

SURVIVING DARK VALLEYS

Dealing With Betrayal & Bitterness

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John 13:18-35

- 18) "I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill the scripture: "He who shares My bread has lifted up his heel against me."
- 19) "I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am He.
- 20) I tell you the truth, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts Me; and whoever accepts Me accepts the one who sent Me."
- 21) After He had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray Me."
- 22) His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them He meant.
- 23) One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to Him.
- 24) Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask Him which one He means."
- 25) Leaning back against Jesus, he asked Him, "Lord, who is it?"
- 26) Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, son of Simon.
- 27) As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him.
- "What you are about to do, do quickly," Jesus told him,
- 28) but no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him.
- 29) Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the Feast, or to give something to the poor.
- 30) As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.
- 31) When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in Him.
- 32) If God is glorified in Him, God will glorify the Son in Himself, and will glorify Him at once.
- 33) "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for Me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.
- 34) "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.
- 35) By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another."

John 13:18-35

These are those dark valleys we walk thru when we allow ourselves to become offended, and self pity becomes our shield (instead of Jesus), and “woe is me” becomes our theme. We allow bitterness, negativity, and depression to rule our thoughts and actions.

This is very relevant for us, because, I believe that all people experience the pain of betrayal at one point or another in their lives. The extreme of which only that person knows. We’ve all gone through some hurt or pain (gossip, rumors, back biting/stabbing or some actual physical action). All of us have been wounded.

It’s amazing as a pastor how many people call me, e-mail me, or have counsel with me on just this subject.

As we walk thru these dark valleys, here’s the question:

How do we handle the hurt? How do we process the pain?

How do we bounce back from betrayal?

What do we do with it? With a broken heart? With the hurt feelings?

What better place to go to than the Word of God (to Jesus) and to see how He handled those seasons of life.

And I want to point out 4 things that our Lord did as He walked out those seasons, at the same time, paying our debt.

In the first half of John 13, we find Jesus washing the feet of His disciples.

He got up after supper, put a towel around Himself which was the clothing of a servant in the ancient world, and then one by one, He washed the disciples feet.

Then He said, “I have done this as an example to you, and even as I have done it to you, I’m calling you to go and wash the feet of others.”

**It’s a very powerful example of servant hood,
as we watch the Creator of everything, serve His creation in love.**

Now, the thing about John 13 that makes it so interesting is that, it is a chapter of contrast.

On one hand we see Jesus showing His great love (agape) by washing the feet of His disciples.

On the other hand we see Judas, plotting his betrayal of Jesus.

Here is Jesus showing that agape love as Judas plots how he will deny and betray Jesus.

That’s what I want us to look at this morning.

How did Jesus deal with the betrayal? This dark valley.

One thing I want us to keep in mind as we go through these verses this morning, is that Jesus experienced the same emotions as we do.

Hebrews tells us that “He was tempted in all ways as we are, and yet was without sin.”

Philippians 2:7 tells us, “He became a man in every way, that He took upon Himself the form of a servant.”

And as we go through hard times and challenges, so too, our Lord. We read in the Gospels that there were times that He was angry, mad, there were other times when He was sad, and discouraged. Other times He was filled with joy.

Here in the second half of John 13, we find Jesus, struggling. He's hurting as Judas is plotting, and ultimately will leave and betray Him.

So let's walk through Jesus' betrayal this morning, and once again, let us look at how Jesus dealt with betrayal.

Let's begin in verse 18 as John sets the stage, Jesus begins saying (John 13:18-22) -

Here's the context, Jesus had just washed their feet, they're sitting around a table enjoying fellowship, interacting with each other (a good time!) and suddenly things got real serious, real fast.

And we see in verse 21 it says "Jesus was troubled in spirit." The word "troubled" in the original language means stirred, agitated; it speaks of deep emotion and pain. It's that time, when tears are only a brief moment away.

The disciples could probably sense that something was wrong with our Lord; that He was going thru a real hard time. There was probably a change of pace in His words, a change of climate in the room.

And so Jesus just lays it on the table and says "one of you will betray Me."

You can imagine how these words must have struck those disciples. Painful not only for them to hear, but for Jesus to say.

As Jesus tells them what's about to happen, it's fascinating, He reaches back and pulls out a relatively obscure passage of scripture:

Psalm 41:9

"He who shares My bread has lifted up his heel against Me."

