

“When Your World Turns Against You” – how to handle betrayal

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In Connecticut in 1814, a four year old boy named Phineas was told by his father that for his birthday he was giving him an island. The boy immediately asked to go see it, but his father said he was too small. He could go see it when he was older. Well, the young boy dreamed of his island. He could see the beautiful water, and the soft sand on the beach. He thought of it as his most special place and he couldn't wait to go see it.

When the boy turned 10, he asked his father if they could go to his island and his father said yes! The boy was so excited as they got into the carriage and began their trip. As they traveled he looked intently over hills and valleys looking for his island. When they came to the top of another hill, his father said the island was in the next valley. When he got to the top, he looked down into the valley and all he saw was a very small island that was a snake-infested marsh filled with weeds.

He couldn't believe it! All of his dreams and hopes had been completely dashed. He asked his father how he could do such a thing to him. The father said he gave him this kind of island to remind him that everything is not as it might seem and he didn't want his son to expect more than he should.

That boy grew to be the creator of the Greatest Show on Earth, P. T. Barnum. His most recognized statement was a reminder of his past hurt and betrayal and his focus in business, *“There's a sucker born every minute!”*

Turn to Matthew 26. As we think about betrayal, and how to handle it, we don't have to look any farther than what happened to Jesus Christ. Verses 47-49, *“While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; seize him.” And he came up to Jesus at once and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” And he kissed him.”* That gives us the first point in betrayal!

Only a friend can betray a friend! When an enemy says or does something against us, it still hurts but we don't expect anything else from them. But when a friend betrays us it hurts deeply! We expect more of a friend and can't understand why someone we thought cared about us would do such a thing!

When these types of things happen in our lives, many times those hurts become hates. We become angry and lash out at others, including our friends, because we continually remember the hurt! We want to understand why it's happening, but sometimes we can't! What we need to know is that Jesus loves us and knows everything about us. **We may not understand exactly what's happening, but we have to trust the one who's at the controls!**

It's important for us to remember that Jesus is able to see the good in a bad heart. He's able to see the purpose in the pain. Jesus knew why He'd come to earth. He came to save you and me! When Judas betrayed Jesus, it was the result of Satan working in his heart, causing him to turn from doing the good Jesus taught and going his own way. But Jesus still loved him! Jesus knew at the Last Supper what Judas was going to do, but He still washed his feet and served him His body and His blood!

Jesus asks us, when we're betrayed to follow His example. He asks us not to seek revenge but forgive. Just as Jesus forgave Judas and all those who crucified Him, He also forgives you and me over and over again for the sins we commit every day even though we've told God we won't! When we're betrayed, we need to follow two steps toward forgiveness.

First, **Reflect on God's forgiveness of you.** Each and every Sunday we come to God pleading for His forgiveness for how we've gone against Him. And every time He forgives us and gives us a new start. Because of this, He asks us when we've been betrayed to **Take a**

Concrete Step of Forgiveness toward those who've hurt us. He asks us to follow His example and forgive, forget, and go on! We can't spend our time in judgment, but we need to work to make the relationship better! Ephesians 4:32 says, "*Be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.*"

As we encounter betrayal, God gives us three ways to handle it. First, **find good in the bad**. Look for ways not to have this situation change the way you react to the betrayer. Love as Jesus has loved and continues to love you!

Second, **find a purpose in the pain**. Besides feeling the pain and hurt, look at yourself and ask the question if there is anything you have done to deserve the betrayal. Self-evaluation is not a bad thing! It doesn't necessarily mean you're wrong and your betrayer is right, but just as you ask God to help stop sin, ask Him to tell you what He wants you to do to make your relationships better. God never said it would be easy or fair!

Third, **be encouraged by the God of the heavens**. We're here on a very special day. This is Trinity Sunday and our focus is on our Triune God. The Father Who spoke creation into existence and has breathed into us the breath of life. The Son Who willingly came to earth and took our punishment by giving His own body and blood. The Holy Spirit Who's with us every day and will never leave us, guiding and leading us in our walk of life.

This is also a day to remember all those who put their trust in God and willingly went to places they never dreamed they would go and fought to keep us free and allow this nation to become the greatest nation on earth. It's also a day to remember those who gave their lives in this fight and never made it back home.

But even more importantly, this is a day we've been reminded as we watched the Baptism this morning that God has called us His own. He sees us as His special children and washes us clean of the sins. We'll also receive His body and blood, given and shed for the forgiveness of our sins.

Know that even when you feel your world has turned against you and you feel the sting of betrayal, God loves you with a never-ending love and He's always there lifting you up and holding you in the palm of His hand. Remember these words from Romans 8:31 and hold them close in your heart, "*If God is for me, who can be against me!*"