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Sermon Notes

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The Suicide of Evil

Matthew 27:1-10

As we come to this text, we come to the shocking end of Judas Iscariot. We can picture him swinging dead on the end of a rope, lifeless, alone... the suicide of a truly evil man the fitting end to a detestable story

We can see the thirty silver coins, thrown in disgust into the temple... rolling until each one comes to a stop. We can see the hypocritical priests kneeling down to pick each coin up... the very coins they had paid out to Judas just as short time before... now no one wanted them... they seemed like poisoned coins

This whole tale is a WARNING to all of us... a warning from the life of Judas... of a proper valuation of life and money and especially of Jesus Christ... the most infinitely valuable man who ever lived

In this account, Jesus is brought even closer to the cross by which He will save His sheep from their sins

But even more poignantly in this account, we have a timeless warning of the danger of loving money and trading Jesus for silver:

Matthew 16:26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?

I. Jesus Condemned According to Plan (vs. 1-2)

Matthew 27:1-2 Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people came to the decision to put Jesus to death. ² They bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate, the governor.

A. Final Aspect of the Jewish Trial

1. Three parts: first, before Annas, then before Caiaphas... now, one last time, before the whole Sanhedrin
2. The wicked, illegal religious trial before the members of His own people now comes to its final end

3. The whole wicked effort had been to kill an innocent man with at least an outward SEMBLANCE of justice
4. The false witnesses could not condemn Jesus because their stories did not agree
5. The High Priest charges Jesus under oath:

“Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God?”

Jesus answered plainly:

Mark 14:62 "I am,"

Matthew 26:64 In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

6. The High Priest tore his robes and they all condemned Jesus to death

Matthew 26:65-68 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. ⁶⁶ What do you think?" "He is worthy of death," they answered. ⁶⁷ Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him ⁶⁸ and said, "Prophecy to us, Christ. Who hit you?"

B. The Jewish Council Met Once More to Confirm Jesus' Condemnation to Death

1. This was all completely illegal
2. They “TOOK COUNSEL” once more against Jesus to put Him to death
3. This refers to their careful plans to execute Him without a just cause
4. Contrary to rabbinic law, the first two aspects of Jesus' trial happened at night and away from the Temple
5. Now, contrary to rabbinic law, they hurried him onto the Gentile ruler (Pontius Pilate) for immediate execution, rather than waiting until the third day and fasting and praying to be sure there were not a miscarriage of justice
6. No waiting here... the Council met once more, confirmed the condemnation of this perfectly innocent man, bound him, and hurried Him off to Pilate

C. All of this Was Exactly According to God's Sovereign Plan!!

1. This was the culmination of all their “taking counsel” together and their plotting

Matthew 26:3-4 Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, ⁴ and they plotted to arrest Jesus in some sly way and kill him.

2. But it was also the direct fulfillment of God's plan

Acts 2:23 This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

Acts 4:25-28 You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: "'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? ²⁶ The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One.' ²⁷ Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. ²⁸ They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

D. The Jews and Gentiles Alike Would Kill Jesus

1. Central to God's plan was that Jews and Gentiles alike would condemn Him and Jews and Gentiles alike would kill him
2. Throughout history, Anti-Semites have sought to blame the Jews ALONE for killing Jesus
3. After the Holocaust, efforts have been made to say that the Jews weren't responsible AT ALL for the death of Jesus
4. It was central to the plan of God that Jews and Gentiles ALIKE would be instrumental in the death of God's Son for the sins of the world
5. Jesus was bound and led to the governor... Pontius Pilate; Pilate had been governor of Judea since A.D. 26

E. The Binding of Jesus

Vs. 2 They bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate, the governor.

1. Jesus had already been bound when He was arrested in Gethsemane

John 18:12 Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him

2. At His trial, apparently His hands were free
3. But now that He was finally condemned, He was bound again

4. Remember that they tried several times to bind Samson, and he was always able to break His bonds and kill the Philistines
5. Jesus has infinitely more power than Samson... binding Him didn't hold Him in any way
6. What held Him was His commitment to do the will of the Father

KJV Luke 12:50 But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!

“Straightened” = to be restrained like in a straightjacket!!

