

Good Christians Don't Go To Church On Sunday  
Part 11B: The protection of Christian Fellowship  
Galatians 6:1-2  
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## **I. Introduction**

Matthew 10:1

### **A. Warning signs of Spiritual Failure**

1. A false sense of security  
2 John 1:8
2. Little sins that nobody notices  
John 12:6
3. He planned to do what was wrong  
Mark 14:10-11
4. Giving Satan an opportunity  
Ephesians 4:27
5. Looking for an opportunity to sin  
Matthew 26:16
6. Left the fellowship  
John 13:26
7. Unresolved Guilt  
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### **B. Concern about each other's spiritual progress** Hebrews 3:12-13

## **II. Preventing Spiritual Failure**

### *Prelude*

Last Sunday's "extended greeting time" was a success – I saw people deeply caring for each other.

Part of the vision I've had for this church has included two things going on simultaneously on Sunday mornings:

1. Fellowship in the café
2. Prayer during the quiet time.

Both of them are opportunities for the church to fulfill the scriptural call to "love each other deeply, from the heart."

Last Sunday there were more people in the café than ever before, enjoying the time to connect with each other.

Then I came into this room a little early and found people already gathered in a prayer huddle.

So it was not a surprise the "extended greeting time" was a success.

So today I'm going to interrupt the series on "Purified until we love like brothers" so we can dig a little deeper into what we experienced last Sunday so that the kind of thing we experienced last week will be the kind of thing we experience every Sunday.

Therefore I'm going to encourage you to do something during the message today you should generally never do any day.

Normally during a sermon you should be thinking "how does this sermon applies to me."

Today I'm going to encourage you to think about how this message applies to someone else --

Sometime between now and the prayer time that will follow the message write down the name of a person whose life is coming apart specifically because of their personal spiritual failure.

You can do this privately --

I'm not going to ask you to show it to anyone.

You can use a code word or their initials if you want to keep private.

Just put down the name of someone who

- ❖ is not living up to their potential
- ❖ could be a great force for righteousness
- ❖ who's got all the stuff - but just doesn't have it together
- ❖ seems to be losing ground
- ❖ and you are scared for them.

Got it?

When today's message gets to the verse that contains the phrase "one another"

you'll be able to see I'm getting ready to open the altar and calling people to pray.

It won't be the ordinary type of altar call where we give people a chance to come and pray for themselves.

The invitation today will be for those who feel lead to pray for the person whose name you just wrote down.

## ***I. Introduction***

Let's begin with the story of person who best exemplifies failure. It's the story of a person who could have been a super Christian, but instead he became the biggest spiritual failure of all time.

His name was Judas Iscariot.

To be ready for the prayer time at the end

continue to use the sermon outline to write down the names of someone, who you care about,

who also shares the same characteristics of failure.

*Matthew 10:1*

*He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.*

Jesus needed to choose a special group of 10-12 disciples

to be his regular companions and his personal trainees.  
So he prayed all night, seeking his Father's will in the selection process.

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When he was finished praying, Judas was one of the chosen.  
Jesus was perfect and didn't make mistakes  
So it was not a mistake for Judas to be chosen.

As one of the 12 disciples,  
Judas had a 3 year apprenticeship preparing him to  
continue the mission of Jesus which resulted in  
the salvation that you and I enjoy right now.  
So we believe Judas had more than the usual potential to be  
a spiritual success.

He was among the people to whom  
Jesus gave them special authority to drive out evil spirits and  
the authority to heal every kind of disease and sickness.  
Since he was personally selected by Jesus  
Judas must have had some attitude or ability that  
set him ahead of everyone else.  
He had the potential to be great,  
but he was a huge failure.

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Looking at his story we can see the

### **A. Warning signs of Spiritual Failure**

By "warning signs" I'm saying these were ways  
people should have known that Judas was going to fail.  
They are warning signs you will probably be able to see  
in the spiritual life of that person you wrote down in the margin

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of your note page.

#### **1. A false sense of security**

Can you imagine what it was like to have Jesus single you out of

a multitude of followers and say  
 “Judas, I see great potential in you and I am going  
 to give you authority over demons, and every form of illness.”  
 Do you think it went to his head?  
 Do you suppose Judas said to himself  
 “I’m in... I can just put it in cruise from here on.”  
 Maybe he said to himself, “Jesus chose me  
 I’m a charter member of the church  
 ncould happen to me.”  
 I just wonder if it went to his head.

If being “in the church” will keep your spiritually safe  
 Judas would never have fallen.  
 Truth is being “in” the church isn’t enough.  
 Yet there are people all the time who have this false sense of security.  
 They think they are on their way to heaven because they were baptized.  
 They think they’re safe from Satan’s attack because they go to church.  
 Getting baptized won’t make you eternally safe  
 Baptism is just a symbol, it doesn’t make you anything besides wet.  
 Going to church or being a church member won’t save you either.  
 Even being born again or entirely sanctified will not

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secure you from spiritual failure

2 John 1:8 Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for

God’s plan for your life is only as secure  
 as your relationship with Jesus is intact.

