

The Wasteful

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[0:00] It probably was Walter Lord's classic on the shipwreck, but I was fascinated with that great ship.! It was an engineering marvel, a floating palace whose maiden voyage ended in tragedy.

! Some have even died trying to reach the sunken vessel just to get a haunted glimpse of its remains resting on the ocean floor. In June 2023, more than a century after that ship went down, a small deep sea capsule called the Titan imploded while carrying five people down to see the wreckage.

Among those attempting to travel almost two and a half miles deep into the North Atlantic, where the water pressure is 380 times worse than on the surface.

There was a billionaire explorer there, a father and a son, and Ocean Gate Expeditions founder, Stockton Rush, all died instantly, lost instantly in the same waters of the North Atlantic, about 400 miles south of Newfoundland, where the Titanic herself went down.

We may want to leave that watery grave alone. The maiden voyage of the Titanic was to be a grand event.

[1:26] A ticket was not easy to get. The world's elite clamored to be aboard the Titanic. There were millionaires there, much more rare in that day than today.

Industrialists and celebrities all wanted to be on that ship that was called the ship that God himself couldn't sink. It is estimated that 10% of the world's wealthiest people were on that ship.

Among those planning to sail were J.P. Morgan, the powerful financier who owned the White Star Line, the company that owned the fleet that included the Titanic, as well as a man named Milton Hershey, the king of chocolate.

Both of them had tickets in hand. Morgan canceled at the last minute, blamed it on business. Hershey and his wife chose to sail home earlier on another vessel.

They both had tickets purchased. Tickets they never punched. Lives were spared because they didn't. Because four days after it set sail, the Titanic struck an iceberg in the frigid waters of the North Atlantic and slipped beneath the waves, breaking in half along the way.

[2:46] Never reaching the shores of New York. Never completing her maiden voyage. I thought about that story when I thought about who I want to talk about this morning.

Unpunched tickets reminds me of one that had a ticket of opportunity like no one else and just wasted it.

The last two weeks, we've looked at 11 of the apostles. I want to look at the last one today. They are listed four times in Scripture.

Three times in the Gospels, one time in the book of Acts. All three of those lists in the Gospels have Judas Iscariot last on the list.

Acts does not even include him because of some of the things we'll talk about today. And Judas never got on board.

- [3 : 51] And I'm not speaking of boarding a failed voyage. I'm speaking instead of getting aboard an opportunity of a lifetime, of eternal lifetime. And he was close.
- But yet he was so very far. He is the last of the 12 apostles chosen by Christ. However, he is unlike the rest.
- To be blunt, he's a waste. And I call him the wasteful. I want you to see in Mark chapter 3, beginning in verse 13, it says that Christ appointed the 12, Simon to whom he called the name Peter, James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James, to whom he gave the name Barnabas, that is, sons of thunder, Andrew and Philip and Bartholomew and Matthew, and Thomas and James the son of Alphaeus and Thaddeus and Simon the zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.
- As I mentioned earlier, he's always last in these lists. Twice referenced this way as the one who betrayed Christ. Luke calls him the traitor. And then when Luke writes Acts, he does not even include him in the list.
- He's a waste. For one, there's a wasted opportunity here. Judas was called by Christ to follow him. He was entrusted with the money bag, Scripture tells us, of the ministry of Christ.
- [5 : 26] He witnessed what others witnessed as well of Christ did. He saw the miracles that Christ did. He heard the teaching of Christ. He heard it directly from the mouth of Christ.
- He saw the impact of his words. He saw the power of God firsthand. I believe that when he joined Jesus on this journey, that he was convinced that Jesus was the Messiah.
- And that they were looking for from the very beginning. However, he never laid truth of Christ by faith.
- He expected, as many Jews did, he expected certain things to come from the Messiah. As his understanding of what prophecy said. With some emphasis on some prophecy. With an ignorance of other types of prophecy.
- And the reality is, many people have made Christ out. They still make Christ out. To be who they want him to be. And not who, in fact, he is. The reality is, he was never transformed by Christ.
- [6 : 34] He even betrayed him. And that's why Judas is thought of to be the most notorious and universally scorned traitor in all of human history. The most colossal spiritual failure ever recorded.
- It was a wasted opportunity. But not only that, but it was also a wasted influence. While Judas could have easily been influenced by Christ, he literally walked with Christ daily.
- The sad reality is that he was never influenced by Christ. That he never actually walked with Christ. All along the way. There seems to be a growing animosity for Christ.
- Within his heart. And because Christ was not who he thought he ought to be. And then an event happens that is recorded in John. That looks like it set the wheels in the motion of his portrayal.
- I want you to see it. It's in John chapter 12. Beginning in verse 1. And it says this. Six days before the Passover. Jesus therefore came to Bethany where Lazarus was.
- [7 : 44] Whom Jesus had raised from the dead. So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served. And Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table.
- Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment. Made from pure nard. And anointed the feet of Jesus. And wiped his feet with her hair.
- The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. Now I want you to get this setting real quick. This is six days before the Passover.

