

THE BETRAYER

“Judas had planned to give them a signal, saying, ‘The man I kiss is Jesus. Arrest him.’ At once Judas went to Jesus and said, ‘Greetings, Teacher!’ and kissed him.” [Matthew 26:48–49](#) NCV

When betrayal comes, what do you do? Get out? Get angry? Get even? You have to deal with it some way. Let’s see how Jesus dealt with it.

Begin by noticing how Jesus saw Judas. “Jesus answered, ‘Friend, do what you came to do’” ([Matthew 26:50](#) NCV).

Of all the names I would have chosen for Judas, it would not have been “friend.”

What Judas did to Jesus was grossly unfair. There is no indication that Jesus ever mistreated Judas. When, during the Last Supper, Jesus told the disciples that his betrayer sat at the table, they didn’t turn to one another and whisper, “It’s Judas. Jesus told us he would do this.” He had known it, but he treated the betrayer as if he were faithful.

It’s even more unfair when you consider that the religious leaders didn’t seek him; Judas sought them. “What will you pay me for giving Jesus to you?” he asked ([Matthew 26:15](#) NCV). The betrayal would have been more palatable had Judas been propositioned by the leaders, but he wasn’t. He propositioned them.

And Judas’ method . . . why did it have to be a kiss?

And why did he have to call him “Teacher”? That’s a title of respect.

The incongruity of his words, deeds, and actions—I wouldn’t have called Judas “friend.” But that is exactly what Jesus called him.

Why? Jesus could see something we can’t. He knew Judas had been seduced by a powerful foe. He was aware of the wiles of Satan’s whispers. He knew how hard it was for Judas to do what was right.

He didn’t justify or minimize what Judas did. Nor did he release Judas from his choice. But he did look eye to eye with his betrayer and try to understand.

As long as you hate your enemy, a jail door is closed and a prisoner is taken. But when you try to understand and release your foe from your hatred, then the prisoner is released and that prisoner is you.

[The above first appeared in [And the Angels Were Silent](#) by Max Lucado (Thomas Nelson)]