The phrase "lifted up his heel" is an old Hebrew axiom which speaks of someone being hurt or wounded and then being kicked when they're down (it's where we get that phrase). It speaks of putting salt in an open wound.

And so He quotes Psalm 41, and by doing so, He's saying, you know, I'm down, I'm wounded and someone's kicking Me. Interestingly Psalm 41 was written by David in his own season of betrayal.

Let's look at II Samuel 16:

David experienced great pain as his son Absalom rebelled against him and tried to steal the kingdom from him.

All you theologians remember Absalom. The Bible describes him with long flowing hair (the Fabio of the ancient world).

Absalom had an agenda. He wanted the power, so he sat there by the gates of the city and began to talk to the people to poison their hearts against king David.(his dad)

All the woman loved him, and all the men respected him, and when he saw that the moment was right, he launched his campaign to uproot David and remove him from the throne.

In II Samuel 16 & 17, you can read that story.

David was forced to flee from Jerusalem, as he fled, he sent back some of his closest followers to be spies (2 Priests, Zadok & Abiathar / “take the Ark back, if I find favor with the Lord, He will bring me back”, their sons, Ahimaaz & Jonathan - messengers. His close friend Hushai the Arkite, “deny me to Absalom” -he did 3 times) his heart tattered and torn, broken because his son had rebelled against him and to make matters worse one of his closest friends rejected him, Ahithophel.

Ahithophel was one of David’s senior advisors. Ahithophel was one of David’s mentors. He is described as older, having wisdom. They had a long history together; yet, when this rebellion happened, “A” switched sides. He joins Absalom and begins to advise him on how he can kill David. And “A” says “look, here’s the deal, your father, David, is running away, this is what you need to do, you need to pursue him now, you need to kill him now, while he’s weak and on the run. I know David, do what I say and you will have victory.”

But Absalom asked Hushai his advice, and Hushai told him “A” was wrong, “take your time, gain strength, then attack David” And so Absalom said, “no” to “A”. He said, “I’m not going that way, I’ll get a bigger army, make myself strong and then kill him.”

And when “A” realized he had been rejected by Absalom and knew he had already betrayed David, he went out and hung himself.

Does that story sound familiar?

Here in John 13, Jesus - of the line of David, He reaches back into the scriptures to this Psalm, to make reference to that story where David was betrayed by “A”, a close friend, one who broke bread with him, who would hang himself in his betrayal, so too, Jesus was about to experience betrayal in such a way.

Judas would betray Him and then be dismissed as a now used pawn by the Pharisees.

It’s fascinating that Jesus, as He’s dealing with heartache and betrayal, in His time of pain, He reaches into the Word. He finds comfort in the Word.

This is our 1st point this morning, as we battle against betrayal and bitterness.

#1 Find Comfort in The Word!

I believe Jesus went back into scripture here as an example to us as to what to do in our seasons of struggle and hurt and pain.

The word of God always meets us where we are at.

The word of God is a spiritual balm that soothes and restores us.

Allow it to minister to you in seasons of distress as well as seasons of joy.

Job 23:12 - "I have treasured Your word more than my necessary food."

This is a man who lost everything in a single day.

Here he is, it's all gone - family, livelihood, home, yet, Job's heart is for God's word.

Jeremiah was betrayed, thrown in a pit, preached for years without a single convert. His church was just him and God. We know from scripture he had times of discouragement and yet in Jeremiah 15:16 he says,

"Lord, I found Your word, and ate of it, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart."

David said in Psalm 119:25

"My soul clings to the dust; revive me according to Your word."

Man, I don't know about you, but I can relate to that.

When your dry, empty and broke, the one thing that will revive you is God's word.

So Jesus knowing He's about to be betrayed, finds comfort in the Word.

Let's continue -

Verses 23-26

Jesus shares with the disciples - one of you will betray Me, and Peter wants to know who. (He's the 1st guy in history to own a blog. He wanted to post it on line. He always wanted the latest scoop. He wanted to know what others didn't know.)

So Jesus says, okay, I'll tell you.

"It is he who breaks bread with Me" (verse 26)

Notice Jesus identifies His betrayer thru the breaking of bread.

The Book of Matthew tells us that "the breaking of bread" is a symbol of Jesus' body.

In the upper room Jesus took bread, broke it and said "this is My body broken for you."

