

For What Will You Betray Christ?

Marshall Reid

When one says the name “Benedict Arnold,” thoughts are immediately conjured up of one of the most famous traitors of all time. His betrayal of this country during the War of Independence is thoroughly documented, and his name has become a catch phrase describing anyone who betrays another. His reasons for being a traitor are varied, but have partly to do with rising debts and the promise of money from the British government. He eventually was paid £6,000 (approx. £500,000 today).

Judas Iscariot is another famous traitor, and while we may never know the complete reasons he decided to betray Jesus, money was obviously one motive. In Matt. 26:14-16, we’re told that he was willing to do so for 30 pieces of silver. That was the equivalent of about 4 months wages, a good sum of money for the average worker. However, it’s also interesting to note that 30 pieces of silver was also the lowest price allowed to be paid for a slave. In effect, Judas sold Jesus as a slave to the chief priests. I’m afraid that most of us betray Christ for far less than Judas did, and definitely for far less than Benedict Arnold betrayed the United States.

Some may say, “Wait a minute! I haven’t betrayed Christ! I’m a loyal follower of Jesus.” Think about that with me for a moment. We’ve told Him that we are His disciples. We’ve told Him that He is our Lord and Master. We’ve told Him that we love Him more than anything else. We’ve told Him that we will follow Him. We even sing songs that say as much. However, isn’t it true that there are times that we don’t follow Him? At times, we let something or someone else be our Lord and Master, love something or someone else more than Him, or are disciples of something or someone else. It is at those moments, however long or short they may be, that we betray Christ. We have pledged our allegiance to Him and then reneged on that pledge.

Peter’s denial of Jesus was also an act of betrayal, though we don’t usually talk about it in those terms. Though he did not do so deliberately, nor was it premeditated, the effect was the same as Judas’ betrayal. By both their words and their actions, they both said they were not followers of Christ. Both of them said they were loyal to something else and loved something else more. For Judas, it was his greed. For Peter it was his own safety and security.

For what would you betray Christ? Would you be like Judas and betray Him because of your greed? Most of the time, if not all of the time, our betrayal is for far less than the payment Benedict Arnold or Judas received. It is so easy in this materialistic world we live in to get caught up in the riches this world has to offer. Though most of us will never be “rich,” it seems like we’re constantly reaching out for more. It never ceases to amaze me that Paul said we should be content with food and clothing (1 Tim. 6:8). He doesn’t even mention a house. How many of us can say we could be content with those basic necessities? When we consciously or unconsciously are hungering and thirsting for the things of this world rather than hungering and thirsting for righteousness, we are betraying Christ. We’re no longer serving Him. Riches have become our master.

At times, we may be more like Peter and be ashamed of our association with Jesus Christ. After all, being a Christian isn’t always the popular way to live. While we may never be afraid for our life because of being a disciple of Jesus, we can betray and deny Jesus for far less “serious” of a reason than Peter. Are you afraid of being looked down upon, made fun of, feeling too different? How we choose to act in certain situations, where we choose to go, and what we choose to say will tell the world what we’re most concerned about. Jesus tells us to deny ourselves and follow Him (Matt. 16:24). When we refuse to do so, we deny Him in the process, and He will in turn deny us to the Father (Luke 12:9).

For what will you betray Christ? There is nothing that can be worth the consequences of being denied entrance into the Kingdom of God. Not money, not life or security. Nothing. Judas realized the consequence was not worth the 30 pieces of silver, but his reaction to his guilty conscience was one of giving up. Peter, on the other hand, truly repented of his betrayal and became a pillar in the church. Examine your life closely, and if you realize that you have been betraying Christ or denying your association with Jesus, choose the path Peter took. Make a new commitment to Him and resolve to serve Him and Him only.