



Dear heavenly Father, we worship You this morning with our tithe and offerings. We pray for the courage to put You first in our lives. In the name of Jesus, amen.

APRIL 3, 2021

When Judas refused to put God First

Putting God first can be difficult. What can we learn from Judas, who refused to put God first?

The other disciples believed Judas was the perfect disciple. He was intelligent and very competent. He also believed Jesus was the promised Messiah. However, Judas wanted to follow Jesus closely so he would obtain a high position in the kingdom of God.

Ellen White reminds us that “the Saviour read the heart of Judas; He knew the depths of iniquity to which, unless delivered by the grace of God, Judas would sink. In connecting this man with Himself, He placed him where he might, day by day, be brought in contact with the outflowing of His own unselfish love. If he would open his heart to Christ, divine grace would banish the demon of selfishness, and even Judas might become a subject of the kingdom of God” (The Desire of Ages, page 294).

Many of us have talents and abilities that help us achieve so much in our careers and local church leadership. Like Judas, it is possible for us to believe in Jesus while we are slaves to our own selfishness. Judas was in charge of the money so he could experience the joy of giving in a transformative way. Putting God first in our tithe and

promise is a tangible way Jesus is also transforming our hearts.

Like Judas, we are also tempted to follow Jesus so we can get our mansion in heaven. However, the Bible doesn't encourage anyone to desire heaven because of the wealth. When Judas asks to become a disciple, Jesus simply responds:

“The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath nowhere to lay His head” (Matthew 8:19, 20).

When Judas denied Jesus and eventually committed suicide, his selfishness finally won the war for his heart. Money had no value any longer, so the 30 coins became a curse and a reminder of his failures. God is inviting you and me to put His kingdom first in everything we do. Money is a blessing from God only when we allow Jesus to defeat selfishness in our hearts.

Judas refused to put God first. The consequences were terrible for him and the people around him. God's love compels us to put His kingdom first, while Judas' example is a warning for us today. As the deacons collect the tithe and offerings, we are challenged to put God first.