

John Bevere Uncovers the Disciples' Greatest Failure—And It Didn't Start With Judas

Jesus was seated with His 12 apostles, giving thanks and serving Communion, when He made a startling statement: “Behold, the hand of My betrayer is with Me on the table. And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!” (Luke 22:21–22). What an announcement! We would say today that Jesus had “dropped a bomb” with those words.

Although Jesus knew from the beginning that He would be betrayed, it was the first His disciples had heard of it. Can you imagine the horrible feeling in the room as He said that one of them who had been with Him from the start, a close associate, was going to betray Him?

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In response, “they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing” (v. 23). They were overwhelmed with shock that one of them would be capable of such a horrifying thing. But their motive for this investigation was not pure. We know this by how their conversation ended. Their reason for the inquest was selfish and full of pride. Look at the very next verse of Scripture:

Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them

should be considered the greatest (Luke 22:24).

Picture this: Jesus told them He was about to be turned over to the chief priests to be condemned to death and delivered to the Romans to be mocked, scourged and killed. The one who would do this was sitting with Him at the table.

The disciples questioned who it was, and it ended up in an argument about which of them would be the greatest. It was dishonorable—almost like children arguing over an inheritance. There was no concern for Jesus, but a jockeying for power and position. What unimaginable selfishness!

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If I had been in Jesus' position, I might have asked if they had heard what I had said or if they even cared. We see from this incident an example of how the Master walked in love and patience. Most of us, if in Jesus's place, would have said, "Every one of you, get out! I am in My greatest hour of need, and you're thinking of yourselves!" What an opportunity to become offended!

We can almost guess who initiated the dispute among the disciples: Simon Peter, since he had the most dominating personality of the group and was usually the one who spoke up first.

He was probably quick to remind the others how he had been the only one to walk on water. Or perhaps he refreshed them about how he had had the first revelation of who Jesus really was. Then he may have shared again his experience on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus, Moses and Elijah.

Peter was fairly confident that he was the greatest of the 12. But this confidence was not rooted in love. Rather it was anchored in pride.

Jesus looked at all of them and told them they were acting as mere men, not sons of the kingdom: "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.' But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves" (Luke 22:25–27).

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