people in our community have been infected with love and generosity. Last Friday we had 94 members of our church who donated blood. What a great way to love East Texas!

One lady told me she has noticed that people are saying, "I love you" more often. She said that when the UPS guy was walking back to his truck she meant to yell, "Thanks" but found herself saying, "I love you!" We could all use a little more love.

We've been studying the Gospel According to John verse by verse since 2018, so I'm going to continue to preach this series, because we need to keep listening to what Jesus said and watching what Jesus did. Today we're going to start reading in John 13:18. The title of the message is The Danger of Pride and Pretense.

Of course, that title is a take-off of Jane Austen's famous romantic novel, *Pride and Prejudice*, written in the year 1813. It was story about the twists and turns of Victorian romance in rural England. Today, it has been the target of many spinoffs and spoofs, the worst has got to be the 2016 movie, "Pride and Prejudice and Zombies."

The setting is the upper room in Jerusalem where the disciples were gathered for the Last Supper. It's the night before Jesus went to the cross. I mentioned in the last message, don't picture them sitting on one side of a long table like many paintings depict. They were reclining on cushions around a smaller table. They supported themselves on their left arm so their right hand—the clean hand—could be used to eat and drink.

Speaking of salvation, Jesus said in John 13:10 "You are clean, but not all of you." For He knew who would betray Him. Let's read about Judas beginning in John 13:18. Keep your Bibles handy because we'll read about Peter a little later.

John 13:18-30. Jesus said, "I'm not speaking about all of you; I know those I have chosen. But the Scripture must be fulfilled: The one who eats my bread has raised his

heel against me. I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am he. Truly I tell you, whoever receives anyone I send receives me, and the one who receives me receives him who sent me."

When Jesus had said this, he was troubled in his spirit and testified, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me."

The disciples started looking at one another—uncertain which one he was speaking about. One of his disciples, the one Jesus loved, was reclining close beside Jesus. Simon Peter motioned to him to find out who it was he was talking about. So he leaned back against Jesus and asked him, "Lord, who is it?"

Jesus replied, "He's the one I give the piece of bread to after I have dipped it." When he had dipped the bread, he gave it to Judas, Simon Iscariot's son. After Judas ate the piece of bread, Satan entered him. So Jesus told him, "What you're doing, do quickly."

None of those reclining at the table knew why he said this to him. Since Judas kept the money-bag, some thought that Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the festival," or that he should give something to the poor. After receiving the piece of bread, he immediately left. And it was night.

Let's consider the danger of pride and pretense, but in reverse order. We'll study the Pretense of Judas and the Pride of Simon Peter. As you compare Judas and Peter, they are polar opposites. There are two lists of the twelve disciples, in Matthew 10 and Luke 6. Peter is always listed first and Judas is listed last.

I. JUDAS WAS GUILTY OF SPIRITUAL PRETENSE.

Judas was a false friend who sold Jesus out for thirty pieces of silver, which is about \$100 in today's money. The very name Judas has come to be associated with betrayal. I've never met a person whose parents named him Judas. There's a couple of important lessons we can learn from Judas.

A. You may be acquainted with Jesus but not truly saved.

In the entire history of humanity, Judas had the benefit of being in the presence of Jesus for three years. The question people want to know is WHY did Jesus choose Judas? The answer is simple, and we find it in what Jesus said in verse 18. It was to fulfill the Old Testament prophecy. Jesus said, "The scripture MUST be fulfilled." Then He quoted the words of King David found in Psalm 41:9 "Even my friend in whom I trusted, one who ate my bread, has raised his heel against me." David sang this song with a broken heart when his son Absalom rebelled against him and tried to steal the throne. Jesus' heart was broken by the betrayal by someone He considered a friend. A few hours after this meal, Judas would lead a mob into the Garden of Gethsemane and betray Jesus with a kiss.

Judas spent three years attending Jesus University. His mind was full of biblical truth. Judas heard all the parables and teachings of Jesus. He knew more about what Jesus taught than we do because only a small percentage of what Jesus did and said are in the Gospel accounts. Judas' problem wasn't information, it was transformation. He hadn't been transformed.

And Judas witnessed the miracles of Jesus. He was there when Jesus turned water into wine. He saw Jesus waterskiing on the lake without a boat—or even skis. He was there when Jesus said, "Lazarus, come forth." He watched as a man dead for four days came out of a grave. And yet in the end he betrayed Jesus.

Judas is a warning to us that there are people who can be a church member and not truly be saved. Going to church doesn't save you. Reading the Bible doesn't save you. Walking down an aisle and filling out a form doesn't save you. And being baptized doesn't save you. An old country preacher put it like this: You can be baptized so many times in a farm pond until you know every catfish by its first name and still not be saved. It's about knowing and loving Jesus.

Some of you watching me are still skeptical about faith and Jesus. Perhaps you have thought, "If I could only see Jesus in the flesh and hear the actual voice of Jesus, then I would believe." Not necessarily. Judas spent three years with Jesus.