7. Also, the binding of Jesus fulfills the type of Isaac

Genesis 22:9-10 When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

8. And also, the “leading” of Jesus fulfills Isaiah 53

Isaiah 53:7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter

II. Judas Condemned According to Conscience (vs. 3-5)

Matthew 27:3-5 When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. ⁴ "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood." "What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility." ⁵ So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

A. Judas “Saw that Jesus Was Condemned”

1. It seems almost incomprehensible that Judas could somehow have been deceived about where this all was heading
2. When he betrayed Jesus for the paltry sum of thirty pieces of silver, He must have known that Jesus' enemies meant to kill Him
3. Some have used this to paint a more sympathetic picture of Judas... that CANNOT BE
4. Judas (like Peter) probably had a clear view of Jesus at some point in the trial and realized what was about to happen

B. "Seized with Remorse"

1. Judas feels incredibly guilty for what he's done
2. The Greek word translated "remorse" here IS DIFFERENT than the word usually translated "repentance"... Judas did not repent... but he FELT TERRIBLE for what he's done
3. The Apostle Paul gives us a picture of what Judas was feeling at this point

2 Corinthians 7:10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

4. Peter and Judas give us a perfect picture of both sides of that verse
 - a. Peter felt a genuine sorrow for his sins and that sorrow brought repentance resulting in eternal life... this is a regular rhythm of the life of sanctification
 - b. Judas on the other hand felt remorse... a sickness over the wretchedness of who he was and what he'd done... but this led directly to his death

C. "I Have Sinned... For I Have Betrayed Innocent Blood"

1. This is an amazing realization by Judas!! The INNOCENCE of Jesus... and his own sin
 - a. What was his sin??

At least this:

Deuteronomy 27:25 "Cursed is the man who accepts a bribe to kill an innocent person." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

But deeper:

John MacArthur: "No man could be more evil than Judas Iscariot. Only eleven other men in all of history have had the intimate, personal relationship he had with the incarnate Son of God. No man has ever been more exposed to God's perfect truth, both in precept and example. No man has been more exposed firsthand to God's love, compassion, power, kindness, forgiveness, and grace. No man has had more evidence of Jesus' divinity or more firsthand knowledge of the way of salvation. Yet in all of those three indescribably blessed years with Jesus, Judas did not take so much as the first step of faith. In a way that defies comprehension, Judas persistently resisted and rejected God's truth, God's grace, and even God's own Son. Also in a way that defies understanding, he managed completely to conceal his wicked rebellion from everyone but Jesus."

So... Judas feels the first inklings of guilt for his sin... but not with the conviction that leads to salvation...

Even more amazing... his testimony to Jesus' INNOCENCE!!

2. It is incredible the various people who testified to Jesus' sinless purity

a. Jesus claimed it in front of His enemies

John 8:46 Can any of you prove me guilty of sin?

b. Pilate's wife claimed it

Matthew 27:19 While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him."

c. Pilate himself claimed it... THREE TIMES!!

John 18:38 Pilate ... he went back outside to the Jews and told them, "I find no guilt in him."

John 19:4 Pilate went out again and said to them, "See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him."

John 19:6 Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him."

d. Even the demons claimed it

Mark 1:24 "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are--the Holy One of God."

e. And now, here, Judas claimed it

"I have betrayed innocent blood!"

3. The sinlessness of Jesus is essential to our salvation

1 Peter 2:22 "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."

1 Peter 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-- yet was without sin.

4. Judas clearly testified to it... BUT

D. Jesus' Enemies Had No Heart to Listen

Matthew 27:4 "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood." "What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility."

The incredible COLDNESS of these enemies of Jesus... they were demonic in their lack of compassion for others... these were Judas's "friends"... they used him and now tossed him aside like a piece of garbage!

Luke 11:46 Jesus replied, "And you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them."

E. The Tragic End: Judas Hangs Himself

Matthew 27:5 So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

1. Guilty, racked with remorse, this evil man adds one more sin to the others
2. First, in fulfillment of prophecy, he throws the thirty silver coins into the temple
3. The coins that he got for his wickedness now were repulsive to him... as though they were now on fire, burning his hands... or like radioactive waste, they threatened to defile him forever
4. He has ended up with nothing... no relationship with Christ, no esteem or gratitude from the Chief Priests, no money... NOTHING
5. Now, he is COMPLETELY ALONE... the Greek words show how alone he was
 - a. He LEFT
 - b. He WENT AWAY
 - c. He hanged himself
6. Matthew Henry: driven by the horror of God's judgment against him, he jumped straight into that judgment... seeking to escape the licking flames of guilt he plunged into the roaring fire of hell

III. The Chief Priests Counsel According to Prophecy (vs. 6-10)

Matthew 27:6-10 The chief priests picked up the coins and said, "It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money." ⁷ So they decided to use the money to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. ⁸ That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to this day. ⁹ Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: "They took the thirty silver coins, the

price set on him by the people of Israel, ¹⁰ and they used them to buy the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me."

