

“Hearts of Darkness”
(Mark 14:10-11)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. Last time we saw the disciples grumble
 - a. When the woman poured the expensive perfume
 - b. On Jesus’ head.
 - (i) “The perfume could have been sold
 - (ii) And given to the poor.”
 - c. A parallel account tells us
 - (i) Judas was particularly put out
 - (ii) Because he liked to steal the money
 - (iii) That was put into their common bag (John 12:6).
 - d. The chief priests were likewise put out:
 - (i) Because they were earlier looking
 - (ii) For a way to arrest and kill Jesus
 - (iii) But couldn’t because of people (vv. 1-2).
2. Now the opportunity affords itself to resolve both issues.
 - a. Judas now goes to the chief priests to sell Jesus out.
 - (i) Judas gets what he wants: money.
 - (ii) And the priests get what they want:
 - (a) An opportunity to arrest Jesus
 - (b) Away from the crowds,
 - (c) That they might kill Him.
 - b. After a deal is struck,
 - (i) Judas begins looking for the right time
 - (ii) To betray Him.

B. Preview.

1. I want you to notice something here regarding the character of sin:
 - a. Both Judas and the chief priests
 - (i) Were willing to betray Jesus –
 - (a) Judas to the chief priests
 - (b) And the chief priests to the Roman –
 - (ii) So that they might both gain something
 - (iii) They wanted: Pleasure/fun.
 - b. Now you might say,

- (i) “Wait a minute.
- (ii) Judas wanted money,
- (iii) And the chief priest wanted to kill Jesus.
- (iv) How can you say it was because of pleasure?”

c. Think about why Judas wanted the money:

- (i) It was for the same reason
- (ii) Everyone else wants it:
 - (a) So he could buy the things he desired
 - (b) That would bring him pleasure.

d. Why did the chief priests want to kill Jesus?

- (i) It's because if they didn't
- (ii) They would lose their place of authority
- (iii) And affluence over the people,
- (iv) And so they too wouldn't have what they wanted
- (v) That would make their lives more pleasurable.
- (vi) They were willing to betray Jesus
- (vii) For the sake of their personal pleasure.

e. Just one more thing to note:

- (i) And that is who these people were
- (ii) That were willing to betray Jesus.
 - (a) Judas was one of His disciples.
 - (b) More than that, one of the twelve apostles.
 - (c) The chief priests were the ministers of Israel –
 - (d) Those who led worship,
 - (e) Who sacrificed and interceded for the people
 - (f) In the Temple.

(iii) This sin is found in the church and without –

- (a) Because there are unconverted people
- (b) Within and without.

(iv) I don't think I really need to remind you

- (a) That it's found in the converted as well.
- (b) This disloyalty for the sake of pleasure
- (c) Is still in our hearts.

2. This morning, let's consider two things:

- a. First, sin will move us to betray Jesus.
- b. And second, what we can do to fight against it.

II. Sermon.

A. First, let's consider that sin will move us to betray Jesus.

1. Remember what sin is:

- a. John tells us, “Sin is lawlessness” (1 John 3:4).
 - (i) It’s that which is opposed to God,
 - (ii) Particularly His Law.

- b. We know by now
 - (i) That the Law is fulfilled by love.
 - (ii) If sin is its opposite,
 - (iii) Then sin is hatred –
 - (a) Hatred of what is good
 - (b) For ourselves and others,
 - (c) And hatred of God.

- c. Since this is what it’s like
 - (i) It shouldn’t surprise us
 - (a) That it moves those infected with it
 - (b) To betray Jesus
 - (c) Whenever He stands in their way
 - (d) Or can gain something they want by doing so.

 - (ii) It shouldn’t surprise us
 - (a) That the chief priests wanted
 - (b) To betray Jesus to the Roman authorities
 - (c) To retain their position of authority.

 - (iii) It shouldn’t surprise us
 - (a) That Judas wanted to betray Him
 - (b) For thirty pieces of silver.

 - (iv) It really shouldn’t surprise us
 - (a) That those all around us
 - (b) Do the evil they do.
 - (1) That’s what we should expect from unconverted people
 - (2) Who don’t have God’s love in their hearts.