That would precede the death of Christ. This is his final days before the cross. He's having dinner with dear friends. And Mary takes a pound of expensive ointment.

It is often described as spikenard in scripture. That is the most prized fragrance used on the dead. It was harvested from the high slopes of the Himalaya mountains.

[8 : 45] It was hard to get. Hard to reach. Costly to buy. It was a sacrifice for her to use probably her most prized possession on Christ.

It was worth a year's wages. And she liberally, even recklessly washed his feet with it.

Using her hair. I said it's her hair. A woman didn't let her hair down anywhere except in the privacy of her own home with her husband.

Her hair was considered her glory. It was not for others to see. Mary took her glory and laid it at the feet of Jesus.

And I said the feet. Because in that day the feet was thought to be the filthiest part of the body. Only the lowest servants of the household washed feet because they wore sandals.

[9 : 58] And because they walked on dusty roads. The same place that the animals walked. It was not pretty. But when she did this.

Scripture says the house was filled with the fragrance. Not only does that speak of good fragrance.

But I believe it speaks of influential sacrifice. Because everybody was affected. Not only by the scene of her surrendering herself there.

But by the waff of the finest fragrance known to them. That is everybody. But Judas. It goes on to say.

But Judas Iscariot. One of his disciples. Who. He who was about to betray him. Said. Why was this ointment not sold for 300 denarii.

[11 : 05] That's about a year's wages. A denarii is a day's wage. And given to the poor. He said this. John just tells us.

He said this not because. He cared about the poor. But because he was a thief. And having charge of the money bag. He used to help himself. To what was put in it.

Jesus said. Leave her alone. So that she may. Keep it for the day of burial. For the poor. You'll always have with you.

But you do not always have me. Judas sees the value. Of what's been poured out. And what's being kept. For the day of his burial.

However. Remember. When the ladies got to the tomb. On Sunday morning. To anoint his body. He'd already risen.

[12 : 04] There was no need to anoint the body. Because it wasn't dead. This anointing. Had been enough. But.

Judas was not trying. To be a steward. He was not trying. To take care of the less fortunate. He was trying to get rich.

And Christ called him on it. And that is the step. This is the altercation. That. That broke him. Mark chapter 14.

Tells us. That he left them. To go to the chief priest. To betray Christ. Luke 22. Tells us. What led him. To leave them.

And go to that meeting. Of betrayal. It says in Luke. 22 verse 3. Then Satan. Entered into Judas. Called Iscariot. Who was of the number.

[13 : 02] Of the tribe. Now when Luke says. Then Satan. Entered into Judas. I want you to understand. That was not a sudden ambush.

By the evil one. It was not. It was the result. Of a long. Quiet. Invitation. Judas. Had been. Walking.

Beside. Christ. But he had been walking. Toward. Sin. He had dipped his hands. Into greed. Dabbled in deceit.

And before long. The sin. That he toyed with. Had taken over his life. And I want you to see. The progression. That happens. In such a pattern. First.

There's a foothold. Ephesians 4. Verse 27. Says. Do not give the devil. The opportunity. That word opportunity there. Speaks also.

[13:57] And is often translated. A foothold. And the foothold. Of Judas was. That he had a love. Of money. Enough to steal. Jesus said.