A. The Chief Priests: Wicked Legalists to the Very End

1. "It is against the law..."
2. Amazing, because the thirty pieces of silver probably came from the temple treasury! Now, the very coins themselves have been defiled by their use
3. Here the Chief Priests show their wicked, legalistic hearts

Matthew 23:23-24 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices-- mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law-- justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. ²⁴ You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.

Where is the JUSTICE? Where is the MERCY??

4. Later, we will see this same kind of legalism in the trial before Pontius Pilate

John 18:28 Then the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness the Jews did not enter the palace; they wanted to be able to eat the Passover.

Amazing!! They are in the process of killing the Son of God, and they want to maintain legalistic cleanness by a law God hadn't even GIVEN!! "You shall not enter the house of a Gentile!" It was NEVER COMMANDED!!

B. They Take Counsel Together: What Shall We Do With the Thirty Silver Coins?

Matthew 27:7 So they took counsel and bought with them the potter's field as a burial place for strangers.

C. The Mysterious Fulfilled Prophecy: Jeremiah or Zechariah??

1. On the surface, it would seem that Matthew has made a mistake ascribing this to Jeremiah
2. Look at Zechariah 11:12-13

Zechariah 11:12-13 I told them, "If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it." So they paid me thirty pieces of silver. ¹³ And the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter"-- the handsome price at which they priced me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD to the potter.

- a. Context in Zechariah: God had told Zechariah to shepherd his afflicted people in the context of other false shepherds; the people hated the godly shepherd and rejected him; Zechariah asks for his wages
 - b. The key elements of contact: shepherding in the context of false leaders; rejection by the people; thirty pieces of silver thrown in the temple to the potter!!
3. Why then ascribe this to Jeremiah?
- a. MacArthur: “Jeremiah” was seen to be the chief prophet and thus this was shorthand for Law, Writings, and Prophets... so Law = Moses, Writings = David, and Prophets = Jeremiah
 - b. D.A. Carson: Points to Jeremiah 19:1-13

Jeremiah 19:1-2 This is what the LORD says: "Go and buy a clay jar from a potter. Take along some of the elders of the people and of the priests ² and go out to the Valley of Ben Hinnom, near the entrance of the Potsherd Gate.

Proclaim a message of future judgment and desolation on Jerusalem at that field;

Jeremiah 19:10-11 "Then break the jar while those who go with you are watching, ¹¹ and say to them, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: I will smash this nation and this city just as this potter's jar is smashed and cannot be repaired. They will bury the dead in Topheth until there is no more room.

- c. So, the themes there are “potter’s field” “burial place”

D. The Ultimate End of Judas

Acts 1:18-19 (With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out. ¹⁹ Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)

- 1. Judas was the ultimate “stranger”... outside of the grace of God, dying in a despicable way

IV. Applications

A. Jews and Gentiles Alike...

- 1. Are equally sinners

Romans 3:9-10 What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. ¹⁰ As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;

2. Are equally going to be judged by God

Romans 2:9-11 *There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; ¹⁰ but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. ¹¹ For God does not show favoritism.*

3. Are equally responsible for the death of Christ

a. Jewish courts rejected Jesus and condemned Him

b. Gentile courts finished the execution

4. Are equally saved by faith in Christ alone

Romans 1:16 *I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.*

Romans 3:29-30 *Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, ³⁰ since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith.*

Galatians 2:15-16 *"We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' ¹⁶ know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.*

B. "Taking Counsel": The Sovereign Plan of God Cannot Be Derailed

1. Everything in this account was foreordained by God

2. Repeated phrases "take counsel"

a. They "took counsel" to put Jesus to death

^{ESV} Matthew 27:1 *When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death.*

b. They "took counsel" to buy the Potter's Field

^{ESV} Matthew 27:7 *So they took counsel and bought with them the potter's field as a burial place for strangers.*

c. It means to confer together, to discuss plans for the future

Proverbs 19:21 *Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.*

3. Hear again Acts 4:

Acts 4:25-28 "Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? ²⁶ The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One.' ²⁷ Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. ²⁸ They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

