

# Love Thy Neighbor in Service

## Decisions, Decisions!

**P**eter or Judas, who will you be? Both were apostles and both were chosen by Jesus. Each had an important role to play.

Peter was considered to be in the inner circle of those closest to Jesus. Judas was the individual responsible for handling the money for Jesus and the twelve apostles. Each had promised to give his life for Jesus when dangerous situations came up (Mathews 26:35 NIV).

At some point, considering Jesus to be the Messiah predicted from the scriptures (Old Testament), both were looking for Jesus to take power here on earth, run the Romans out of Jerusalem and lead Israel back to the position held in the time of Solomon or David (when Israel was at the height of it's earthly power).

Both let Jesus down at critical moments in His ministry. While the scriptures do not specifically say why Judas made the choice to turn Jesus over to the authorities, two ideas have been proposed.

First, Jesus had made it clear



that He was not going to be seeking earthly power. Judas did not like that direction as Judas was hoping to receive some type of authority in Jesus' new earthly kingdom.

Second, Judas did not like the pace at which Jesus was moving into power in his earthly kingdom. In either case it appears Judas assumed if he forced Jesus into enough of a corner He would use His miraculous powers to overturn the Romans in Jerusalem and ultimately all of Israel. Judas would benefit by being put in charge of something important in the new kingdom.

**T**his would explain why, after the authorities had taken Jesus into custody, Judas tried to return the blood money back to the chief priests, and made the statement he had betrayed

innocent blood (Mathews 27:4 NIV).

## ... And Peter?

Peter also turned on Jesus. At the last supper, only hours before Jesus was taken prisoner, Peter had promised Jesus he would die with Him should something bad happen (Mathews 26:35 NIV).

**H**owever, when the hour came for Peter to stand with Jesus and be taken captive Peter ran away. He did follow to see what would happen to Jesus, but while following Jesus Peter ended up denying that he even knew Jesus (Mathews 26:69-75 NIV).

Both Peter and Judas had great remorse when they realized their respective mistakes. It was at this point the direction of each life changed dramatically. Peter turned back to the Lord with all of his poor choices, and Judas ran even farther away.

The results of those two decisions were huge. Judas hanged himself in shame

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(Mathews 27:5 NIV). His name became associated with the greatest betrayal in history, and the name is no longer used in the world today.

How many people do you know named Judas?

Peter came back to the lord, was forgiven, and became incredibly bold in testifying throughout Jerusalem and the ancient world that Jesus was the Messiah. He is considered one of the founding leaders for Christianity and is a Saint in the Catholic Church.

**W**e see the same pattern of choice in the homeless population we serve at LTN.

They are normally burdened with a long history of poor choices. From that spot some individuals make the tough decision to turn back to the Lord and incredible life change can begin. Others walk away in shame and guilt, leave the Lord even farther behind and their lives continue to spiral farther downward typically ending in jail, institution or death.

**I**nterestingly, the choices that were faced by Peter and Judas are still occurring to you and me every day. For

### What can you do?

We need your prayers! It is the most important thing you can do for the ministry.

*"The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective."*

(James 5:16 NIV)

LTN is committed to spreading the Gospel by Christ's example to "love thy neighbor as thyself." Matthew 22:39. To this end, LTN has designed programs with the purpose of helping clients build a relationship of faith in God, regain their dignity and eventually, regain their self-sufficiency. Contact us to learn more about the services and programs.

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those who do not believe in Jesus Christ He gives all the way until death to make the decision to accept Him and receive an eternity with Him in paradise. The example for this is found in the criminal crucified with Jesus.

"One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!"

But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't your fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus

answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

**F**or those individuals that do believe He allows us to make the decision each day which way will we turn. I have on so many occasions, when pressed into a corner, made a decision away from the Lord. Actually, it was only in attempting to follow Jesus in a real way that I found out just how weak I really was in facing difficulties for Him.

From that position of poor choice I have found my life to be just like that of the homeless. Will I make the decision to turn back to Jesus or go further my way?

When I turn back to Him,

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***Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.***

**Matthew 22:39**

*New Email*

**[jchapmanjr01@talkamerica.net](mailto:jchapmanjr01@talkamerica.net)**

Please make a note that John now has a new email address. We apologize for any problems this might cause but we look forward to staying in contact with you.

**Their Choices...Our Choices**

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although sometimes difficult, the outcome is always better. When I travel farther down the path away from Jesus the problem seems only to get worse. It can end up as one of those things I wish I had never done or been involved in and must now carry in my mind for the remainder of my life.

Every one of us has made decisions, just like Peter and Judas, to turn away from Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, that is what makes us human. The real difference is what will you do once in that position? Turn toward the Lord or run away?

May God bless you,

**John Chapman, Jr.**