- 2. But do you realize that the same disposition to betray Jesus is in your heart as well?
 - a. Now thankfully it’s not exactly the same –
 - (i) When He saved us
 - (a) He broke the power sin had over our hearts.
 - (b) We don’t have to submit to it any longer.

 - (ii) When you’re confronted with a temptation
 - (a) You have a choice: either to obey it or not.
 - (b) If He hadn’t given you His grace
 - (c) You could only have chosen between different sins.

- (iii) But the fact that the power of sin is broken
 - (a) Doesn't mean you're perfect.
 - (1) Perfection is reserved for heaven.
 - (2) It's only there the Lord will give you a perfect love
 - (3) And take all your sin away.
 - (b) You still have sin in your heart,
 - (1) And because you do
 - (2) It will continually tempt you
 - (3) To betray Jesus.
- b. How do we as Christians betray Him?
 - (i) Every time we make a choice
 - (ii) That is against what He wants us to do
 - (iii) Because there's something we want more
 - (iv) We betray Him.
 - (a) Not to the same degree.
 - (b) But badly enough.
- c. The first commandment really teaches us
 - (i) To love God most of all
 - (ii) And find our pleasure in Him.
- d. The rest of the commands
 - (i) Show us how to do that:
 - (a) In the worship we offer to Him,
 - (b) In the promises we make to Him and others,
 - (c) In our work and rest,
 - (d) In the way we relate to authority,
 - (e) In how we protect our lives and the lives of others,
 - (f) In keeping our thoughts and the thoughts of others pure,
 - (g) In protecting what belongs to others,
 - (h) In speaking the truth,
 - (i) And in being content with what the Lord chooses to give us.
 - (ii) When we violate these moral principles –
 - (a) When we break these commandments –
 - (b) Because there's something we're hoping to gain
 - (c) That will add to our personal pleasure,
 - (d) We're betraying Jesus
 - (e) In much the same way
 - (f) That Judas and the priests did.
- e. Let me make this just a bit more concrete by giving you some examples:
 - (i) If you choose to join yourself with a church
 - (a) That you know doesn't worship the Lord

- (b) As He commands
 - (c) Because you enjoy it more,
 - (d) You've betrayed Jesus for your pleasure.
- (ii) If you make a vow to the Lord –
- (a) Such as what you do in your membership vows –
 - (1) But then break them
 - (2) Because it's no longer convenient to keep them;
 - (b) Or if you make a promise to do something
 - (1) That's good and right,
 - (2) But then don't keep that promise,
 - (3) You've betrayed Jesus.
- (iii) If you decide that instead of resting
- (a) And gathering together with the Lord's people
 - (b) To worship and fellowship on His holy day
 - (c) To go to the beach, or an amusement park,
 - (d) Or to the movies,
 - (e) Or to do anything other
 - (f) Than what He's told you to do on that day,
 - (g) You've betrayed Jesus.
- (iv) If you refuse to submit to the lawful use of authority,
- (a) In the state, church or family,
 - (b) You've betrayed Jesus.
- (v) If you do things that are harmful
- (a) Either to yourself or others;
 - (b) If you commit sexual sins,
 - (1) Or provoke immoral thoughts in others
 - (2) Because of the things you say,
 - (3) The way you act,
 - (4) Or even the clothes you wear;
 - (c) If you take something that doesn't belong to you,
 - (d) Even time that belongs to your employers;
 - (e) If you say things that aren't true about others,
 - (1) Either to injure them
 - (2) Or to make yourself look better;
 - (f) If you're not happy
 - (1) With what the Lord has given you
 - (2) Or what He's decided to give to others;
 - (g) You've betrayed Jesus.

(vi) And what is the reason we choose to do what we want above what He wants?

- (a) Inevitably, it will be
- (b) Because we hope to gain
- (c) Something that will bring us greater pleasure.
 - (1) Self pleasure outside of God's will
 - (2) Is the essence of sin.

(vii) Again, this mirrors what Judas and the priests did.

- (a) I hope you can see
- (b) What a terrible thing sin is:
- (c) It is to betray Jesus,
- (d) To forsake your loyalty to Him.