4. Applications

- a. For all those of you interested in current events... and perhaps terrified about the future... REST IN GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY over the plans of men
- b. Recent events (like the terrorist bombing of the Boston Marathon) have left people feeling shaken, worried, anxious about the future
- c. They wonder is a planted bomb might suddenly explode from a public trash can or a locker at the bus station or from a public washroom at a crowded stadium or from under a heavily trafficked bridge
- d. People worry about plots and plans that terrorists and evil people are making
- e. Some put their trust in the government and its ability to eavesdrop on cell calls... they are willing to give up on their personal freedoms so that we can be more secure; others feel that for government to be so powerful that basic rights can be abrogated for the common good is in some ways WORSE than the terrorists
- f. Others just despair and feel that there's no way for the restless, irrational power of evil to be controlled... there's never an answer to the WHY?? question that comes after a terrorist attack
- g. Dear friends, we need to rest secure in the hand of God... human beings TAKE COUNSEL together to do all kinds of evil every day... criminal masterminds are plotting economic or political or military or terrorist attacks on common peace-loving people every day... but it is God's purpose alone that can prevail
- h. God's purpose is to save sinners through Jesus Christ
- i. He allows a small amount of terror and crime to rip our security to shreds so that we know we need a Savior... and His name is Jesus
- j. God is IN CHARGE AT EVERY MOMENT!!!

k. Do not fear the terror of the night

Psalm 91:1-6 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. ² I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." ³ Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. ⁴ He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. ⁵ You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, ⁶ nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday.

C. Understanding Guilt, Despair, and Suicide

1. Three people in the Bible are depicted as committing suicide

- a. King Saul on Mount Gilboa fell on his sword when pressed by Philistine soldiers... badly wounded, he saw no alternative than to kill himself
- b. Ahithophel, during the rebellion under Absalom, when he saw that his advice was not taken, knew that Absalom's coup would fail; he went home, put his affairs in order, and hanged himself
- c. And Judas, here in our account, also hanged himself

2. Judas: Guilty conscience led to despair... despair led to suicide

- a. Judas knew he had done wrong
- b. Guilt came upon him like waves...
- c. Guilt is to the soul what pain is to the body... it shows that something is wrong
 - i) When we feel physical pain, we immediately seek to address the situation so we don't continue to do damage to the body
 - ii) When we feel guilt, we should realize that the reason is WE ARE GUILTY... we do WRONG THINGS...
 - iii) Judas had done something extremely evil
 - iv) He had NO FAITH... no confidence in God's restoring mercy...
 - v) He merely went to the very men with whom he'd made the deal and sought to salve his conscience by giving the money back
 - vi) He should have run to Christ and begged forgiveness; or cried out to God and begged for mercy

3. Reasons for suicide:

- a. Retaliation: getting back at people for wrongs others have done to them; when teens commit suicide, a lot of times they are just trying to hurt their parents... and they definitely succeed
 - b. Reunion: a deep desire to be with loved ones who have died... an older spouse who was particularly dependent on a now departed spouse may want to end their lives rather than go on living in emptiness and loneliness
 - c. Rebirth: Eastern religions, suicide is a religious action... leading to reincarnation in a better circumstance
 - d. Atonement: people kill themselves to make up for grave sins they have committed
 - e. Overwhelming circumstances: life has become so unbearable that to them, it's better to die than to go on living in such misery
4. Lesson #1 about suicide: It doesn't mean God wasn't sovereign
- a. In the case of Saul, who committed suicide:

1 Chronicles 10:13-14 Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD; he did not keep the word of the LORD and even consulted a medium for guidance, ¹⁴ and did not inquire of the LORD. So the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse.

- b. This is still true:

Psalm 139:16 All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

5. Lesson #2: Suicide is a great sin... it is self-murder

Exodus 20:13 "You shall not murder.

It is an act of terrible selfishness leaving an awesome mess to clean up... people for the rest of their lives, whenever they see the photos or videos of the person are hit afresh with pangs of guilt and pain

6. Lesson #3: Great guilt can produce great desperation... and change your views of God
- a. Despair is like a drug that can cloud your mind and make you forget the power and love of God
 - b. Fight despair with scripture!!