In Matthew 6. 24. You can't serve both. God and money. You'll hate one. And love the other. And that's exactly. What's happening here. But a foothold.

That is allowed. Let's just say. A weakness. That's recognized. In our lives. A sinful pattern.

That's recognized. In our life. That's allowed. To happen. That's not broken. That foothold. Becomes. A stronghold.

And when it becomes. A stronghold. That's much more. Deliberate. It's not an. Accidental. Mess up. From time to time.

[14:54] It's a. It's a pattern. Within our lives. You have all. You have allowed. Influence. To permeate. A matter. Until it takes over. That's a stronghold.

And he's now. Looking for an opportunity. To snuff. Jesus. Out. Not only that. But to benefit. From it. Financially.

Wasn't able to benefit. From the anointing. It was wasted. As he saw it. So now he wants. To benefit. Financially. By setting. Jesus up.

And handing him over. That. That deliberate. Alliance. To sinfulness. That. Rationalization. Of wrongdoing.

Leads. To satanic. Control. And. Satan. Entered in. To Judas. That's what scripture says. John says. That it happened. The moment. He took the bread.

[15:50] In the last supper. With the disciples. In the upper room. And now. What Satan's entered in. He is now. Controlled. By Satan. Now listen. That's a lot.

About the state of his soul. Because that can't happen. To a Christian. That tells me.

That he never came to Christ. Because the reality is. Satan can't possess. A. A Christian. You can't be possessed by.

Christ through salvation. And by Satan at the same time. First Corinthians 6 says. That our body is a temple.

Of the Holy Spirit of God. Christians can be. Hear me now. Christians can be influenced. And they can be oppressed.

[16:52] But they cannot be possessed. Let me be more clear. Satan can knock. Satan can peer in the windows.

Of your life. He can scare you. He can scar you. He can bully you. But he cannot possess you. Judas.

Was possessed. And demons. Can possess the lost. Oppress the saved.

And obsess. Anyone. Who toys too long. In the shadows of sin. Judas. Was not an innocent victim.

He was a willing vessel. And he bit off more nicotine. The influence of Christ. Was wasted. Because his heart was unguarded.

[17:53] He carried the money bag. But money carried him. He stood in the light of every day. But yet let darkness move in. He wasted the opportunity. To be influenced by Christ.

He chose another route. Now. Let me go back to the anointing. For just a minute. Okay. The anointing. In that special worship hour.

When they're sharing a meal. She brings out the most precious thing they have. It's in a clay jar. That does not have a screw on top. It does not have a sprayer on the top of it.

It's sealed. She breaks that seal. It can never be completely closed again. Unless they put it in another vessel. And she anoints his feet.

With that fragrance. With her hair. And the fragrance. Fill the room. Is what scripture says. And I'll always believe. That that was literal. But I also believe.

[18:52] That it was spiritual. Because she. Impacted others. By her. Sacrifice. But there was somebody in the room.

Whose worship was hindered. Who. Who never got it. And I want you to hear me today. I pray for you.

Before we ever walk in this room. Be careful. If your worship. Is hindered. There's always a few.

That just don't get it. And while Mary was worshiping. While Mary was worshiping.

At the feet of Jesus. Judas was calculating. With a cynical eye.

[19:55] For the whole scene. He's calculating. I want you to hear me this morning. He was in worship. But worship was not in him.

And that's a bad place to be. So if you feel like that today. Brian thank you. This week and every week.

For the music that you choose. And for what this choir does. And for the specials that are set up. And all of that that goes into that. It's obvious to me. There's an anointing upon.

The preparation that takes place. Before we ever come in this room. And I'm thankful for that. I cherish it. So if you feel like today.

With the songs. The prayers. And the sermons. If you. If you just don't get it. I want you to take note of that. I want you to take note of that. What is it?

[20:54] Is it possible that it's within you? Is there a hindrance that's within you?

Possibly unconfessed sin? Possibly besetting sins? Those sins that continue to build patterns in your life. Sin that so easily clings to you.

And entangles you. Is there a stronghold in your life? The bigger question is. Do you know the Lord personally?

Have you ever surrendered your life to the Lord? And that's not an accusation. It's just a question. If there's something wrong. What is wrong with your worship? I'm telling you.