And Judas had all the disciples fooled. When Jesus said, "One of you will betray me" it wasn't like eleven sets of eyes darted to Judas. They really didn't know. They asked, "Who is it?" They suspected Peter, because he was always saying and acting unpredictably. Abraham Lincoln is credited with saying, "You can fool some of the people all of the time. And you can fool all of the people some of the time. But you can't fool all the people all the time." And we can add, "And you can never fool God."

B. When you reject Jesus, your destiny is darkness.

The last thing John says about Judas was that he left the supper and went out and it was dark. I think this has a symbolic meaning. Jesus has already claimed to be the Light of the World. So when you turn from Jesus, the only thing you find is darkness—spiritual darkness.

Jesus said, "He who receives me receives the one who sent me." But the opposite of that is true. A person who rejects Jesus like Simon did, rejects the Father who sent Him.

Judas walked out of the dinner into the dark. And it kept getting darker. The next day he committed suicide and went to an even darker place. Even today when someone dies, we tend to say, "He's fine now because they've gone to a BETTER PLACE." Not everyone is going to a better place. Judas didn't. And even today, not everyone is going to Heaven.

Many people have a mistaken idea about hell. They think hell will be bright lights and loud music. It will be one long party time. But three times in Matthew Jesus described hell as a place of "outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth."

In 2 Peter, he described people who are spiritual pretenders. In 2 Peter 2:17 we read, "These people are springs without water, mists driven by a storm. The gloom of darkness has been reserved for them."

In Matthew 27 we see the final day of Judas' life. The Bible says he was full of regret but regret is not repentance. He tried to give the money back. The religious leaders wouldn't touch it because it was blood money. Judas threw the money at them and went out and hanged himself—and the real darkness had just begun.

There are people today who are like Judas. They are church members, who have never been transformed. They talk the talk, but they don't really walk the walk. If you are one of them, it's not too late for you.

Years ago, when I was a pastor in Alabama, I was preaching a revival at First Baptist Church of Atmore. Before the service, the pastor and I were served dinner by a church member who was a big hunter and he was also a taxidermist. He stuffed animals.

Barbara Bush had a great sense of humor. She once told a joke about a veterinarian who was also a taxidermist. His motto was "Whatever happens, you get your dog back."

Well, this guy's house was filled with stuffed animals. I walked by his fireplace and jumped because there was a stuffed rattlesnake coiled there. Of course, there were the multiple deer heads on every wall. He even had a bobcat in his den. I was a little unsettled during the meal being surrounded by so many animals.

We had a good meal, and that night I preached on the words of Jesus found in Matthew 7. Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in Heaven. On that day (Judgment Day) many will say unto me, 'Lord, Lord didn't we prophecy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many wonderful works in your name?' Then I will announce to them: 'I never knew you; depart from me you lawbreakers.'"

That night, I spoke about how some people appear outwardly to be Christian, but they had never been inwardly transformed by Jesus. When we gave the invitation, I was surprised to see the man who served us dinner walking up to the pastor. They talked for a while and prayed and when we stopped singing, the pastor asked the man to share with the congregation. The man had tears in his eyes and said, "Most of you know that I'm a taxidermist. I make dead animals look alive. Tonight, the Lord convicted me that I was like one of those stuffed animals. I had been going through the motions of being a Christian, but inside I was dead. And tonight, I gave my heart to Jesus."

That man went from being a pretender to a true follower of Jesus. And it's not too late for you. In just a few moments, I'm going to give you an opportunity to place your trust in Christ.

Now read about Peter's pride in 13:36: "Lord," Simon Peter said to him, "where are you going?" Jesus answered, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow later." "Lord," Peter asked, "why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." Jesus replied, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly I tell you, a rooster will not crow until you have denied me three times.

II. PETER WAS GUILTY OF SPIRITUAL PRIDE.

Peter was so full of himself that he said, "I will die for you." In Matthew's version of this conversation Peter was riding his high horse when he added this claim, "All these others may leave you, but I never will!" And Jesus said, "Peter you are going to deny me not once, not twice, but three times. And you'll do it before sunrise." Let's learn a couple of important lessons from Peter's pride.

A. We are often too proud to admit our weakness.

Pride is the sin that blinds the person who has it. Everyone else can see it, but a proud person has too much pride to admit they have a problem with pride. There are plenty of biblical warnings about pride. Proverbs 16:18 says, "Pride comes before destruction, and an arrogant spirit before a fall."

There's a children's fable that illustrates this truth. Once there were two ducks and a frog that lived in the same pond. They became good friends. Everything was fine until a drought occurred and the pond started drying up. The ducks said to their frog friend, "This is no problem for us because we can just fly to another pond. But you will dry out and die before you can hop to the next pond. What can we do?" The frog came up with a brilliant idea. He said, "Why don't you each take the end of this stick in your bills? I'll hang onto the stick with my mouth while you fly us to the next pond." "We'll do it!" The ducks said.

