

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

APRIL 11, 2022

Finally, we come to Judas Iscariot. He is the only disciple who was not born in Galilee. He is believed to have come from Kerioth, a city about 14 miles west of the Dead Sea. In modern usage, Kerioth has come to mean “traitor.” There seems to be no record of how he became a disciple of Jesus. What we do know of him throughout his time with Jesus is not befitting someone who claims to be a disciple.

Somehow, he was chosen to be the treasurer of the group. He feigned great caring for the poor, and as money disappeared from the treasury, the disciples probably thought that he was giving to the poor. In fact, he was embezzling money for himself. In the last visit of Jesus to the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, before his final journey to Jerusalem, we read the story of Mary anointing the feet of Jesus with costly perfume. Matthew and Mark picture all of the disciples being shocked that such a costly perfume would be used in such a way. John singles out Judas Iscariot, recording, “Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denari and given to the poor?” He said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it (John 12:3-6).

Two theories exist about why Judas betrayed Jesus. One theory is that Judas was attempting to force Jesus into a display of his Messianic power, overthrowing Rome. Another theory is that Judas was an avaricious and dishonest man, who was concerned only with furthering his own ends.

There are also many legends about why and what happened to Judas after he learned that Jesus would be crucified. Matthew (27:3ff) describes Judas as attempting to return the money that he had received for betraying Jesus and cries out, “I have sinned.” He later committed suicide in remorse for his sin. As Christians, we teach that anyone who confesses their sin will find forgiveness (1 John 1:9) so the question arises, “Was Judas forgiven?”

Lord, we would never think of ourselves as betraying You. And yet, we sometimes find ourselves aware that by our actions and our attitudes we betray your mission for us in this world. Forgive us, Lord, for we desire only to honor You. Amen.

Pastor Louise