

Intervention #5
When God Chooses to Forget
Luke 22:47-62
4/24/16

- Have you ever just sat around and thought about how powerful God is? How big He is? How strong? I don't think that most of us think about this. We sing about it, but we don't really let the words sink in. I believe if we thought about the bigness and greatness of God, our big problems that overwhelm us would dim in comparison to the greatness of our God!
 - The Bible says, "The heavens are His throne and the earth is His footstool..."
 - That would make His big toe about the size of South America!

- If his big toe is the size of South America, I wonder how big his eye is? Actually, some say they have a picture of the eye of God. Let's see a picture of it.
 - This is a picture taken by a NASA Hubble telescope in May 2003 at the Kitt Peak Natl. Observatory in Arizona. Many are calling it the "eye of God." NASA describes it as a collection of gasses known as the Helix Nebula. It is a trillion miles long. It is 650 light years away from us.
 - How far is that? Now light travels at 186,000 mi/sec. So if you wanted to get to the "eye of God", all you would need to do is do a little math. Light travels about 11 million miles per minute, about 670 million miles per hour, about 16 trillion miles per day.
 - Those numbers are massive. Maybe someone from the government is used to dealing in numbers that large, but I'm not!
 - If you tried to get there in your Ford or Chevy at 75 mph, I don't know how long it would take you, but just to get out of the Milky Way galaxy (our neighborhood) it would take you 22,300 billion years. That doesn't include stopping for gas along the way!
 - WOW! GOD IS HUGE ISN'T HE???? God is huge and his mind is vast!

- Let's go back to that "eye of God".
 - Do you think He's really looking down like that? There was a song about how God is watching us from a distance. That's probably how most people see God, some big presence, just watching us from a distance. He's not really involved. He's certainly not really intervening. He's just watching us.
 - What a sad way to think of God. We've been seeing that God desires more than to just watch us. He wants to intervene in our lives. He wants to be involved. Yes, he is watching, but there is more to God than some distant spiritual being just watching.

- Proverbs 15:3 tells us that yes, he is watching, "The LORD is watching everywhere, keeping his eye on both the evil and the good." God is omniscient meaning that he

is all-knowing and all-seeing, he is omnipotent meaning that he is all-powerful and he is omnipresent meaning that he can be present everywhere at the same time.

- Nothing else can claim any of those things. Even other spiritual beings like the angels and Satan and his demons cannot claim any of those things. They can't be everywhere at the same time, they aren't all-powerful and none of them can read your mind to be all-knowing nor can they see everything.
 - Only God can know what you did this morning or last night or yesterday because he was there seeing all of us at the same time. And, only God know what you've been thinking.
- Hebrews 4:13 also tells us this, "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable."
- Nothing is hidden from God. Knowing this and knowing that God can see everything and read our minds because he knows everything, knowing that everything we have ever done or thought makes us naked and exposed before God, that can be scary, huh?
 - How many here want everything they have ever done or thought to be on display for everyone here to see and know? Not me!
- Just think about it – with His massive eyes, He sees everything I've ever done wrong and everything you've ever done wrong. With His massive brain, He knows every wrong thought I've ever thought and every wrong thought you've ever had.
- I'd imagine that He must have a massive memory, doesn't He??? He can remember everything that he has seen us do and hear us think.
 - Well....sort of...
- See, this is where God's intervention kicks in. We've been in this series called Intervention about how God desires to intervene for us. His greatest intervention came on Easter when Jesus conquered sin, death and the grave for us to bring us salvation and forgiveness of our sins.
- In order to bring us salvation and forgiveness fully, maybe one of the greatest ways God intervenes is in what He chooses not to do.
 - Although He sees all, knows all & can remember all. With as big as he is and as much as he knows, he could choose to flick us off the face of the planet if we tick him off. Has anyone ever did anything to tick God off?
 - Yet, God chooses to intervene in the lives of guilt-ridden, sorrowful people when we come to him for forgiveness by choosing not to remember all that we've done to tick him off and do wrong.
- Micah 7:18-19 in the NIV says, "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. You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea."

- And, check Psalm 103:8-12
The LORD is compassionate and merciful,
slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.
⁹ He will not constantly accuse us,
nor remain angry forever.
¹⁰ He does not punish us for all our sins;
he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve.
¹¹ For his unfailing love toward those who fear him
is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth.
¹² He has removed our sins as far from us
as the east is from the west.

