13th Sunday after Trinity
7th in a Series on the 12 Apostles
Rolling Meadows - 1964

Rev. Carl F. Thrun

IN NOMINE JESU

St. John 14: 18-24 I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and will love him and manifest Myself to him. Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, Lord how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world? Jesus answered him, "If a man loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words.

JUDAS, 'NOT ISCARIOT'

What's in a name? Sometimes nothing at all — sometimes a whole lot. all depends. When the name Judas is mentioned, it is usually accompanied by thoughts of contempt and bitter distaste. Immediately people think of Judas Iscariot - the man who betrayed his Lord for a handful of silver coins. Try, as men have, to ~~explain to themselves and to the world how a man could sell out the very Christ of God~~ excuse him & justify his actions, they have never succeeded in making a saint out of Judas Iscariot. The halo just doesn't fit. It keeps falling off.

That is why John is very careful to tell us about whom he is speaking in our text. There must be no doubt or misunderstanding here — it was Judas 'not Isaariot' who asked Jesus the question in the upper room: Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world? He was also call Lebbaeus or Thaddaeus, which means from the heart, or one beloved. Outside of his name and the question which he put to Jesus, we know nothing about him. Just a name, a question, and the answer of our Lord — that is all the biographical material we have at our disposal. But John wants us to be sure to remember that this ~~is~~ was Judas 'not Iscariot.' There is a lesson in that for you and me.

How many people, a hundred years from now, will bother to remember that we ever lived? Few men in the annuls of history have ever reached the fame and renown of a George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, or Martin Luther. The chances are rare indeed that men will ever write long biographies about you or me. For a while, perhaps, the folks we leave behind will remember us. What will they remember? Will it be good When they sum up the story of our life in a sentence or two, as people often do, where will they put us — with Judas Iscariot, or with Judas 'not Iscariot'?

What do people say about us now, when we are not around? You've heard them. Som one mentions a name, and immediately someone else says, I know him; he's the one who's always cursing - who can't utter a single sentence without being either filthy or profane! Another name is mentioned and immediately you remember that h is the town drunkard. Another name brings to mind the worst gossip you have ever known — if you want to know what is going on, just spend some time with Mrs so-and-so. Still another causes someone to say, You mean the fellow who is always causing trouble in the church? - The crusader who is always finding fault - The pessimist, the man of little faith, who says about everything that is proposed, "IT CAN'T BE DONE, SO WHY TRY?" Tragically, surely with no good for the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, we can go on and on — You mean the church officer who never does anything — the guy with the excuses — the one who is always complaining, down-grading rather than up-grading, criticizing rather than emphasizing, undermining rather that building up - You mean the procrastinator, the one who is quick to see what everybody else is not doing, but who never does anything himself! Thunbnail sketches, single-sentence biographies they are, and they are not pretty.

There are others, thank God, of whom we can think with warm and grateful hearts. They are people whom we fondly remember as the kindest, most generous, cheerful, faithful, unselfish, truly Christian individuals whom it has ever been our pleasure to know — the best mother, the ~~kindest~~ most respected father, the most understandi teacher, the most admirable businessman, the most helpful physician, the most sincere pastor, the most devoted churchworker in our acquaintance. This we must know — the life that is given to us now, the hours that are yours and mine today, the days and the weeks that are passing for us this year, the discipleship with Jesus that we are living out right now, will decide for time and for eternity whether we will be remembered with Judas Iscariot or with Judas 'not Iscariot'. — I said for time and for eternity. There are only two alternatives. Either we wil spend eternity with the blessed or with the damned, with Christ or without Christ, depending upon whether we have believed or have not believed, whether we have

walked with God, by grace through faith, in the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, or have chosen not to walk with God in the darkness of our unbelief.

Beyond the name of Judas 'not Iscariot' we have only the question that he asked of Jesus in the Upper Room. It was the darkest night in the history of man, the same night in which God's own Son was betrayed, given over into the hand of evil men, and led away to be crucified. Jesus knew what was going to happen, and He was trying to prepare His disciples: Where I am going you cannot come! The disciples had been looking for Jesus to establish an earthly kingdom, where He would display His power and glory before the whole world - but now all of their hopes and dreams seemed to be shattered. He was going to leave them. A new commandment I give unto you, Jesus was saying to them, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. With all of His great compassion, Jesus was trying to comfort them in their sorrow and quiet their broken hearts: Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's House are many mansions....I go to prepare a place for you.... I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him. They were wonderful, beautiful words, but what did they mean? It was Judas who asked, Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world? Jesus answered, If a man loves Me, he will keep My Word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My Words. It was exactly what Jesus had said before. No use trying to explain - no use trying to tell them just how it would all come about - just this: Take comfort, Judas, and don't be afraid. Tomorrow you will

see Me die. But you will not be left alone. I will come to you, and I will be with you, as long as you love Me and lovingly keep My Word. Perhaps not that ve night, but surely later on, Judas learned to know what Jesus meant - when throug all the fiery trials and crushing tribulations of his apostleship, he learned to feel the sustaining, strengthening, life-giving presence of Christ wherever he labored, wherever he suffered, wherever he went - when, in the years that followe by faith and prayer, by Word and Sacrament, he knew that Jesus was ever at his si

Isn't this just where our discipleship so often falls down today? We forget that Jesus has promised His unseen presence to those who love Him and keep His Word. How many of us are really conscious of the fact that Christ is here right now - that He sees us and what we are doing? We come to church and we go through all the motions of worship - singing, praying, bringing our tithes and offerings - we listen to the Word of God, if we find it interesting and we're not too tired - and we do it all in a way that shows that we are not even half conscious of the presence of Him who said, Where two or three are gathered together My Name, there am I in the midst of them. More important still, we live out our lives in a way that shows we have forgotten or else just don't believe that Jesus is alive today, that He knows how things are with us from day to day, that He know what we are doing, what we are saying, thinking, reading, planning. We have hear too much of the world's ridicule. We have tasted too deeply of the world's unbelief. We have tried to take the supernatural out of our religion and we have succeeded only in robbing ourselves of the presence of Christ. Wasn't that Christ' answer to the question of Judas? If a man loves Me, he will keep My Word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. So do Christ and the Father manifest themselves to us and not to the world. In the loneliness of his prison cell, forsaken by most of his friends, Pau could say, But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength... The Lord will rescue me from every evil and save me for His heavenly kingdom! Stephen, bruised and bleeding, stoned to death for his faith, looked up to what others saw as an empty

sky and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. What was it that Judas had asked? Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself - make Yourself real - to us, and not to the world? This is the answer, the answer that has come to His disciples ever since - disciples who have loved Him and kept His Word. The Father and His beloved Son have promised to come and make Their home with us. The eternal Christ is with us when we worship Him. He hears us when we pray. He walks at our side. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me. The Shepherd leads us, and the Father is waiting, there on the other side. It is for us to love Him and keep His Word.

Amen.