

## Battles of the Heart

Throughout Scripture we're exposed to \_\_\_\_\_ people make. They'll either follow their \_\_\_\_\_ will or the will of God. Today, we're exploring \_\_\_\_\_ battles of the heart. We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The Scriptures not only reveal the heart of God, they also \_\_\_\_\_ us to see ourselves. They help us \_\_\_\_\_ the temptations and challenges we face, that they're not unique to us. The Scriptures do not shun \_\_\_\_\_ the good and evil found in our lives. They honestly reveal when people have done the \_\_\_\_\_ thing and when people have failed. Through the Word of God we can see the \_\_\_\_\_ of choices people make, some for blessing and some not.

I want to tell the \_\_\_\_\_ of three battles of the heart. Three men, who went through a tremendous \_\_\_\_\_, discovering a lot about themselves. Battles of the heart \_\_\_\_\_ us a lot about ourselves. These battles \_\_\_\_\_ what kind of person we are. They \_\_\_\_\_ our strengths and our weaknesses. They reveal our commitment to God and what is right or what we are willing to \_\_\_\_\_ in our lives. They show us our priorities and what we truly \_\_\_\_\_.

The Lord Jesus said, "But store up for yourselves treasures in \_\_\_\_\_, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your \_\_\_\_\_ will be also" (Matthew 6:20-21). Where is your heart? What are your treasures? Romans 8:5-6 says, "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is \_\_\_\_\_, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and \_\_\_\_\_." You're making choices now that will affect your \_\_\_\_\_ destiny. Will you win or lose?

**Our reading today comes from the Gospel according to Luke 22:31-34**, and this discussion takes place on the night when Jesus of course was betrayed, the night before He was to be crucified.

Battles of the heart come to \_\_\_\_\_ of us, tempting and testing us. The New Testament tells of three people who \_\_\_\_\_ critical battles in their hearts over right and wrong. Each of them faced the consequences of their choices but each in a \_\_\_\_\_ way. These challenges of \_\_\_\_\_ come to all of us. How we \_\_\_\_\_ to matters makes a difference. So let's look closer at these three people.

First, we take a look at what Scripture \_\_\_\_\_ us about the heart of Judas Iscariot. Judas had a \_\_\_\_\_ with greed and money; he was in a position to use money that didn't \_\_\_\_\_ to him since he carried the money box for Jesus and the disciples. Judas got into the \_\_\_\_\_ of pilfering money to meet his own desires. You'll remember that Mary, the sister of Lazarus, broke an alabaster vial of perfume, to \_\_\_\_\_ the feet of Jesus. This perfume was a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard. Mary anointed his feet and wiped His feet with her \_\_\_\_\_. The house was filled with fragrance.

John 12:4-8 says: "But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, said, 'Why was this perfume not \_\_\_\_\_ for three hundred denarii and given to \_\_\_\_\_ people?' He said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a \_\_\_\_\_, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it. Therefore Jesus said, 'Let her \_\_\_\_\_, so that she may keep it for the day of My burial. For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have Me.'"

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**Longer quotations may not appear in the Study Sheet, but can be read in the accompanying transcript.**

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Judas apparently had heard of the \_\_\_\_\_ to kill Jesus. Matthew 26:14-16 says: “Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, ‘What will you \_\_\_\_\_ me if I deliver him over to you?’ And they \_\_\_\_\_ him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he sought an opportunity to \_\_\_\_\_ him. Luke 22: says, “Satan entered into Judas.” When Jesus and the disciples were observing the Passover on the \_\_\_\_\_ before Jesus died, Matthew 26:20-25 says: “Now when evening came, Jesus was reclining at the \_\_\_\_\_ with the twelve disciples. As they were eating, He said, ‘Truly I say to you that \_\_\_\_\_ of you will betray Me.’ Being deeply grieved, they \_\_\_\_\_ one began to say to Him, ‘Surely not I, Lord?’ And He answered, ‘He who dipped his \_\_\_\_\_ with Me in the bowl is the one who will betray Me. The Son of Man is to go, just as it is \_\_\_\_\_ of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been \_\_\_\_\_ for that man if he had not been born.’ And Judas, who was betraying Him, said, ‘Surely it is not I, Rabbi?’ Jesus said to him, ‘You have said it \_\_\_\_\_.’”