- See, God chooses what to forget. Don't you wish you could do that? Don't you wish you could choose what other people forget or remember about you? Don't you wish you could choose what your kids forget or remember?
 - A wise teacher sent home a note with the children of her 3rd grade class at the beginning of the school year. "I'll make a deal with all of you parents. I won't believe everything your child says about you, if you won't believe everything they say about me."
 - Kids seemingly forget everything good or positive - lunch money, report is due, to turn in their homework, test tomorrow...things you've taught them like: good manners, saving money, etc. But just fight in front of them once and they'll remember that for life. Pass gas at the dinner table one night and they'll tell every teacher they have throughout life.
 - People forget all of the times that you have helped them if you fail to do what they want just one time. It would be nice to choose what people remember and forget about us so that they remember all the good and forget all the bad, right?

- Well, today I actually want to show you that God intervenes in your lives by choosing to forget certain things that aren't so good, and choosing to remember others forever!
 - That's what those Scriptures talked about. God chooses to forget the sin his children have committed. And, he chooses to remember how much he loves us and to show compassion for us. That sounds like a pretty great intervention.
 - Let's use two famous historical figures to illustrate this. They are two of Jesus' disciples: Peter and Judas.
 - Now, history treats these two characters very, very differently. If you know anything about these two disciples, you probably think of them very, very differently. Judas was the one who betrayed Jesus which led to Jesus' arrest and crucifixion. Peter was the disciple who remained faithful and would become the main leader of the Christian church after Jesus' ascension to heaven. Pretty big differences.

- But there are also MANY similarities.
- Let's look at some similarities. First, both Peter and Judas Loved Jesus. Knowing the end of the story, we might be surprised to hear that, but it's true.
 - We know Peter did. Peter was a fisherman who had been around Jesus and heard him speak. Jesus intrigued him. Jesus reached out to him. Peter felt something when he was around Jesus. So, when Jesus called Peter to follow him, Peter left his boat, his family, everything to follow Jesus.
 - Peter is the one who, without hesitation answered Jesus' question, "Will you also leave me also?" after 58 other so-called disciples found his teaching to be too radical and walked away. What was Peter's answer: "Lord where would we go? You have the words of eternal life." He was saying, No way am I going to leave you! I know you have life!
 - Peter was also the first disciple to really get who Jesus was. Peter got that Jesus was more than a teacher or a prophet. When Jesus asked his disciples, "How do you think that I am?" Again, Peter, without hesitation said: "You are the Christ the Son of the living God..."
 - Peter's the one that it is thought to be the disciple who cut the soldier's ear off when they were coming to arrest Jesus. He was willing to defend Jesus in that moment.
 - No one questions how much Peter loved Jesus.
- But, there has been much debate about Judas' love of Jesus. How could Judas have really loved Jesus and then betray him? Oh, I don't know, probably just like many of us have! We love Him, we claim to love him, but we often betray him by choosing ourselves or our signature sin over him, right?
 - Judas was a faithful disciple of Jesus just like Peter, up to a point. When Peter spoke of needing to replace Judas in Acts 1, he even said in verse 17 that Judas, "was one of us and shared in the ministry with us." Judas was a real disciple and a believer.
 - But, then Luke 22:3 records the moment when Satan entered Judas' heart and deceived him enough to cause him to betray the one that he loved. Satan played to Judas' signature sin – greed.
- We've talked over the years how everyone has a signature sin. That's the sin that we are the most vulnerable to. Your signature might be different than mine. I don't understand being addicted to alcohol or someone who steals. Satan isn't going to try to tempt me to do either of those because they aren't my vulnerabilities. My signature sin is something else and Satan relentlessly tries to deceive me and tempt me in my area of my signature sin. He does the same to you.
 - Judas' signature was greed. He was even thought to be stealing from the disciples' common funds as he was the treasurer for Jesus and the disciples.

Satan played to this weakness and Judas decided to take 30 pieces of silver to betray Jesus.

- Yet, they both started out well. They both loved Jesus & Jesus NEVER FORGOT THAT! Jesus will never forget your love for him.

- But, in their love, there was a difference. What was it? One man focused all of his passion on Christ which would, in the end, keep him close to God. Another man thought he could hold on to another passion which, in the end, caused him to fall away choose that passion over Christ and reject Christ in the most personal way.
 - Peter loved Jesus first. His passion revolved around Jesus. He left everything for Jesus.
 - Judas loved Jesus, but he loved money, too. His thought he could serve both God and money and we know that Scripture says that is impossible. It is impossible to love and serve God and something else equally.

- Listen, you will always have to ultimately make this choice of what truly has your passion – are you going to be fully and completely passionate for Jesus, forsaking all other passions and making him your number one or are you going to be fully and completely passionate for something else.
 - We each have to make that choice. Is Jesus our all in all, is he our everything or is something else present in our lives, too, that we think we hold on to and still keep hold of Jesus at the same time.
 - Now, you might think you are juggling your passions and Jesus pretty well, but there will come a point of decision where you have to make a choice. It might not be today. It might not be in year. It might not be for a while
 - But, can I tell you, as a pastor, I pray, for your sake, that you do make that choice today. The sooner you make that choice, the better before, like Judas, your passion takes you so far away from Jesus that you get past the point of no return.

