

Love Petrified

John 13:21-30

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In today's teaching from John 13 we see the cold heart of Judas Iscariot. We wonder how Judas could have been so close to Jesus and yet so far away. We ask the same question about the Pharisees; how could they see all Jesus did and want Him to kill him because of it? Unfortunately, Judas and the Pharisees were not the first one to respond this way. Since the fall we see people coming face to face with the truth and rejecting it. David shows us the opposite, a soft heart. Confronted with truth he said, "I have sinned." May God help us have a heart that is soft and open to truth.

Picture a burning candle. When you hold a piece of bread above the flame, it becomes hard and brittle. Now picture holding another candle above the flame. It immediately begins to soften and drip. The flame is like the truth. The truth does not change, the basis of truth is the nature of God. Thankfully there is no chance that will ever change. The effect of the flame on one object is to harden and another object is softened. Our hearts are similar.

Some people hear the truth and are convicted and repent, others will hear the truth and become bitter and cold. We wonder how Judas and the Pharisees could have missed Him, yet according to Romans 1 all of us are "without excuse." We all can see God in His creation. No one has good reasons to reject God.

Yet there are still those who do. Some insist there is no God, and we are here by chance. They say we came from nothing, and we return to nothing. They hold to this line despite the mounting

evidence to the contrary. Science is showing us incredible things about His intricate creation. The evidence points to a creator and a master plan. How can someone see and know this and still walk away from Him? This is like the bread in the flame, their hearts are hard and brittle.

This makes us ask, how can we make sure this is not us? What must we do to have a soft heart? How can we be like the candle and be soft toward truth? I believe II Thessalonians 2:10 gives us the answer. We must have a love for truth. Truth in this case is so much more than rules or written documents. To love the truth is to love Jesus, he said, "I am the way, **the truth**, and the life." Loving the truth is loving Jesus. Loving Jesus is saying yes to Him.

Those who are saying "Yes" to Jesus will not reject Him. You cannot love Him and ignore His what He says. Saying Yes to Him is living for and with Him every day. If Judas and the Pharisees would have loved Jesus, the story could have been much different. Instead, their interaction with the truth caused their hearts to become cold. Today when you hear truth, don't harden your heart. Instead love the truth and grow in your relationship with Him.

Now, here's Pastor J. Mark with today's teaching.

Some substances when they become cold become very hard. To become pliable, they must be warmed. Certain precious metals, like gold and silver, have a low melting point compared to steel. We are told that a dead tree under proper conditions will petrify, become like rock. After that it has no function, no particular use, except a museum piece.

Now, even in our human relations sometimes love gets cold and hardens. It loses its warmth. Even love toward God can cool off and get somewhat hard. Here in John 13:21-30 we have demonstrated for us what happened when **Love Petrified**.

21 *When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.*

22 *Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.*

23 *Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.*

24 *Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake.*

25 *He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?*

- 26 *Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.*
- 27 *And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.*
- 28 *Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spoke this unto him.*
- 29 *For some of them thought because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.*
- 30 *He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.*

Our Lord gave several WORDS which show us how love can be petrified.

Love hardens under **The Piercing Word**.

I want you to reflect upon what Jesus said, "One of you shall betray me." Can you create the picture in your mind? Can you see Jesus with His twelve disciples; those who had been closest to him; those who had heard all His teachings; those whose feet He had just washed to demonstrate His endless, matchless love? Those were the ones that were gathered with Him now at the table when He said, "One of you shall betray me".

One of you, He said. They had not yet known what that meant. It must have pierced each one of them to the heart, "One of you shall betray me". That is a piercing word, it is a word that cuts to the quick, cuts deep in the heart. That's one word from Jesus to demonstrate how love can petrify.

When the piercing word revealed a betrayer, there had to follow **The Identifying Word**.

John, who was lying on Jesus' bosom, asked the question, "Who is it, Lord?" Of course, they wanted to know. Jesus had made it specific enough that one of them was going to do this awful deed. And John said, "Who is it, Lord? Tell us who it is."

Now watch how Jesus answered. He said, "He it is, to whom I will give the morsel when I have dipped it?" I understand from reading the Jewish encyclopedia that the observance of the

Passover had in it the dipping of a morsel of bread, then eating it as some symbol of the deliverance from the land of Egypt.

Jesus, as the host of that Passover feast, took this morsel and dipped it and gave it to Judas Iscariot. Now he was marked out by the identifying word, "He it is to whom I shall give the morsel when I have dipped it."

I don't see any other conclusion to draw but that the love Judas may have had suddenly hardened; it was petrified. Jesus' identifying word brought it into the open when He gave the morsel to Judas Iscariot, Simon's son. That was the identifying word.

What followed was not a happenstance for Jesus gave **The Commanding Word**.

We are informed in this text that as soon as Judas had received the morsel, Satan entered into his heart. Then Jesus said, "Whatever you do, do it quickly", do not hesitate, the time has now come for you to act.

This may well have been brooding in Judas' mind. Earlier in John's Gospel we learn that Judas was the one who said, "Why was not this sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?" That was when Mary anointed the feet of Jesus with that precious box of ointment. You see, he must have been brooding over this for some time.

Now Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly". It was not clear to the others. We would think that they should have now understood what Jesus was predicting, pointing out to them, and giving the command that it be accomplished. It was clear to Judas because the Bible tells us here that he went out immediately. He went out into the darkness of the night.

There is something rather foreboding about that. Here was a man whose love had petrified. When Jesus said, "Do it quickly," he went out into the night. The darkness of the night surrounded him.

Thus, in this experience of Judas, love petrified. It hardened; it lost its warmth. Now Jesus' words show us how that can be possible: it was the piercing word, "One of you"; it was the identifying word; "He it is to whom I will give the morsel when I have dipped it"; and it was the commanding word, "Do it quickly".

My friend, love needs to be kept alive. Don't let your love die or petrify. Even in this Jesus loved him. And He loves you.

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Now, I urge you to tune in next week as Pastor J. Mark continues our study from John's Gospel. You won't want to miss it. And until then, keep looking to Jesus, He'll give you hope for today!