Later that night in the \_\_\_\_\_ of Gethsemane, Judas betrayed Him. Matthew 26:47-50 says: “While He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came up accompanied by a large \_\_\_\_\_ with swords and clubs, who came from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he who was betraying Him gave them a sign, saying, ‘Whomever I \_\_\_\_\_, He’s the one; seize Him.’ Immediately Judas went to Jesus and said, ‘Hail, Rabbi!’ and \_\_\_\_\_ Him. And Jesus said to him, ‘Friend, do what you have \_\_\_\_\_ for.’ Then they came and laid \_\_\_\_\_ on Jesus and seized Him.”

Later Judas regretted the great \_\_\_\_\_ he committed. Matthew 27:3-5 says, “Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt \_\_\_\_\_ and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, ‘I have \_\_\_\_\_ by betraying innocent blood.’ But they said, ‘What is that to us? See to that yourself!’ And he \_\_\_\_\_ the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and departed; and he went away and \_\_\_\_\_ himself.” The name Judas Iscariot will always be associated with betrayal and shame. This ending is \_\_\_\_\_ beyond measure.

The second person to face a battle of the heart that night was the Lord Jesus himself. Matthew 26:36-39 says: “Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to His disciples, ‘Sit here while I go over there and \_\_\_\_\_.’ And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and \_\_\_\_\_ to be grieved and distressed. And then He said to them, ‘My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of \_\_\_\_\_; remain here and keep watch with Me.’ And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His \_\_\_\_\_ and prayed, saying, ‘My Father, if it is possible, let this cup \_\_\_\_\_ from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.’” Jesus is here \_\_\_\_\_ what He knows that He will be condemned. He knows He’s going to \_\_\_\_\_ humiliation, false charges, beatings, scourging, and crucifixion. He knows He will die a \_\_\_\_\_, agonizing death. There was indeed a \_\_\_\_\_ battle going on in his heart. Do I save myself from death and fail my Father’s \_\_\_\_\_, or do I die an agonizing death and \_\_\_\_\_ His will? Thankfully, His \_\_\_\_\_ for the Father led Him to do what was right. His death \_\_\_\_\_ us all.

Hebrews 5:7-9 describes that night, “In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was \_\_\_\_\_ because of His piety. Although He was a Son, He learned \_\_\_\_\_ from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who \_\_\_\_\_ Him the source of eternal salvation.” Because the Lord Jesus willingly offered His body as a sacrifice in obedience to His Father, we have \_\_\_\_\_ in our obedience to Him.

The third person to face a battle of the heart that night is Simon Peter. The Lord Jesus said to Peter, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your \_\_\_\_\_ may not fail. And when you have \_\_\_\_\_ again, strengthen your

brothers.’ Peter said to him, ‘Lord, I’m ready to \_\_\_\_\_ with you both to prison and to death.’ And Jesus said, ‘I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you \_\_\_\_\_ me three times that you know me’” (Luke 22:31-34). These four verses reveal a prediction, telling us of the battle of a heart.

Jesus had said to Peter, James and John, “The spirit is indeed \_\_\_\_\_, but the flesh is \_\_\_\_\_” in Matthew 26:41; and this is certainly true. We want to do what’s right, we plan to do what is right, but circumstances can lead our fears and our flesh to battle against our \_\_\_\_\_ desires.

Matthew 26:69-74 tells the story of what Peter did: “Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came to him and said, ‘You too were \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus the Galilean.’ But he denied it before them all, saying, ‘I don’t \_\_\_\_\_ what you’re talking about.’ When he had gone out to the gateway, another servant-girl saw him and said to those who were there, ‘This man was \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus of Nazareth.’ And again he denied it with an \_\_\_\_\_, ‘I do not know the man.’ A little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, ‘Surely you too are one of them; for even the way you \_\_\_\_\_ gives you away.’ Then he began to curse and swear, ‘I \_\_\_\_\_ know the man!’ And immediately a rooster \_\_\_\_\_.”