Exodus 34:6-7 And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and

faithfulness, ⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.

Micah 7:18-19 Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. ¹⁹ You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.

7. Lesson #4: God is merciful and will forgive all sins in Jesus name; perhaps Judas's biggest sin is in not believing God could forgive him

Matthew 12:31 And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men...

Matthew 12:32 Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven...

Grace Greater than All Our Sin:

Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured,
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilled.

Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that is greater than all our sin.

Sin and despair, like the sea waves cold,
Threaten the soul with infinite loss;
Grace that is greater, yes, grace untold,
Points to the refuge, the mighty cross.

Dark is the stain that we cannot hide.
What can avail to wash it away?
Look! There is flowing a crimson tide,
Brighter than snow you may be today.

8. Fear what follows suicide: Hamlet pondered suicide

To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether 'tis Nobler in the mind to suffer
The Slings and Arrows of outrageous Fortune,
Or to take Arms against a Sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them: to die, to sleep
No more; and by a sleep, to say we end
The Heart-ache, and the thousand Natural shocks
That Flesh is heir to? 'Tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To die to sleep,

To sleep, perchance to Dream; Aye, there's the rub,
For in that sleep of death, what dreams may come

Putting it simply... he's worried what will happen after he kills himself:

***Matthew 10:28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.
Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.***

D. The Coldness and Lack of Compassion of the Enemies of God

1. Notice how cold and compassionless are Judas's so-called friends
2. Notice that they don't care anything about him at all!
3. Teenagers, college students... perhaps you are yearning for friendships and are willing to do whatever it takes to get in with a group...
4. But if they are enemies of Christ, they will care NOTHING FOR YOU!!

E. Warning!! Ill-Gotten Wealth Never Satisfies

1. Judas threw the wages for his wickedness into the temple
2. He HATED those thirty silver coins
3. I think he may have a ghastly vision of them for all eternity
4. Beware of COVETOUSNESS!
 - a. TGC: speaker talking about money
 - b. Churches have recovery ministries for all manner of sins... sexual sins, addiction sins, etc. But no one ever admits to being GREEDY! To being COVETOUS
 - c. Beware the LOVE OF MONEY!!

1 Timothy 6:9-10 People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

1 Timothy 6:17-19 Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. ¹⁸ Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. ¹⁹ In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

d. Assess yourselves:

- i) How do your spending habits display your relationship with money?
- ii) How do your work habits show either how valuable Christ is to you or how valuable possessions are to you?
- iii) How does your generosity to the poor and needy show your valuation of Christ verses money?

F. The Proper Valuation of Christ

Zechariah 11:13: ...this magnificent price I was valued by them.

- 1. Zechariah talks about the thirty pieces of silver as “that magnificent price at which they valued me!”
- 2. Isn't it amazing how much Christ valued us... and how little we valued Him!
- 3. The essence of worship is this: what is Christ WORTH to you?

1 Peter 1:18-19 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

Appendix

I. Can a True Christian Commit Suicide?

A. Medieval Catholic theology: suicide is a mortal sin which cannot be atoned for since there was no chance to confess to a priest

1 John 5:16 If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that.

- 1. For Catholics under that system, suicide is an unpardonable sin that leads straight to hell

2. Imagine the grief of the loved ones of such a person!!
- B. So... to Say “NO... a true Christian cannot commit suicide” leads logically to that position
- C. But to say “Yes” leads to all kinds of wretchedly difficult issues as well!
1. We’re saying that a true Christian, someone genuinely born-again, is also indwelt by the Holy Spirit
 2. The Holy Spirit will not allow a true Christian to be tempted beyond what he/she can bear
 3. It is hard to understand how a person indwelt by the Spirit can be so overwhelmed with life circumstances that they kill themselves
- D. But What is the Difference Between that and any other grave sin committed by a true Christian?
1. All sin is irrational and mysterious in the extreme for a genuine Christian
 2. All sin committed by a genuine Christian is an example of the world, the flesh and the devil temporarily overcoming the power of the indwelling Spirit and producing sin

Romans 7: I DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT I DO!! THE VERY THING I HATE, I DO!!