Why does Jesus choose this to be the symbol that would reveal Judas?

This really hit me this week, it was Jesus' way of really expressing His (scandalous) grace. In effect what Jesus is saying is, I know he's going to betray Me, stab Me in the back, but you know what?, I'm still going to be broken for Judas and many like him.

My blood is going to be shed, I'm going to die for sin like that.....

And by breaking bread with Judas it is in a way like giving Judas a chance to repent.

It's like saying "look man, there's an opportunity for you. You can receive my grace, receive My mercy, if you choose to do it."

Jesus brings the hurts, brings the wounds, where?

To the cross.

He is in essence talking about the cross, referencing His sacrifice that He's walking out even now. This is truly scandalous grace. This is where we come to our second point this morning. What do we do with that pain? That heartache?

#2 Bring It To The Cross.

Jesus' blood is sufficient to cleanse any and all sin.
Ephesians 4:32

Paul says, "even as you have been forgiven by Jesus, so you have need to forgive the sins of others."

On the cross Jesus took our sin, our shame, our guilt. But listen, He also died for the sin that that person committed against you. For that conflict between you two. For that malicious gossip against you. That thing that happened, Jesus' blood is sufficient to cover it.

Take it to the Cross!

In the Book of Exodus 15, the children of Israel are out in the desert making their way to the promised land, a journey which should have taken a week some say; but because of their disobedience, it took 40 years. So they're hot and thirsty; they come upon this pool of water and they immediately run down and begin to drink this water, but they spit it out. They say, man this water is bitter, it's like poison! We can't drink this.

So they called it Marah which means in the Hebrew "bitterness." They say to Moses, "Moe, what's the deal, have you brought us out here to die?" "We need water." What did Moses do? He cut down a tree and threw the tree in the water and the scripture says, "the bitter waters were made sweet."

In the old testament the tree is a picture of the cross....

It's a picture of Calvary, of what Jesus did for us.

Maybe there are some here today who are filled with the bitterness of the past, some poison.

When adversity comes, don't throw in the towel, throw in the cross.

When we throw in the cross, something happens in the well of our soul, the bitter waters are made sweet.

We need to bring it to the cross!

"I'm not holding on to this Lord. Your body was broken! Your blood was shed!
And there's blood enough and grace enough to cover over this sin!

Jesus, knowing Judas was going to betray Him -

#1 FINDS COMFORT IN THE WORD.

#2 HE BRINGS IT TO THE CROSS

(IDENTIFYING HIM THRU THE BROKEN BODY); and,

#3 check it out in verses 27-29:

Jesus after identifying His betrayer, He turns to Judas and says, "what you do, do quickly."

Why does Jesus say this? Listen, this is huge!

Jesus is releasing Judas to do what was on his heart; He's respecting his free will.
Notice Jesus doesn't try to hold on to Judas.
He's not like, "no, don't do this! You have no idea what your doing."

No, He doesn't bribe Judas.

No, He doesn't try and manipulate Judas.

No, He doesn't hold on to Judas.

No, He doesn't try to get all psychoanalytical with Judas, in that,

Judas, you've obviously got some issues, lets explore your past, your relationship with your mother.

He lets Judas go!

#3

What do we do with the pain?

What do we do with the Judas'?

What do we do with the heartache and hurt?

#3 LET IT GO!!!!!!

So often in our lives when someone hurts us or wounds us, we don't want to let it go.

We hold on to it. We think about it. We dwell on it.

The word "resentment" literally means "to think again."

and so it keeps us up at night.(offended).

We begin to build our case because we want to settle the score.

But what Jesus does should really speak to us.

Instead of holding on to it, He releases it and we need to do that.

We need to say, Lord in faith, I'm choosing to release this to You.

This doesn't mean we justify it; it means we know by faith that we don't have to dwell on it.

Hebrew 12:15

"Beware, lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled."

The author of Hebrews is saying, bitterness is like a root, a weed. It's sown into our heart when the pain, and heartache, and tragedy happens and unless we root it out quickly, dealing with it in a Godly manner, it's going to grow.

If all we do is dwell on it, think on it, then all we're doing is watering it, tending it.

The roots are going to grow strong and deep, entangling it in our soul until it's out of control, or taken control.

The verse says, "beware" it will "defile" you.

"Defile" in the Hebrew was used to describe someone with leprosy.

It means "to contaminate and disfigure with a disease."

