



EYEWITNESSES: THE PASSION OF JESUS GOOD FRIDAY 2013

JUDAS: 'THE MAN I KISS IS THE ONE YOU WANT.'

Judas' story is a tale of greed, betrayal and remorse.

Judas Iscariot was a close companion of Jesus, who had been part of the inner circle of followers. In the early sections of the gospels, Judas seems a relatively minor figure. However, as Jesus' revolutionary message increasingly scandalises the Jewish authorities, Judas emerges from the background. He sees an opportunity to profit himself by betraying his leader – to his death. In a deep irony, Judas chooses a kiss of peace as a sign to distinguish Jesus in the gloomy Garden of Gethsemane. Chapter 26 of Matthew's Gospel describes the scene:

Jesus was still speaking when Judas, one of the twelve disciples, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs

and sent by the chief priests and the elders. The traitor had given the crowd a signal: 'The man I kiss is the one you want. Arrest him!'

Judas went straight to Jesus and said, 'Peace be with you, Teacher,' and kissed him.

Jesus answered, 'Be quick about it, friend!'

Perhaps Judas didn't realise what the consequences of his betrayal would be. Or maybe he couldn't stand the guilt. Whatever the motivation, he soon regrets his actions. Unable to undo what he had done, he hangs himself in despair.

Consider

- Do you stop to consider the consequences of your choices? What practical steps might you take in your life to help make good decisions?
- Have you been betrayed by someone close to you? Or perhaps you might have betrayed somebody else? How might you experience reconciliation in that situation?