B. That brings us to the second point: what can we do to fight against sin?

1. The answer is as obvious as the problem.

- a. If we betray Jesus for the sake of pleasure,
- b. Somehow we need to find greater pleasure
- c. In submitting to Him.
 - (i) That is, in fact, what the Holy Spirit
 - (ii) Creates in our souls when He regenerates/renews us:
 - (a) Pleasure in Lord.
 - (b) That's what love is: pleasure/desire for something,
 - (c) In this case, for the Lord and the things of the Lord.
- d. To keep from betraying Jesus
 - (i) Because of the pleasure we find in not obeying Him,
 - (ii) We need to find a greater pleasure in obeying Him.
 - (iii) How can we do this?

2. First, by understanding more fully what happens

- a. When we do betray Jesus in this way:
 - (i) We hurt ourselves, others and dishonor God.
 - (ii) We need to understand that this is true.
- b. When you sin against God, you hurt yourself.
 - (i) God isn't going to kick you out of His family,
 - (a) But He will discipline you
 - (b) To help you get back on track (Heb. 12:10).
 - (ii) There can be other consequences as well.
 - (a) If you break your promises/covenants
 - (b) It could cost you dearly.
 - (c) If you disobey authority,
 - (d) You could be arrested;

- (e) If you don't take care of your health,
 - (f) You could get chronically ill;
 - (g) If you commit immorality,
 - (1) You may get a disease
 - (2) Or be responsible to take care
 - (3) Of a child that's conceived.
 - (h) If you steal from others,
 - (i) There are legal consequences.
 - (j) If you lie about others,
 - (h) It can come back on you.
- c. You can also hurt others.
- (i) A broken promise can make things difficult
 - (ii) For the one you've made the promise to.
 - (iii) It's obvious how breaking the sixth commandment hurts others.
 - (iv) Immorality can leave someone with a child to care for.
 - (a) Talking about immoral things,
 - (b) Or wearing provocative clothing,
 - (c) Can cause someone to break the seventh commandment
 - (d) In their thoughts.
 - (vi) Lying about others
 - (vii) Injures their reputation.
- d. And of course, all these things
- (i) Dishonor the Lord
 - (ii) Who delights in all good
 - (iii) And hates all evil.
- e. Perhaps if we understood these things better,
- (i) We would be less apt to do them.
 - (ii) We might be persuaded to do the things
 - (iii) That are good for us and others,
 - (iv) And that bring Him pleasure.
3. The other thing we can do
- a. To fortify ourselves against sin
 - b. Is increase our love for God.
 - (i) The more you love Him
 - (ii) The more you'll want to do
 - (iii) The things that please Him,
 - (iv) And in the process,
 - (v) The more you will help yourself and others.
 - c. So how can you love Him more?

- (i) Meditate on His love for you –
 - (a) A love so great that He gave His only begotten Son.
 - (b) Think about Christ's love for you
 - (c) In obeying and dying for you on the cross.
 - (d) Think about the Spirit's love for you –
 - (e) That He is God's own love
 - (f) Living in your heart.
 - (g) These can stir you up to love Him more.

- (ii) Use the means of grace more:
 - (a) Read and receive the Word in faith.
 - (b) Pray in all things, everywhere, at all times.
 - (c) Receive the sacraments.
 - (d) Don't forsake the fellowship of the saints (Heb. 10:25).

- (iii) And stop quenching the Spirit's love
 - (a) By compromising with sin.
 - (b) Stop rebelling against Jesus.
 - (c) Stop betraying Him.
 - (d) The more you resist,
 - (e) The stronger your love will grow
 - (f) Because you won't be doing the things that quench it.

- d. Let me just say in closing
 - (i) That if you've never trusted Jesus
 - (a) And turned from your sins,
 - (b) Your heart is still the same
 - (c) As Judas and the chief priests.

 - (ii) You'll never be able to keep from betraying Him
 - (a) For things infinitely less important
 - (b) Without first turning to Him
 - (c) And asking Him to change your heart.

 - (iii) If that's the case with you,
 - (a) Come to Him this morning.
 - (b) Trust Him to take away your sins
 - (c) And to give you a heart
 - (d) That takes pleasure in Him. Amen.