



## Disloyalty / un-Faithfulness

### Encounter Prayer:

Dear Eternal God, please help us to grow in our faith, becoming more like Jesus daily. Help us reject the kingdom of the world while participating in the transformation of the world so that it looks more like your Kingdom. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen!

### Encounter God:

Where have you seen God at work in your life this week?

### Encounter Neighbor:

What good have you done for someone else this week?

### Encounter Scripture:

Text: Matthew 26:14-16

*"Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, 'What will you give me if I betray him to you?' They paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him."*

Dictionary.com defines loyalty as "a strong feeling of support or allegiance". It also defines faith as "a system of religious beliefs." Both definitions fall short of what God expects from his people. Loyalty is more than being "hooked on a feeling" and faith is more than "a system of religious beliefs." Loyalty is demonstrated through our actions, especially in the face of adversity. Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). The kind of faith God requires is more than an intellectually assent to a set of doctrinal statements, no matter how orthodox or biblically sound. Both right teaching and right practice of our faith demonstrate our allegiance to the Kingdom of God.

Judas betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. I surmise, the thought running through most of our minds is most likely, "How could he!" How could he spend three years with Jesus, watching him restore sight to the blind, give the mute the ability to speak, set free the demon possessed, cleanse lepers, miraculously feed thousands, resurrect the dead, walk

on water, heal the paralytic, heal the centurion's servant, and make the winds and waves obey- yet betrayed Jesus? Surely, none of us would have done the same, especially after personally hearing Jesus' teaching, witnessing the miracles that he performed, and being in covenant community with him. While we may not offer to hand over Jesus for money, I wonder if there are ways that we fall short in living the faith we proclaim and sing. Is our loyalty divided? Is there something that the world has to offer that we are willing to compromise our faith to acquire? Are we trying to impress or gain acceptance from a person, gain a position, or increase our net worth?

In Matthew 26:6-13, Jesus is at the house of Simon, the leper, when a woman pours an expensive jar of ointment of Jesus' head. The disciples were upset. In their view, it was a waste of money, since the ointment could have been sold and the proceeds given to the poor. Jesus corrected the disciples, telling them that the woman had done a good thing because she prepared him for his burial. This woman demonstrated her faith by her action. She seemed to know or has accepted what no one else has; Jesus is going to be crucified. She gave sacrificially to Jesus, while Judas sought to enrich himself by giving Jesus over to the religious authorities.

The woman with alabaster jar is representative of life in the kingdom of God. Seeking God's kingdom and his

righteousness should be number one in our lives (Matthew 6:25). The woman did not think to herself, "Gee, this perfume/ ointment is expensive. Maybe I should save it for myself." She put Jesus first. Jesus is the both the King and the embodiment of the kingdom of God which is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17). These are precious gifts from God that world cannot produce. However, Judas traded those precious gifts for precious metal from the kingdom of this world.

The natural tendency is to ask, "What can we do?" We should start with being rather than doing. We need be honest with ourselves about our relationship with God. Is it strong? Is it healthy?" Second, we need to revisit our membership vows, as follows: *As a member of Christ's universal Church, will you be **loyal** to Christ through The United Methodist Church, and do all in your power to strengthen its ministries? As a member of this congregation, will you faithfully participate in its ministries by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service and your witness?*

Last, we need to put it all into practice, or in the words of Nike: "Just Do It!" We need to practice spiritual disciplines through acts of piety, justice, and mercy. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we can do it. We have the power to reject the kingdom of the world. We know in the end God's kingdom will make all things new.

**Encounter Heads:**

Define faith in your own words. What are some great biblical examples of faith?  
What are some contemporary examples of faith?

Define loyalty? What are some ways that Christians can demonstrate their loyalty to the Jesus Christ, the embodiment of the Kingdom of God?

What is the Kingdom of God? How does a person enter the Kingdom of God? Does the Kingdom of God enter us?

**Encounter Hearts:**

Share a time when you witnessed the Kingdom of God at work in the world.

Share a time when you sacrificed personal gain for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

What are your thirty pieces of silver?

Have you experienced disloyalty from a friend, family member, or co-worker? How did you handle the situation? What did you learn about yourself? About God?

Share spiritual disciplines that have helped your faith grow.

**Encounter Hands:**

Did you cause harm in word or did to someone this week? (self-examination). If so, confess your sin to God, then seek to reconcile with your brother or sister.

Share your prayer concerns and celebrations.

Ask a member of the group to pray for the concerns and give thanks for the celebrations.

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## Notes Sections

**Prayer Concerns:**

**Celebrations:**

### **Daily Reflection Questions**

Where have I seen God at work in my life today?

What is one thing that I am thankful for?

What is one thing that broke my heart today?

What is one good thing did I do for someone else today?