I am very concerned about the people who are in churches  
 which teach people can never lose their salvation.

It produces a false sense of security.

Adopting this false sense of security is sliding towards spiritual failure  
 because you think you can do whatever you want,  
 and maintain your status.

It leads to the next step in a spiritual failure...

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## 2. Little sins that nobody notices

You know what I mean?

Things like prayerlessness,

white lies,

lottery tickets, and

being ignorant to the waitress?

One of the little known facts about Judas was his position as treasurer of the disciples:

When they traveled around the disciples put their finances together and Judas was the one who held on to the money.

I suppose he was in charge of paying the bills and giving to the needy.

Whenever they came upon a poor person,

the group would authorize Judas to give some of money to the poor,

pay the tax collector,

or buy the lunch meat for the next day's sandwiches.

I don't know what stage the opportunity became too much for him but at some stage, Judas was unable to resist the opportunity.

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He began to take money out of the bag for himself.

*John 12:6 he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.*

I suppose Judas only took a few coins at a time.

He probably never took so much anyone would miss it, nobody would even know.

Perhaps Judas thought this wasn't a real bad sin but the fact remains

if you get comfortable with the little sins

it's not long before you are comfortable with bigger sins.

His petty larceny was a step on the way to the huge betrayal of Jesus

At this point Judas is on a slippery slope towards failure, but it's not too late to turn around. Perhaps a good treasurer's report might have pointed out the problem and people could have intervened.

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As sin creeps into Judas's life he and Jesus begin to disagree.

### **3. *He planned to do what was wrong***

Soon Judas' begins to identify with those who want to stop Jesus

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Mark 14:10-11

Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them.

11 They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

Stealing from the treasury and his other sins may have come in times of weakness, but even now that he is planning to do the wrong thing it's not too late for Judas to turn his life back to Christ. It's just getting more unlikely.

Planning to do what we know is wrong is

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### **4. *Giving Satan an opportunity***

And he doesn't need much opportunity to destroy you. Isn't it interesting that the chief priests promised to give Judas money? Judas' desire for money was at the beginning of his failure. And money is involved at this level of advanced failure. I believe Satan gave the idea of bribing Judas w/ money. Because Satan knew Judas had a weak spot for money.

Satan knows our weak spots, and if we give him the opportunity, he will take advantage of them.

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This is why the Bible warns us

Ephesians 4:27 ... do not give the devil a foothold.

Judas showed his weakness in his false security and his petty theft.

Satan used that opportunity to get a stronger grip on Judas.

It's not too late for Judas to break away from Satan --

but it's getting more and more difficult.

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### **5. *Looking for an opportunity to sin***

After making the deal with the Chief Priests to betray Jesus

Judas began looking for the right opportunity to do it.

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*Matthew 26:16*

*From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.*

People do this all the time

They know they have a weakness for certain sins.

yet they continually look to put themselves in situations where they are likely to have the opportunity for that sin.

Such as the alcoholic who goes to parties where there will be drinking,

or the adulterer that allows him/herself to develop rival relationships

the gossip who asks seeks out juicy information

or the person who struggles with negative thinking hanging around a bunch of people who have habit of negative talking.

When a person gets to the point that they look for opportunity to sin

they have not had a permanent spiritual failure,

it's not too late to turn around, but it's getting less likely.

That night at dinner Jesus announced to his disciples

One of them was going to betray him.

Now Judas knew that his plans were no longer secret so

He made the second most fateful decision in his slide to failure:

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## 6. *Left the fellowship*

He stormed out of the room in which Jesus and the Disciples were sharing their last supper together.

When he left that group

he left the only people on Earth that could have helped him turn around

You've seen it happen in other people's lives haven't you?

When people begin spiritual failure that last place they want to be is among the fellowship of believers.

The place they are the most uncomfortable

is among those who are comfortable with Jesus.

It's not too late for Judas to turn around

But now that he's left the fellowship of believers, he's own his own.

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## 7. *Unresolved Guilt*

Judas stole his way back to the chief priests, then

led them and their soldiers to the secret place Jesus was that night.

The soldiers arrested Jesus, and bound him for trial.

Although Jesus was found without fault, he was sentenced to die.

Judas saw how far things had gone,

he realizes it's his fault that an innocent man is going to die.

His unresolved feelings of guilt have been building up,

it's the same guilt he felt when he stole from the treasury

it's the same guilt he felt when he planned to betray Jesus

it's the same guilt that made his so uncomfortable that

he had to get away from the other believers

It's the same guilt he tried to ignore as he led the soldiers to Jesus

Now the guilt is bigger than it ever was before.

He is haunted by the guilt, persecuted by the guilt, driven by the guilt

Finally he the guilt drives him to the worst thing he ever did.

Worse than the petty theft,

worse than the conspiracy,

even worse than the betrayal.

This time it's not something he does - It's something he doesn't do

This is the one that will seal his spiritual failure.

Every other sin he could be forgiven of except this one...

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Judas doesn't ask for

or accept the forgiveness that will resolve his guilt.

