

The Tale of Two Apostles

Icebreaker: What was the naughtiest thing you remember doing as a kid. We're not interested in your naughty grown-up stories - there has to be a level of innocence for it to be funny!! :-)

Earlier in John 13 (verse 2) we read that Judas was already convinced by "the devil" that he was going to betray Jesus. Now read John 13:21-30.

From John 6:70 we know that Jesus had chosen the twelve apostles one of whom was Judas who Jesus already knew was "a devil". Judas presumably was selected because of the important role he would play in salvation history. John doesn't tell us what happened to Judas because he knows his readers would have been familiar with the synoptic tradition (Matthew, Mark and Luke). From these other accounts we know that Judas took his own life - this is the last thing we know about him.

Random deep question: Of course we can never know for sure, do you suppose that even though he betrayed Jesus that Judas will be with us in heaven?

Contrast the life of Judas with that of Peter. Jesus had said to Peter that as he washed his feet he wouldn't understand why he was doing it but "afterwards" he would. I suggest that the act of washing feet was the ultimate sign of humility and Jesus' command to his disciples to do likewise was a reference to their deaths for the sake of the gospel.

Read John 13:31-38.

If we stopped here, things would look bleak for Peter but we know from John 21 that Jesus fully redeems him (3 times), tells him the kind of death he will die (similar to Jesus') and then tells Peter, "Follow me."

1. John 21 tells us how Peter is to die; Acts 12 tells us how James died. Christian tradition tells us that of the Twelve all but John were killed for their faith. Does this support you in your faith to know that these men were so convinced of the resurrection of Jesus or had you never really thought about it?
2. The difference between conviction and condemnation was the difference between the fates of Peter and Judas respectively. Conviction comes from the Holy Spirit, condemnation from the enemy. Paul tells us that there's "Now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:1). Can you think of times when you've felt condemned for your sin - that there was no way back?
3. The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin so that we can deal with it. This is guilt which should last a second before we deal with it! I'm going to suggest that the reason we deal with it is because of the hope of the resurrection which "afterward" (after Jesus' resurrection) Peter was now convinced about. Do you agree with that? If there was no resurrection (to eternal life and death) would we be just as well doing whatever we want in this life?

Follow any thoughts through to completion and then close in prayer with any specific areas that people are struggling with - especially if anyone is facing condemnation.