



Kirknewton and East Calder Parish Church of Scotland

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Contemporary Lesson Rev Dr André J Groenewald

Text for the Lesson Luke 22: 47 -48

⁴⁷ While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, ⁴⁸ but Jesus asked him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

In Edinburgh I learned a very good Scottish description of someone as being a nippy-sweetie and I do not have to explain to you the meaning!

I think Judas was a typical nippy-sweetie - a description we are all familiar with.

In Jesus' company he was trustworthy, helpful and loyal but as soon as Jesus turned his back, he did two things at the same time: he betrayed him with a kiss or in more modern words, stabbed him in the back with a sadistic smile!

Who was this man?

John's Gospel tells us that he was the Son of Simon Iscariot, which meant a man of Kerioth or Karioth South of Judea. His name always appears the last in the list of the apostles, according to the Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke. He was the appointed keeper of the purse which was a trusted position. It seems as if he was quite serious about the money matters as he moaned with Jesus that Mary was wasting money when she anointed his feet with expensive oil, worth 300 denarius or a year's wages.

However in JOHN'S Gospel it seems as if Judas was a clever and sly apostle from the start, the one that Jesus pointed out even in the beginning of his ministry as his betrayer.

But despite this Judas was quite normal. He was a church man and a follower of Jesus. Yes he could have been one of us.

We can all be nippy sweeties at times. No one of us can sit here tonight in church and pretend that we are not or have never been nippy sweeties to Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour! We can be so polite in church and even outside on a Sunday just to get to our homes and start screaming at our children, husbands, wives, partners, and parents. We can be so loving in the company of our Christian brothers and

sisters but once they're gone, we can act so unloving to even our closest relatives. We can be so hopeful in church and sing the hymns of hope, but once someone close to us dies or gets sick, we are the first to lose hope! As Christians we know our fate. We will be treated like sheep to be slaughtered but once we experience the first wave of suffering or hardship, we tend to feel as though God is punishing us. We know we will face death but once someone dies close to us, we tend to be shocked as if we think death does not exist.

We are all guilty of betraying our faith in Jesus Christ. Even if:

- We recite all the bible passages (usually out of context),
- we come to church devoutly,
- we give everything we have for the church or the poor,
- we know all the songs,
- we belong to all the committees of the church,
- we think we are the only ones that have faith,
- we think we are the only ones that can pray...

No-one can stand up tonight and openly confess of not betraying Jesus in some way or another!

We are no better than Judas or Tom, Dick or Harry.

I once heard the most shocking story. They asked a minister's son why he stopped believing in Jesus Christ. He then said. Well, it is easy in church my father was the example of faith, hope and love for everyone but not for his own family! I guess there are many, many more of these stories in circulation.

I guess his father was also a nippy-sweetie like us all in the presence of Jesus. Saying one thing but doing another!

May we change our attitudes this Easter and become the disciples Jesus want us to be; the disciples who act what they believe, and not nippy sweeties!

Amen