

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY

LENT 2021
LEADER GUIDE

WEEK 4: FISTFUL OF DOLLARS

03.14.2021

SESSION GOALS

This session's discussions and prayer will equip participants to:

- Explore the motivations and the nature of Judas' betrayal compared to others, including but not limited to the crowd and Peter;
- Reflect on how money (or other factors that are important in our lives) can be wrapped around our self-worth and mental health.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 26:14-16; 27:1-10

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Gospel of Matthew is more descriptive when it comes to telling the story of the betrayal and death of Judas. Matthew adds the details of the conversation between the priests and Judas in verse 15, "What will you give me if I betray him to you?", highlighting the greediness of Judas. Earlier when Jesus is anointed at Bethany, Judas is among the disciples complaining that the cost of ointment that was poured out at the feet of Jesus could have been used to help the poor. However, what Judas received in exchange of handing over Jesus (30 pieces of silver) was far less than the expensive ointment poured out for him.

Later, when Judas finds out that Jesus is condemned to death, he changes his mind to bring back the 30 silver pieces. We even hear his remorse over his action in Matthew 27:4 saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." But Judas commits suicide later, not being able to ask for forgiveness or even forgive himself for such a mistake. From his exchange with the chief priests after he found out about Jesus being condemned, one may conclude that Judas certainly did not see the consequence of his deal with the chief priests. While it was Judas' greed that blinded him to hand over Jesus, it may be worth a discussion to see

if Judas' handing over Jesus is really at the crux of the reason Jesus was put to death. Unlike the chief priests and the crowd, who willfully attempts to execute Jesus, Judas seems that he never intended to see Jesus die. Furthermore, Judas' attempt to suicide hints us that Judas perhaps suffered from mental health issues, which may have been wrapped around his distorted view over money and possessions.

SUGGESTED LEADER PREPARATION

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your preparation, and your class as you present this guide to your participants.
2. Carefully read the scripture and take note of what stands out to you.
3. With the insight you have gained during the scripture reading, go through the leader guide to add/modify/eliminate any discussion questions or activities according to the needs of the participants.

LESSON PLAN

ENGAGE

ASK: If you suddenly had an opportunity to instantly earn \$30,000 worth of extra income, what would you do with it?

SAY: 30 pieces of Silver that Judas received in exchange of handing over Jesus were worth about 120 denari, about 4 months worth of wage at the time. According to Census, the median household income in Plano in 2019 was \$95,602. So, Judas received about \$31,430 for his deal.

ASK: In the same train of thought, if anyone in our congregation purchased close to \$80,000 worth of perfume just to pour it out "at the feet of Jesus," how would you react?

EXPLORE

SAY: It is clear that Judas really wanted/needed the money. While Matthew paints the motivation for his betrayal as Judas' love for money, Luke paints it as a deeper spiritual problem, that "Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot" (See Luke 22:3-6).

ASK: Whose assessment of the situation do you agree with more? Why or why not?

COMMUNE WITH THE WORD

SAY: Compare Judas' motivation for betraying Jesus to the one of Peter (See Luke 22: 54-71). Both Judas and Peter betrayed Jesus, but Judas became the embodiment of evil, while Peter became the first pope of the church (according to the Catholic tradition). While Judas openly expresses his remorse, Peter does not until Jesus sees him again after resurrection.

ASK: Why is it that one is highly regarded while the other is not?

EMPOWER

SAY: After finding out that Jesus was condemned to death, Judas commits suicide. This is one of the biggest clue that Judas perhaps struggled with mental health issues, along with his spiritual struggles. He probably was swamped by shame around money and himself, that he saw no hope but to end his own life as a punishment for himself.

ASK: Judas had shame on his sense of self, especially wrapped around money. Some of us also link our sense of self wrapped around money, sex, power, our physical looks, and/or even control. How are we called to faithfully respond to such a condition we find ourselves in?

ASK: Our spiritual healthiness is most definitely related to mental health, and we are called to be faithful stewards of all aspects of our well being. How are you taking care of your body, soul, mind, and spirit to be a faithful disciple of Jesus?

CHURCH-WIDE MISSION: SHARING SHOES & JOY IN PERU

"Some call it the "Wall of Shame," the high, thick concrete wall topped with barbed wire that separates some of Peru's poorest neighborhoods from the most affluent. In one of these poor neighborhoods, on our mission trips to Peru, we play games next to the wall, on a bare dirt soccer field. A hole in the wall allows a glimpse of the green parks and gleaming white buildings on the other side. On the rich side, shoes are a status symbol—soft leather, stiletto heels. On the poor side, shoes can mean the difference between illness and health, or whether a child is allowed to attend school. For these kids, it's not the value of the shoes that's important. Instead, new shoes help communicate the inherent value of the child."
- Lanie Williams, Mission Coordinator



A brother and sister play in front of the wall that separates their community from the wealthy one on the other side.

Join us in serving families in Peru by donating new shoes and socks, volunteering to sort and prepare shoes for delivery, or donate to help build more bathrooms.

LAUNCH

"When we deny the story, it defines us.
When we own the story, we can write a brave new ending."
Dr. Brene Brown



CUSTER ROAD
United Methodist Church