So they took off flying with the frog between them. They flew over the farm house and the farmer looked up and saw them. He said, "What a brilliant idea. I wonder who thought of that?" Proudly the frog said, "I did!" Thus illustrating that pride goes before a fall.

B. Jesus doesn't give up on us when we fail.

Even when Jesus predicted that Peter would fail, He also knew Peter would bounce back and be a leader. On the night of the Last Supper Luke gives us more insight into what Jesus said. In Luke 22:31 Jesus said, "Simon, Simon, look out. Satan has asked to sift you like wheat. But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And you, when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." The word "turn back" is our word for repent. The difference between Judas and Peter is vast. Judas felt regret and went out and killed himself. Peter repented of his sin and Jesus restored him to a place of leadership.

We can learn from our failures. A junior executive at IBM involved his company in a risky business venture which resulted in a \$10 million loss. Tom Watson, the CEO of IBM called him

into his office. The embarrassed junior executive said, "I guess you are going to fire me." Tom Watson said, "Fire you? Why would I want to do that? We just spent \$10 million educating you."

The Bible is full of famous people who failed and God still used them. Abraham lied twice about his wife. Jacob lied to his dad and cheated out his brother. Moses committed murder. David sinned with Bathsheba and had her husband killed. All these Bible characters and many more failed and God restored them. So don't let your life be defined by your failures. God can restore you and use you in a mighty way.

CONCLUSION

Before we leave John 13, let's go back to that upper room where there were twelve disciples and Jesus. Jesus was the Lord and Master, but the Bible says He stood up and took off His clothes and wrapped a towel around Himself. Then He took a basin of water and went to each disciple, including Judas and Peter, and knelt down and washed their feet. In this act, Jesus was acting out that the total story of redemption. We read in Philippians 2 that from the beginning of the beginning Jesus, the second person of the godhead was seated on a throne in Heaven. He was co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit. He was worshipped by a massive army of angels and other Heavenly creatures. But Jesus willingly stood up and He laid aside the garments of glory. He divested Himself from the full benefits of Deity, and He stepped from the throne and lowered Himself to become a human being like us. And not just a man, but a slave, and He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death—and not just any death—the death on a cross.

He came to lay down his life as a servant for you. Just as He got off the couch to serve the disciples, he got off His throne to serve you. Just as He got down on the floor to wash their feet, He got up on the cross to save you. Just as He poured out water for the disciples, He poured out His blood for you.

His death wasn't the end of the story. Because God raised Him from the dead and then He raised Him to restore His glory. The Bible says, "Therefore God has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:9-11)

Jesus said, "Peter, where I'm going you can't go now. But one day you will follow me." He meant, "Peter I'm going to die tomorrow. And it's not your time to go there yet. But one day you will."

It's not in the Bible, but the early church fathers write that years later, Peter was arrested by the Roman government in Rome and they prepared to crucify Peter. But this man so full of pride that night, had been broken under the yoke of service. His last request was to be crucified upside down, because he didn't feel worthy to be crucified in the same manner as His Lord.

One day we're all going to die. Only God knows when. I know one day I'm going to die, but for me, it will be a glorious experience. As the Bible says, I'll be absent from the body and present with the Lord.

Sometimes when I used to check in to an airport the ticket agent would ask me. "What's your final destination." I've always been tempted to say, "Oh, my final destination is Heaven." But to keep from being cheesy, I'll just say, "DFW or Atlanta or wherever I'm going." So what is your final destination? There are only two choices: Heaven or Hell.

Sometimes people will say crazy things like, "This life is hell." Oh, no my friend this isn't hell, it's a million times *better* than hell. Or someone will say, "This is a heavenly experience." Oh no, my friend this life is a million times *worse* than Heaven.

So, here's my last thought for you. Listen carefully. For those of us who know and love Jesus, this life is as close to hell as we'll ever be. But for someone who doesn't know or love Jesus, this life is as close to Heaven as you'll ever be.

But today, it's not too late to change your final destination. If you would like to place your faith in Jesus today, I want to lead you in a prayer of faith. It's often called a sinner's prayer, but every prayer is a sinner's prayer. But this is a prayer to take the first step of salvation. It's like the prayer I prayed when I first trusted Christ. If you would like to join me in this prayer, please bow your heads where you are and repeat these words after me—and mean them sincerely in your heart.

Dear God, I am a sinner. I'm sorry for my sin; please forgive me. I believe Jesus Christ is Your Son and that He died for my sins and You raised Him to life. I want to invite you Jesus, into my heart, to take control of my life. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

OUTLINE

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A. You may be acquainted with Jesus but not truly saved.

"Even my friend in whom I trusted, one who ate my bread, has raised his heel against me." *Psalm 41:9 CSB*

B. When you reject Jesus, your destiny is darkness.

"These people are springs without water, mists driven by a storm. The gloom of darkness has been reserved for them." *2 Peter 2:17 CSB*

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Jesus said, "Simon, Simon, look out. Satan has asked to sift you like wheat. But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And you, when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." *Luke 22:31-31 CSB*

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For the Joy...
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