It blows my mind. That Judas. Wasted. Influence. He wasted his opportunity to influence. He wasted the influence of Christ. Upon him. If I could go back to any time.

[21:55] In history. And somehow time travel back. To any place in history. I'd like to be in Galilee.

It's a special place. Galilee is. I'd like to be in Galilee. And watch him walk by. And hear what he had to say. I've been to the Garden of Gethsemane.

I'd like to walk among that olive grove. And see him out there. I don't know if I want to see him on the cross.

But. I'm jealous of the opportunities that Judas had. To witness Christ.

First hand. But yet he never. Got it. And that leads to the last wasted. He wasted his life. The tailspin.

[23:01] At the end of his life is horrible. And it is fast. And listen folks. It often is. Because a pattern of increased sinfulness often ends in tragedy.

He negotiated. He negotiated. He negotiated. 30 pieces of silver. That's about. And it. There's a range there. What do we mean by silver? But.

But. That's about 40% of the 300 denarii. He was trying to get at the dinner. He got that from the chief priest and the elders.

He led them to Jesus along with the Roman guard. Matthew 26 tells us about it. It says in verse 47. While he was still speaking. Judas came. One of the 12. And with him a great crowd with swords and clubs.

Listen. When it says a great crowd there. I want you to know. If you've been to a church passion play. I've been the Roman soldier. I was one when I was a teenager. If you've been to one of those passion plays. I'm telling you. What showed up at that garden.

[24:00] Ain't anything like you've seen in the church. There could have been more than 100 soldiers show up. They were waiting for a mutiny. They were waiting for something wild.

And. They show up with swords and clubs for the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer. What a name to give a man. Had been given. Had given them a sign saying.

The one I kiss. Is the man. Seize him. And he came up to Jesus at once and said. Greetings. Rabbi. And he kissed him. And Jesus said.

Friend. Do what you've come to do. And then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him. He betrayed him with a kiss. He's sorry. He's sorry. I'd like to meet him in an alley.

Honestly. Sorry. Sorry. He later regretted it. The guilt was too much for him.

[24:58] Matthew 27 verse 3 says this. Then when Judas. His betrayer. Saw that Jesus was condemned. He changed his mind. And he brought back the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders.

Saying I have sinned by betraying innocent blood. And they said. What is that to us? See to it yourself. And throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple.

He departed. And he went out. And hanged himself. Notice he tried to pay back for his wrongdoing. We can't pay back for our sins.

Not only Judas. But none of us can. We can't somehow pay God off. Because of the sin. And the times that we betrayed him.

We can't do that. He couldn't do that either. Notice he also went to the wrong place. He needed to be going to the Lord. It's where he needed to be going.

[26:01] But instead of going to the Lord. He didn't do that. He didn't repent. He didn't pray. He don't say anything about that. Satan's influence drove him.

To hang himself. By the way. That's a common trait of the evil one. Whether it be through suicide.

Whether it be through drugs. Whether it be through stupid action. How does some clown.

Buy an automatic weapon. And go in and clean out. A school of children. Or a grocery store with people there. And then kill himself. How does that happen? It's the evil one.

Folks. That's exactly what it is. It is irrational. It is unbelievable. And I believe it is often possession. Quite honestly. Because Jesus told us.