- Because here's the deal: being fully and completely passionate for something else other than Jesus is idolatry. Plain and simple. I know we don't like to think of that and many here might walk away from this sermon and think, "I just don't agree with Pastor Angela. I don't agree that I have an idol in my life or that I'm worshipping something else because I have this passion in my life that I don't want to let go."
 - But, Scripture makes it very clear that anything, anything that takes your passion away from Jesus, that takes your focus away from Jesus, that takes your attention away from Jesus, that takes your priority away from Jesus is what you truly worship. It doesn't matter what it is. Today, I'm probably not going to go into your house and find a wooden or gold statue of Buddha or some Hindu god with candles around it that you are literally worshipping. Geesh, I hope not! If you do, we need to talk!
 - But, there are other passions and idols that draw us away from Jesus, some of them can even seem good: our children, our spouse, other relationship,

Judas' was greed for money, it could be our career, entertainment, addictions, travel, our possessions like our house, car, stuff, luxuries – it could be plethora of things.

- You've got to make a choice – who or what truly holds your heart? Where is your true passion? You can love Jesus. But, he wants your whole heart, soul, mind and strength, not just a part of those.

- Another similarity between Peter and Judas is that they both made huge mistakes. In fact, Luke 22 encapsulates their dual betrayal. Let's read about Judas' mistake first. Let's read **Luke 22:47-53**.
 - Here we notice Judas' obvious betrayal. What a personal betrayal. As he was kissing Jesus' face, he was really stabbing him in the back.
 - And, Jesus calls it what it is in verse 53: "the time when the power of darkness reigns." The power of darkness was certainly at reign in Judas. His passion for money and greed was controlling his heart.

- But, Peter's big mistake is coming. Let's continue reading **Luke 22:54-62**.
 - Obviously, his big mistake was to deny being a disciple of Jesus. But, did you notice the beginnings of Peter's mistake? Verse 54 said that after Jesus was arrested and taken away, Peter "followed" but "at a distance."
 - Peter fell for the oldest trick in the book. He thought that it was okay to slip back as long as he continued to follow. Following "at a distance" is the most dangerous place you can be – b/c you are deceiving yourself and allowing Satan to deceive you.
 - You think everything is okay – BUT TROUBLE IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER!!! Peter's following "at a distance" would lead to Peter's outright denial of knowing Christ.

- The fact is we've all denied Christ in one way or another. We've failed, screwed up, blown it. But, it's not just in the outright sin when we deny Jesus. It can be in the little things as well.
 - When I was a youth pastor, I went to football game at one of the high schools to pass out flyers for a big, free event called Overtime that we were having at our church for teens after the game.
 - As we were passing out the flyers to students at the game, one of them asked me, "So, do some kids from this school go you church?" I replied, "Yep, quite a few." She said, "Really, like who?" So, I started listing some kids. It was a large school and she didn't most of those that I named. Then, I said one boy's name. She said, "Oh, he goes to your church?" I said, "Yes." "That's weird. I didn't think he would even go to church. He doesn't act like the church-type."
 - How many of us have denied Jesus in that way so that we don't look or act or speak any different than anyone else so that no one knows we are disciples of Jesus at all. We've all denied Jesus in some way, at some time.

- You know what I think, too, with Peter. I think Peter was thinking, “at least I’m not like Judas. I didn’t betray Jesus with a kiss. I’m still following him. I just don’t want to get caught and punished, too, so I’ll just stay back for while.”
 - o But, that thinking and comparing is no good. You can’t judge yourself by where someone else is. Either form of comparison, either by saying you are a better Christian than that person or you saying could never be as good of a Christian than that person – either way will keep you following Jesus at a distance, not getting closer.
 - o So, your thoughts should not be: “*Am I closer to God than this guy or that guy?*” Instead, you should constantly be thinking, “*Am I closer to God than I’ve ever been before?*”
 - o And, if you can’t answer that last question with a “yes”, you are following at a distance and DISASTER IS LURKING AROUND THE CORNER!!! The disaster of full-out denial is lurking around the corner because that what following at a distance is – it is denying Jesus.

- Not only did they both make huge mistakes, but, they both felt the same after they made the mistakes. See, after they made their mistakes, Peter and Judas were were both remorseful.
 - o As soon as Peter realized what he had done, “*he went outside and wept bitterly.*” (Lu 22:62).
 - o Judas also quickly regretted what he had done. Matthew 27:3-5 tells us how remorseful he was. It says, “When Judas, who had betrayed him, realized that Jesus had been condemned to die, he was filled with remorse. So he took the thirty pieces of silver back to the leading priests and the elders. “I have sinned,” he declared, “for I have betrayed an innocent man.” “What do we care?” they retorted. “That’s your problem.” Then Judas threw the silver coins down in the Temple and went out and hanged himself.

