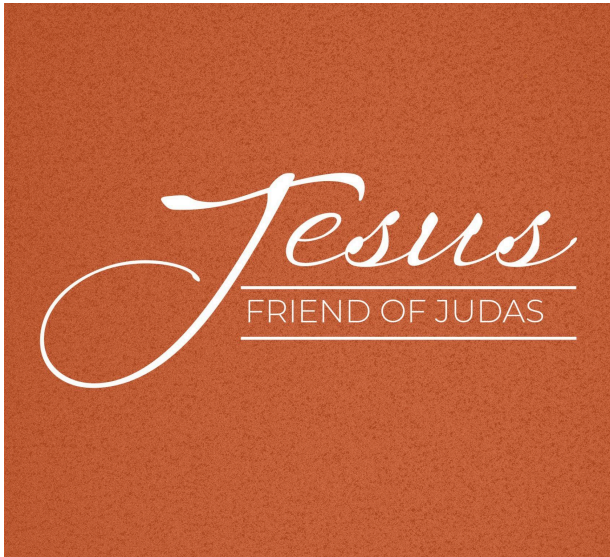


JESUS, FRIEND OF JUDAS

May 17, 2026

Preaching: Michael Swartzentruber, Senior Minister



Matthew 26:14-16, 36-39, 47-56

¹⁴Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests ¹⁵and said, “What will you give me if I betray him to you?” They paid him thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

³⁶Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” ³⁷He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. ³⁸Then he said to them, “I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.” ³⁹And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and

prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.”

⁴⁷While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. ⁴⁸Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.” ⁴⁹At once he came up to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed him. ⁵⁰Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you are here to do.” Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. ⁵¹Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. ⁵²Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. ⁵³Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?” ⁵⁵At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. ⁵⁶But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

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REFLECT & DISCUSS

1. Read the passage slowly. Then take a deep breath and read it again. What word, phrase, or image stands out to you?
2. What do you know about the disciple Judas? Do you relate to him in any way?
3. When Judas is in the very act of identifying Jesus so the authorities could arrest him, Jesus—perhaps unexpectedly—calls Judas “Friend” (v. 50). What do you make of this?
4. Zealots were part of Jesus' disciples (ie, Simon the Zealot). Zealots were Jews who actively worked to resist and overturn Rome's political rule of Israel, even violently. If Judas were also a zealot, how might the desire for political and violent overthrow of Rome offer important context and insight into his betrayal of Jesus (beyond the idea of just greed)?
5. The story of Judas continues, tragically, with his death by suicide (See Matthew 27:3-5). Do you think Jesus would have forgiven him, as he does with Peter and the other disciples who betrayed him in various ways?
6. In what ways have you experienced, dealt with, or been impacted by the tragedy of suicide? How can the church be a supportive and loving presence to those struggling with and grieving the loss of those who die by suicide?



Pastor Michael preached on the Judas story and the topic of suicide on April 18, 2021. You can [listen to the sermon here](#) or use the QR code.

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