

Judas, the Traitor— March 31-April 6

GAMECHANGERS

To prepare for discussion each week, group members should use the **Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scriptures at the bottom of this page. You will notice that we are continuing the pattern of your discussing scripture *after* the Sunday message on that passage.

Background for John 12:1-6, Matthew 26:14-16

Judas Iscariot is one of the most well-known of Jesus's disciples. In fact, he is the most notorious and the most universally scorned. Over 2,000 years later, Judas Iscariot is still known as history's worst traitor.

Although Judas' call is not recorded in scripture, he began exactly where the other disciples had begun. However, it appears that his time with Jesus did not mirror the progress that the other disciples had made. He spent around three years with Jesus just like the others, but to no avail. Judas' story is a reminder that proximity to Jesus does not guarantee relationship with Jesus.

In John 12:1-6, Judas' love of money is evident. Rather than being moved by the extravagance of Mary's gift to Jesus, Judas is only focused on the cost. John, who is writing this account, clearly communicates Judas' intentions and concern about the money. His position as treasurer for the disciples would have made him lean naturally toward thinking about money. But his heart as a traitor would have prized money over Jesus.

In Matthew 26:14-16, Judas begins putting his plan into motion to betray Jesus. Judas is paid in advance and begins looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus. This moment finally comes at the Garden of Gethsemane. Judas leads a party there to capture Jesus and identifies him by giving Jesus a kiss. Jesus is then taken into custody and his trial, torture, and crucifixion was put into motion by this kiss of betrayal.

The Gospel writers also tell us that overwhelmed with guilt, Judas returns the money to the temple—the measly thirty pieces of silver. Finding himself in a hell of his own making, Judas cannot bear it. His sin has brought him such misery that he hangs himself.

John MacArthur says it best: “When Judas bartered away the life of Christ, he was in effect selling his own soul to the devil. The tragedy of his life was a tragedy of his own making. He ignored the light he had been exposed to for all those years, and thus he relegated himself to eternal darkness.” When God changes the world, he changes those who are willing to be changed.

Scriptures for the upcoming weeks:

April 7

Peter – *The Performer*

Matthew 16:13-18, 21-23