- Here’s where we find the difference. The difference between them was how they responded to their mistake and their remorse. Peter Repented. Judas Did Not.
 - o Rather than deal with his guilt (repentance), Judas allowed it to destroy him.
 - o See, **Remorse, Alone, Will Get You Nowhere!** In fact, remorse alone is an open door for Satan, the accuser of the saints, to plant thoughts and lies in your mind that will eventually completely destroy you.
 - You know, I can only imagine the thoughts planted in Judas’ mind by the evil one. See, that’s what Satan does. He tempts you to be more passionate for something other than Jesus, he uses that passion to draw you away from Jesus to the point that you deny or betray him, then he blasts you with accusations about how horrible, worthless and unforgiveable you are!
 - Can you imagine what he said to Judas. “What did you just do, you worthless idiot! You just betrayed your Lord. For what? For 30

silver coins? There is no way you can be forgiven for that. Jesus won't forgive you. The other disciples, the friends you have had for three years now, they will never forgive you. You are scum! Your life is now worth nothing! God is going to destroy you! It is better for you to be dead!"

- The only way God can focus on your bad is when YOU refuse to leave that sin. Instead, you embrace it. You allow Satan to accuse you and tell you that you are your sin and so you stay in that sin so that you never accept the forgiveness that Jesus has for you.
 - o Simon Peter moved beyond regret and remorse and repented! His repentance moved him again close to Jesus. While Judas was hanging from a tree, Peter was being gloriously restored.
 - o That's how, decades later, being the recipient of restoration, Peter could write these words in 1 Peter 5:10, "In his kindness, God called you to share in his eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus...he will restore, support and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation."
- It is clear that God is all about repentance & restoration. Rom 8:1 says, "So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus."
 - o Listen, **Only Repentance Will Break The Chains of Bondage!** If you believe the accusations of Satan, your remorse will destroy you. Only repentance will set you free because after your repentance, Jesus forgets you sin, completely!
 - o Talk about a great intervention!
- This great intervention of forgetting comes because of Jesus' forgiveness. That was another similarity between both Peter and Judas. They were both offered forgiveness by Jesus.
 - o See, before Judas even betrayed Him, Jesus forgave him. While Jesus was hanging on the cross, he prayed that God would forgive them, for they didn't know what they were doing by crucifying him. That included Judas.
 - o Jesus actually washed Judas' feet, knowing he would betray Him.
 - o Sin was already in Judas' heart – Forgiveness was already in Jesus' heart! He was already offering Judas a path to forgiveness. But, Judas couldn't see it because he thought Jesus would never forget. So, he missed the great intervention of Jesus' forgiveness and Jesus' choice to forget.
- Likewise, knowing full well that Peter would deny Him, Jesus passionately warned him in Luke 22:31-32, "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat. But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers."
 - o This is one of the most remarkable portions of the entire bible! Can you see this awesome forgiveness?

- “I know you’re about to mess up, in fact, I’m already praying for you so that you don’t allow too much of a distance between you and me. Then, when you come to your senses, come back to me...And I have a plan for your life!”
WOW!
- Jesus wanted to offer this to Judas as well, but Judas couldn’t see it. Jesus wants to offer this to each of us as well. Have you sinned? Have you denied him? Have you rejected him? Have you allow something else to be your passion?
 - Jesus knows about it and he is offering you forgiveness. In fact, he has been interceding to the Father for you and continually pursuing you so that you will come back to you sense and repent because he will then intercede by forgiving you and forgetting what you did and show you the full life and the plan for you life that he had in mind for you from the moment you were conceived!
 - *Now, that should be something that offers you great and glorious hope and should light your fire a little bit! Thank you, Jesus!*
- This morning, know this - God has selective Divine Amnesia. He chooses to forget everything that you have put under the blood of Jesus. When you accept his intervention, he doesn’t see you in light of your sin, he sees you in light of Jesus.
 - He simply cannot remember the sins you have been forgiven of, and He cannot forget the good that you have done. His great, vast mind makes the choice to forget our sin and remember our good when we accept his intervention.
- So if you feel terrible.....that’s NOT God. That’s the great accuser, Satan. If you have sinned and asked for forgiveness, but you still look over your life and feel sad, guilty, regret, remorse, depressed, pessimistic, discouraged... that is NOT GOD!
 - Through God’s intervention of forgetfulness, he wants you to feel encouraged, forgiven, optimistic about the future, FREE ... that is GOD!
 - What do you need to forget? If it has been covered by the intervention of the blood of Jesus, he has forgotten it. Have you? Do you want to be free, truly free today? Step into the sea of God’s forgetfulness.