3. So all sin by Christians is mysterious and irrational
 4. So also all depression by Christians is mysterious and irrational... blessed by Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms, with overwhelming
- E. Christians Have Struggled with Thoughts of Suicide
1. Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*: Doubting Castle, Giant Despair... no mercy, a daily beating... recommending they murder themselves with the knife, poison, or a rope

2. Christian and Hopeful fight off the despair and escape with the key of promise
3. William Cowper, 18th century Christian hymnwriter, wrestled all his life with mental illness and despair... and temptations to suicide
4. Michael Card wrote a song to help people battling thoughts of suicide: "The Edge"

Poems have their darker rhymes. Stories sometimes make us wait for a happy ending. So also the Father sometimes sings to us in minor keys. Those who refuse to listen to the deep meaning behind the song of darker days are sometimes driven to the edge. I have been there too. Even from the dark point of view, by grace, we are able to move back from the edge and into waiting Arms. There we learn of the sufficiency of God's grace and to never enter the holy place of someone else's pain without the name of Jesus on our lips. There we learn that there is grace enough.

Michael Card

Most of us will never know
 How dark this world can seem
 When life becomes more nightmare than a dream
 So to all of you who have survived
 A visit to the edge
 I trust that you will understand this pledge

I promise I will always leave
 The darkness for the light
 I swear by all that's holy
 I will not give up the fight
 I'll drink down death like water
 Before I ever come again
 To that dark place
 Where I might make
 The choice for life to end

I've found that as I've traveled
 Through the inscape of my life
 That mountain tops make valleys in between
 And when that nameless sadness

Like a cloud comes over me
I look back on all the brightness I have seen

5. Psalm 88 seems written for those in the throes of despair

***Psalm 88:2-3 May my prayer come before you; turn your ear to my cry. ³
For my soul is full of trouble and my life draws near the grave.***

***Psalm 88:18 You have taken my companions and loved ones from me; the
darkness is my closest friend.***

Despair is something the Bible addresses

F. The Physiological Side of Depression... and Perhaps of Suicide

1. Insight from 2 Corinthians 4:6-7

***2 Corinthians 4:6-7 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness,"
made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the
knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. ⁷ ¶ But we have
this treasure in jars of clay***

2. Applicable to all mental illness... ALZHEIMER'S...
DEMENTIA... where formerly sweet-tempered Christians don't
remember loved ones and say outrageous, foul, even blasphemous
things

3. So... sometimes people's brains get broken and damaged

G. Bottom Line: I do think it's possible for a genuine Christian to be so
overwhelmed by the world, the flesh and the devil as to commit
suicide... I am not prepared to say what the Catholic theologians said
that it is an unpardonable sin and a guarantee of hell

II. Comfort for Those Left Behind to Pick Up the Pieces

A. Perhaps the Greatest Trial You Will Ever Face

B. Suicide is an Incredibly Selfish Act, Uncaring Who Will Be Hurt... or
Perhaps Even INTENDING to Hurt Loved Ones Deeply

- C. More Than Ever Before, Such Suffering Victims Have to Turn to Christ
- D. Entrust the Spiritual Destiny of the Loved One to God... Trust in His Mercy and His Righteousness to Be Vindicated
- E. Plead with God to Comfort You... Feed on the Word and Prayer... ask Him to answer your questions
- F. Turn to the Church... don't face it alone

III. Counseling for Those Wrestling with Thoughts of Suicide

- A. Paradox: To ask "If I kill myself, will God forgive me and accept me into heaven?" The same God they want to spend eternity with is UNABLE TO HELP THEM through this dark trial!!
- B. If You Ever Hear Someone Talk Like this... draw out their circumstances... "Boy, it sounds like you're going through some really rough times."
- C. Minister the Word... Remember, it was the KEY OF PROMISE that enabled Christian and Hopeful to escape

1. Martyn Lloyd-Jones... Spiritual Depression... preach to yourself

Psalm 42:5-6 Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.⁶

2. Feed on God's promises

Hebrews 13:5-6 God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"⁶

Isaiah 43:2-3 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior³

Psalm 91:1-7 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. ² I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." ³ Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. ⁴ He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. ⁵ You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, ⁶ nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. ⁷ A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

- D. Fear God's Justice... there is no certainty of the future if you kill yourself
- E. Run to Christ!!! He is the Refuge, the Healer, the Guardian and the Good Shepherd