

Episode: Luke Series No. 14

Narrator: Judas

Primary Scriptures: Luke 14

Story Summary: Teachings of Jesus

Location: Galilee and Judea

Time: Circa 30 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Luke 14:11, 14:26-27, 29-30

Jesus chose Judas to be an apostle. Apparently, Judas was taught the same things as the other apostles and had the same types of experiences. It seems likely that Jesus loved Judas and valued him as much as any of the other apostles, at least until near the end.

Luke never met Judas. What Luke knew of Judas likely came from the testimony of the other apostles and from the stories he heard. We don't read much about Judas before his betrayal of Jesus. It's easy to suppose the Gospel writers so detested his betrayal that they were not interested in saying anything nice about him, but they also say very little about half of the apostles, so it may be that Judas was just like those apostles.

We are not told in the Bible when Judas started drifting away from Jesus. Perhaps he expected Jesus to overthrow Rome to establish an earthly kingdom and was disappointed when Jesus made it clear his kingdom was spiritual. Or perhaps it happened when Jesus called for his disciples to be fully committed and Judas realized he did not want that. Or perhaps it was some difficult teaching of Jesus or a time Judas was embarrassed by Jesus' words or actions. We don't know why or when, but we do know that the actions of Judas helped result in the death of Jesus.

Luke 14:15 references a feast in the kingdom of God. Since Jesus launches into one of his parables in reply, it is easy to overlook or misunderstand the reference. The statement was made after Jesus mentions the resurrection of the righteous. The Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the righteous, but they perceived they were the only righteous ones. Jesus' parable not only discounts their likelihood of attendance, but also opens up the resurrection door for all the people the Pharisees had rejected—the Gentiles, the poor, and the physically disabled and disfigured.

Luke 14:25 says that large crowds were with Jesus when he told them about the high cost of following him. Surely that kind of talk must have discouraged several in the crowd. John 6:66 records a time when Jesus clarified how hard it was going to be to follow him, and many of his disciples turned away and left for good. Unlike many modern leaders, Jesus did not make it easy or cheap to be his disciple; he was interested in having only dedicated followers who were willing to count the cost, and to pay it.

Discussion Questions:

1. Imagine Judas as a faithful follower of Jesus in the early days. Think of a Bible story and place Judas in it as a friend of Jesus. For instance, imagine Judas rowing the boat across the water in the storm, and vying with Peter to walk to Jesus.
2. Jesus once said that whoever was not with him was against him,¹ but he also said that whoever is not against him is for him.² What is the difference in those statements?
3. How do you think the Pharisees reacted to being told they were not righteous and would not receive the rewards of the righteous?

Application Questions

1. Have you ever had a time when you betrayed Jesus?
2. How can you tell if you are fully committed to Jesus as his disciple? Can you think of one thing you could do to become more committed?
3. Have you ever committed to do something for God, but not fulfilled that commitment? What kept you from doing so?
4. What are some of the costs of being a disciple of Jesus?

Application Questions for Teens

1. Judas betrayed Jesus for money. Have you ever traded some measure of your integrity for earthly gain? What would you do if the opportunity was presented to you in the future?
2. What practical commitments do you maintain when it comes to following Jesus? How can you meet those commitments? How can you add to them?
3. Do you have any areas of your life that you approach with the certainty of the Pharisee? How can you work to have God expand your vision of those areas?

¹ Matthew 12:30

² Mark 9:40