And isn't that what bitterness does? It disfigures you. You go around with a scowl on your face.

It contaminates your soul and ugly and malicious words come from your heart trying to spread the

contamination.

2 monks - river - old woman- carry - complain- set her down 5 miles back - your still carrying her.

Anyone here still carrying the past?

The Lord says, "You don't have to, it's disfiguring you, let it go."

Jesus tells Judas - "What you do, do quickly."

He doesn't try to hold him. Control him. No! He frees him.

Is there someone you need to let go of?

Verses 31-35

Judas leaves / Jesus loves

And then He shares with His disciples this new commandment.

"as I have loved you, so you must love one another."

This should leap off the pages as you consider the context.

*As I have loved you -
How did Jesus love His disciples?*

John 13 - He washed their feet.

Which means - He washed the feet of those who would deny and betray Him too.

Do you think it was hard for Him? Remember, He felt every emotion we feel.

Washing feet that would soon run and give Him over to the high priest for 30 pieces of silver.

WHAT LOVE!

How did He do it? How can we do it? How can we love those who hurt us?

#4 CHOOSE TO LOVE!

It was a choice for Jesus and it's the same for us. Again, the scripture tells us He was like us, He went thru similar pain.

Our scripture today tells us He was in anguish of soul, but He still chose to love.

*Love & forgiveness is a choice we make! It's a decision!
and this is the most difficult of all the points.*

Recapping the other points:

#1 FIND COMFORT IN THE WORD! - I can do that.

#2 TAKE IT TO THE CROSS! - absolutely!

#3 LET IT GO! - kind of tough sometimes - but okay it's gone.

But this one it's proactive - it's painful - it is the last thing we want to do.

We don't want to get mad but we still want to get even.

#4 CHOOSE TO LOVE!

You mean, I've got to love them now?

Check your hit list -

forgiveness/grace and mercy are the last thing on there if there on there at all.

CHOOSE TO LOVE!!!!

Jesus even takes it a step further in Matthew 5:44 -

“Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.”

Now this isn't talking about trust. If someone wounds you, God's not saying now you have to trust them. Trust has to be earned, but He is saying love them, pray for them, bless them. *Don't take revenge on them, be good to them.*

Ouch! This hurts!

What I'm learning and what so many of you have discovered is that when we forgive, we are the ones who are blessed. When we wash feet, it is we who are cleansed.

Louis Meads said, “forgiving people is the act of setting a prisoner free, only to find out that the prisoner was you.”

II Kings 6

Elisha in Samaria, it says, the enemy came and surrounded the city, they wanted to take it captive and destroy its inhabitants. Elisha realizes unless there's a miracle, we are toast. What does he do? He prays! He said, “Lord, blind them.”

All of a sudden all the enemy soldiers are blind, stumbling around. So Elisha and his servant go out, and his servant wants to start killing them and Elisha is like, “No, instead let's bring them inside the city.”

So they get these blind soldiers into a long line, each holding the one in front of him and led them into the city. They sit them down, then Elisha prays, “Lord, open their eyes.”

So He opens their eyes, they look around and realization hits and it's “OH! OH!” we're trapped, about to be killed.

And the soldiers of Samaria are ready now to end this, let's kill these guys.

But again Elisha says, “no, this is what we'll do. Let's feed them. Let's bless them.”

So they literally pull out the gas grills, the burgers, and hot dogs, bratt's, macaroni salad, cole slaw, - a huge feast.

The enemy eat, and eat and when they're all stuffed Elisha says, “okay, you can go now.”

The enemy leave, a little suspicious no doubt, and then the Bible says, “they never bothered Samaria again.”

And that's what happens in our life when instead of trying to wipe out our enemies, instead of taking revenge, gossiping, getting even,

we say, “I'm going to bless. I'm going to feed.

I'm going to get on my knees and pray for that person.

I'm going to make a choice to love them.

It's against my fleshly nature. My flesh doesn't want me to do it. I don't even think I want to do it, but I'm making that decision to do it.

And as you do, you encounter Jesus victory!
You encounter the freedom Jesus died for!

I'm not going to judge you, but love you.
I'm not going to be bitter, I'm going to wash feet.
I'm not going to attack you, instead I'm letting you go.

*When that becomes your mindset, you will go from betrayed - to - be blessed.
You will go from being bitter - to - being better.*