Luke 22:61 says that the third denial took place in the Lord’s \_\_\_\_\_, “The Lord turned and \_\_\_\_\_ at Peter.” Can you imagine how \_\_\_\_\_ Peter felt when he realized how he had failed Jesus? Matthew 26:75 says, “And Peter \_\_\_\_\_ the word which Jesus had said, ‘Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ And he went out and he \_\_\_\_\_ bitterly.” Have you ever wept bitterly over your sins? All Peter’s boasting and good intentions didn’t \_\_\_\_\_ him from shaming himself in front of the Lord. Just as the Lord saw and heard Peter, the Lord also sees and hears us when we sin (Proverbs 15:3).

Thankfully, this is not the \_\_\_\_\_ of the story. Peter did \_\_\_\_\_ back and strengthened his brothers. When the women came and told the disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead, Peter went with John to the empty \_\_\_\_\_. They \_\_\_\_\_ for themselves the grave clothes without a body. When Peter saw Jesus at the Sea of Galilee, he professed his \_\_\_\_\_ for Jesus three times. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter with the eleven boldly \_\_\_\_\_ and served the Lord for the rest of his days. Peter faced a crisis of fear and temporarily lost, but he later gained his strength enough to \_\_\_\_\_ all that came his way. Let’s apply these battles to our lives.

Like Judas, some people fail God and \_\_\_\_\_ life is all over. They believe they can \_\_\_\_\_ be saved, so they withdraw from God and die bitterly sad and alone. Judas regretted what he did, returned the thirty pieces of silver, but did not \_\_\_\_\_. Judas didn’t \_\_\_\_\_ up to his failure and come back in repentance, asking for forgiveness. Instead he withdrew from God and took his own life.

I wish Judas could have realized how great the \_\_\_\_\_ of God truly is. The chief of sinners, Saul of Tarsus, became the apostle Paul. Paul said, “It’s a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to \_\_\_\_\_ sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. Yet for this reason I found \_\_\_\_\_, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an \_\_\_\_\_ for those who would believe in Him for eternal life” (1 Timothy 1:15-16). I hope you know God stands ready to forgive you, when you turn to Him in obedience.

Like Jesus, some folks know what they have to do, as hard as it is, and \_\_\_\_\_ to do it, because they love God, and they love others, and they’re committed to doing what is right. The Lord Jesus said, “My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so \_\_\_\_\_ to be My disciples. Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; \_\_\_\_\_ in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. These things

I've spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made \_\_\_\_\_" (John 15:8-11). Keeping God's commandments brings joy not regret.

Like Peter, many grow afraid, deny the Lord by their actions, and then \_\_\_\_\_ weep bitterly when they have to face it. Peter faced his sin, but he was able to \_\_\_\_\_ from it and bless the lives of others. He knew what it was like to be frightened by persecution, but he also understood the forgiveness that God gives to the penitent and the \_\_\_\_\_ He gives to the persecuted. First Peter 5:8-10 says, "Be of sober spirit, be on the \_\_\_\_\_. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring \_\_\_\_\_, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your \_\_\_\_\_, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. After you've suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who \_\_\_\_\_ you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you."

There's likely a battle in your heart. We \_\_\_\_\_ face them. Don't \_\_\_\_\_ on yourself if you fail. Everyone fails at some time or another. Many of us have failed often. We may even have developed a sinful \_\_\_\_\_ that controls us. When you fail, recognize what you've done, be honest with yourself, admit what you've done, and \_\_\_\_\_. As long as you hold on to a sinful behavior, you'll have to live with a \_\_\_\_\_ conscience; and you won't like yourself. Like the prodigal, you won't feel \_\_\_\_\_ to be called the Father's son or daughter.

You can let your \_\_\_\_\_ overcome you, as Judas did; or you can \_\_\_\_\_ from your mistakes and repent. You can turn back to God. Even slaves to sin can become \_\_\_\_\_ of God! Romans 6:16-18 says, "Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, that you're slaves of the one whom you \_\_\_\_\_, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the \_\_\_\_\_ of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness."

No matter what your past has been, you can \_\_\_\_\_! Slaves of sin became slaves of God when they obeyed from the heart what God says. You can become a child of God. Believe with your heart Jesus Christ is God's son, repent and turn from sin to the Lord, confess your faith, and be baptized into Christ Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38). You can have a new life and a good conscience. Obey the Lord today!

We do ask that you focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. Everyone needs a church family. There's probably a church of Christ near you. If you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one.