- [27 : 04] The thief comes to steal. Kill and destroy. Satan don't want to give you a headache. He wants to ruin your life. And if you are a Christian. And he can't have your soul.
- He'll try his best to steal your testimony. He's a Christian. Acts goes on to tell us. That the silver was used to buy the land. That he hung himself on.
- And after he died. Either the branch that he was hanging from. Or the rope that was hanging. Broke. And his body fell. And it burst open. And that field became known.
- As the field of blood. It was bought. With the money. That he threw down. Trying to turn it in. What a sad.
- Sad. Ending. But let me show you. Show you. The saddest part. As Jesus says. In Matthew 26. 24.
- [28 : 02] It would have been better for that man. If he had not been born. What a statement. Why did he say that?
- Because although Judas walked beside Jesus. Although he heard the words of Jesus. Although he had hopes for Jesus at one time I believe. Although he had seen the power of Jesus.
- He never accepted Jesus. Jesus chose him. But he never chose Jesus. And he was close enough to touch Jesus. But not close enough to trust Jesus.
- And that brings us back to the Titanic. Because there were warnings for that ship. The USS Californian was about 15 or 20 miles away from them.
- And they sent six warnings to the Titanic. To tell them about the iceberg that was there. And it was ignored.
- [29 : 08] The operator aboard the Titanic was too busy with other things. He was trying to accommodate other people. Instead of taking care of his job. And he finally said shut up I'm busy.
- And a few minutes later the operator of the Californian cut the radio off. They were stopped by the way because of the iceberg.
- And he went to bed. And that was the last warning. Within one hour the Titanic hit the iceberg. I believe Judas' life is shown to us as a warning.
- To heed the warning. To not waste the opportunity. To not waste the influence. To not waste your life.
- Because the reality is many of us can adhere to Christ. Or adhere to Christian things. And can kind of go along with them along the way.
- [30 : 17] But in reality it never really changes our lives. There's a vague familiarity there. We might even play the part.
- But if you've never surrendered your life to the Lord Jesus Christ. And said Lord I'm a sinner and I know it. And I need you to forgive me of my sins. To come into my life. And to save me. And to change me. If that's never happened to you.
- I'm telling you. If you don't change your mind about those matters. You'll waste your life. Both now and for eternity.
- And the story of Judas is one for church goers. The story of Judas is one that has seen the work of God. Has witnessed the work of God. Has seen those things happen.
- And it's never stuck. We've never been radically changed. I spent last week talking about seven different apostles.
- [31 : 19] All of them except John. And I think I talked about John the week before. But all of them died for their faith. History tells us. The only one that didn't was John who died on the island of Patmos.

At an old age. After writing five of the books in the New Testament. But there was one among them.

That never got it. Never had a zeal for the Lord. Never had been changed by the Lord. And he died without him.

Even with a strong familiarity. Please don't darken the doors of this church.

Week after week after week. And never surrender your life to Christ. You are my greatest burden. Surrender your life to Christ.

[32 : 24] And then live it. Share it. Enjoy it. Be changed by it. Let it show in your life.

Let it show on your face. Tell others about it. So they don't waste the opportunity. They don't waste the influence.

And they don't waste their life. With every head bowed and every eye closed. I want to ask you. If you've never given your heart and life to the Lord Jesus. I encourage you to do that. Within the hour I'm going to baptize.

A young lady that. That met me about a month ago. At the front door of the church after worship. And said she needed to get saved.

And she did. And she did. And she's publicly professing that. Today. If you've never done that.

[33 : 29] If you've never given your life to Christ. I want you to know now is the time. Now I'll be honest. The invitation is not over when we close this service down. I'm always available.

But. Don't miss out on the greatest opportunity you'll ever have in Christ. If you have done that and it's private. You've never made it public.

Then. Christ tells us by his example and by his commission. That we all do that by baptism. I encourage you. To honor God by being baptized.

Maybe you're here and God's drawing you to First Baptist Church. God's doing a wonderful work in our church. I'm thankful for that. And if God's leading you here. We'll be happy to guide you in that. Or maybe there's.

Maybe there's a foothold in your life. That God's shown you today. A slip there. That's more than once. Not a pattern yet. But more than once. That you need to deal with.

[34 : 27] Or maybe there's a stronghold there. And it's a pattern. It's legit. It's real. It's ever before you. As David said about his sin. You need to give that over to the Lord.

If you're a Christian. He can't possess you. Satan can't possess you. But man. He can oppress you. He can weigh you down. And make you miserable. And I'll tell you. The way he does it. The open door is sin.

So just repent of that. And walk away from it. By the power of the Spirit of God. That's put within a safe person. You can walk away from it. You're not a slave to sin.

You don't have to live that way. Heavenly Father. I love you. And I thank you. For the horrible stories. That's in the Word of God. As well as the beautiful stories. That's in the Word of God. Help us to learn from both.

And help us to respond in obedience. As you speak to our hearts and lives. In Jesus' precious name. Amen.