Now it's too late.

Unresolved guilt destroys his potential and ruins his future.

*Matthew 27:5*

So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

But let's not put all the blame on Judas alone

His failure was also the responsibility of the other believers:

They should have seen the warning signs

they should have cautioned him,

they should have stayed up praying for him

But they didn't.

Unchecked, Judas slid deeper into sin.

His condition got worse he couldn't stand the guilt anymore

Judas took his own life.

Friends, if we just keep thinking that GCCTCOS,

as long as we don't care what happens in other people's lives,

More and more of us will fail just like Judas did.

God never intended us to walk our spiritual journey alone

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***B. Concern about each other's spiritual progress***

The first step in avoiding spiritual failure is being concerned about each other's spiritual progress.



Do you really care much money your pastor lost in gambling last month?

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## II. Preventing Spiritual Failure

I have finally arrived at the text of this morning's sermon. Everything I just told you was the introduction and its brief conclusion. The most important part of the message is here in Galatians c 2.

What should the other disciples have done about Judas?  
 What would we do if we discovered an unbelieving heart among us?  
 What could we do about loved ones who have fallen away from God?

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The second step in avoiding spiritual failure is described in Gal 6:2  
 Galatians 6:1-2

1 Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

*(guy carrying backpack comes in)*

Sin is a burden because

it slows us down,

it drags us down,

it pulls us down.

Isn't that persistent temptation or the constant sin a burden?

*(start moving rocks from backpack)*

If we care about the **alcoholic**, his burden of sobriety is our burden too.

If I care about you, **your lack of prayer** is my concern.

If someone's burden is a lack of **grace**, it's our burden too.

If someone's burden is a **faith too weak to tithe** it's our burden too.

If someone's burden is a **critical attitude** - It's our burden too!

If **gambling** is my burden – it's your burden also.

If someone's burden is an **unsaved** loved one – it's our burden also.

If we intend to love one another deeply, as the scripture calls us to do the burdens that get others down are our burdens also

There should never be a Sunday when someone walks out of this place  
with the same heaviness they carried on the way in.  
Sure some people have to go home to difficult situations  
but while they are here  
can they encounter a place that lifts the burden a little?

(I didn't lose any money gambling, didn't win any either,  
I didn't gamble anything, I don't have a gambling problem  
But how would you know that?)  
Do we just look around, see who's here on Sunday  
figure "they're in church, they're OK"  
do we really believe that GCGTCOS?

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The purpose of making sure that no one has an unbelieving heart  
is not so we can talk about them or ridicule them.  
The purpose of coming to church isn't to add to someone's burden.  
Our purpose in gathering needs to be bearing one another's burdens,  
and it doesn't have to wait until the pastor gives you permission.  
I am looking forward to a Sunday when the kind of prayer meeting I saw  
last Sunday both during the quiet time and  
during that extended greeting time  
gets so out of control we don't have time for much of anything else.

When we arrive on Sundays we expect the café to have good food.  
I am looking forward to a time when the café is a time for people to  
do what this scripture calls us to do  
to check and see the conditions of each other's hearts,  
to care about each other's spiritual condition,  
to understand we are called to holiness,  
but are still working to achieve it.

I am looking forward to a church that isn't satisfied  
 with sending cards to people who were absent,  
 but notices their absence with a sense of alarm because  
 we don't know what's going on in their spiritual life.  
 If they are absent because they are on vacation, that's ok  
 but if they are absent because they don't want anyone to know  
 they had an instance of unbelief,  
 where they turned away from God that week  
 that's alarming!

Oh we need to start pray for those people whose names you wrote  
 We need to start praying for them right now

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*(piano begins)*

We need to start praying that they can get right with God.  
 We need to pray that the HS will speak to them,  
 We need to pray that they will turn around and follow God's plan!  
 There are wives here this morning who need to start praying for  
 husbands.  
 There are men here who need to pray for some other men.  
 There are moms and dads who need to pray for their kids.  
 There are people who aren't here this morning - but they should be.  
 We need to seek forgiveness for being so caught up in our own problems  
 That we haven't noticed that one whose pain has turned to failure.  
 We need to pray for that person who just hasn't been able to kick a habit  
 We need to pray for people who've been discouraged and  
 have stopped attending  
 We need to start praying for them right now in your seat, and  
 We need teams of two or more people who will come to the altar and  
 pray for that person they both care about.  
 We need to intercede for their salvation, for their sanctification  
 we need to pray that they will not ignore their guilt

Some people who're struggling who will find someone else in this room and ask them to pray for them at their seats, in the aisles, at the altar. We need to start praying that we can do a better job of encouraging. We need to pray that we will no longer accept mediocre spiritual lives. If we discover we don't have the skills to pray for these kinds of things, then we need to pray that God will help us to pray with more skill.

Let's stop giving the impression that GCGTCOS  
Let's start being a church  
That cares about each other's relationship w/ Christ  
Let's fulfill Jesus' prayer request, that his people would become one.

Sources

Contemporary English Version

The Message

Translation of the NT - Godby