

Watch Out

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Preacher: Larry Davis

- [0 : 00] Jessica? Well, good morning. Earlier this week, I sent out a memo, and this morning I see only two people got it, or at least only two people responded.
- Titus and James Great House, would you join me up here a second? Okay. So, they got the memo. And you know what? There's a reward for being obedient. Let's see here. Yeah, here we go. I thought I lost it.
- There is a reward for being obedient. Titus, James, thank you for getting the memo, and thank you for responding. Thank you. I love it.
- So, if you go to Sitgo or Sassol or one of the other plants in Westlake or Sulphur, you can't just walk right into the plant.
- There is a guardhouse there, and there's a guard, and unless you belong there, you're denied entrance. And that is in place for a reason. There are things inside that place that just ordinary people can't just walk in and walk around and be a part of.
- [1 : 37] So, they have guards, and it's true for other places as well. Yesterday, Barbara and I were in Leesville, and Leesville has Fort Polk, and Fort Polk has a guardhouse.
- Unless you have the proper credentials, and unless you need to be in there, you don't just drive into Fort Polk. There's a reason for that, because there are things there that just regular people don't need to be in there doing.
- But here we are in a church. The doors are open, and we want people to come in here. We're kind of like Walmart. We have, you know, we have greeters, and when you leave, we ask, did you find everything you need?
- So, we're free to come and go here. But we're also warned to be on the lookout for people who are not supposed to be here.
- And I'm going to talk about that this morning a little bit, and the title of my message is Watch Out. And the text I'm going to use is John 18, 1 through 11.
- [2 : 43] John 18, 1 through 11, Watch Out. So, let me ask you this as I get started. If you're going to put together the perfect church, what would that look like?
- Just quickly give me some feedback. What would that look like if we appointed you to put together the perfect church? What would that look like? What would be on your list? Awesome, Nathan.
- I like that. Anybody else? Well, maybe you're saying, well, there's no perfect churches, so what's the point?
- Well, the point is I've got about 20 or 25 minutes to speak, so this is what I'm going to talk about, so this is the deal. But here's the deal. When most people are looking for a church, whether they realize it or not, they are looking for the perfect church.
- And usually they have some sort of list or criteria that they're looking for in that perfect church, whether you realize it or not. There are churches on just about every corner of Lake Charles for a reason.

[4 : 01] If you don't like this church, people want the perfect church. Let's look at this church, Faith Bible Church, since this is where we are.

And let's look at kind of a common checklist that some people have when they're looking for a church. First off, great preacher, great preaching, great teaching. Check.

Check. Children and youth activities. Yeah. Check. Great fellowship. Meaning when we get together, there's lots of food.

Check. Nice building. Check. Nice praise team. Check. Check. How many of us are there? Check. Check. These are the common things that people look for, sometimes for their perfect church.

But what about these things? This is where the Lord led me. I asked the Lord to lead me to a church, and this is where I was led, and this is where I am.

[5 : 09] What about that? I believe that God has led Barbara and I here to this church. We were members of Lake Charles Bible Church for a long time, until God called me to be a pastor of another church for a long time.

And now we're here, because I believe God called us to be here. But what about these things? Committed Christians who are focused on worshiping and serving Jesus Christ.

What about committed Christians committed to getting along with each other? What about committed Christians committed to putting others and their agendas before their own?

What about a community of believers committed to growing in their spiritual journey and helping each other in that community in their journey as well? What about a community of believers committed to not only growing, but also going?

And I know that's a big deal with Pastor Bart. So have you ever been in an imperfect church? Well, we are in one, because as Nathan pointed out, we would want a church filled with perfect people, but we're not perfect people.

[6 : 26] We are imperfect, and we will be imperfect until Jesus returns in the clouds and takes his church home. But here we are in Faith Bible Church, as close to perfect as it possibly can be.

But believe it or not, even in this perfect church, there are some things that maybe we wish were different. And believe it or not, as perfect as you think you are, and as perfect as I think I am, there are probably some things that we would like to change in each other.

Here's the deal. As Nathan pointed out, churches would be perfect if it weren't for the people. There was a guy stranded on an island for five years.

And one day a boat came by, and the captain of the boat looked at the island and saw the man standing on the island. And so he thought, well, let me go check this guy out.

So he pulled the boat up and docked at the island and got off the boat and went on the island and talked to the man. He said, have you been stranded on this island very long? He said, yeah, as far as I can tell, about five years. He said, are you by yourself?

[7 : 38] He said, yeah. Then the captain of the boat looked and saw three little shacks. And he said, well, what is that shack for? And the guy said, well, that's where I live.

He said, oh, well, what is that shack for? He said, well, that's where I go to church. He said, that's cool. Well, what is that shack for? He said, well, that's where I used to go to church. So here's something to think about.

Even if we went out and handpicked people to be in our perfect church, we probably would find out at some point in time that we picked somebody who was not perfect, who wouldn't follow through on things that they said they would follow through on.

We might pick some people who would let us down. We might even pick some people who didn't turn out to be exactly who we thought they would be. And while you're thinking about that, and as soon as you stop thinking about that, think about this.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, God in the flesh, he went out and did just that. He handpicked his disciples. Twelve men, just twelve.

[8 : 49] And these were the men that Jesus would invest his life in for three years. And these were the men that Jesus would leave his ministry to after he left earth. And when you think about that, and when you're through thinking about that, think about this.

How perfect were the twelve men that the perfect Son of God chose? I mean, you would think the perfect Son of God would pick as near perfect men to be his disciples as possible.

Wouldn't you think that Jesus would pick twelve men who got it? Wouldn't you pick twelve men who would be faithful?

Wouldn't Jesus Christ, who is all-knowing, know that who he was about to pick weren't perfect men, and he went ahead and picked them anyway? If you were in human resources and your job was to fill a vacancy, some of these guys probably wouldn't end up on the final list.

These guys would let Jesus down. Only one would remain at the cross when Jesus died. So this morning we're going to open up the book written by the one who was there the day Jesus died.

[10 : 06] It's John chapter 18, 1 through 11. And John writes about one of the disciples who sold Jesus out. Now I want to tie this in to how I started.

As we think about how we worship, who we worship with, where we worship, how we wish the people maybe that we worship with might be a little bit different, how things might be different and more pleasing to the things that I seem to think are important.

I'm going to tie that all in together. Think about it. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, picked twelve men who didn't have it all together.

So there's hope for us. Because nobody's perfect. But there is a warning for us as well. And the warning is that we're really going to have to be on guard.

We're going to have to watch out in this family of God. The passage is John 18, 1 through 11. Let's turn there and let's read this passage.

[11 : 14] When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples to the brook Kidron, where there was a garden. He said, which his disciples entered.

And Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.

Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that would come upon him, went forward and said to them, whom are you seeking? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said to them, I am he.

And Judas, who betrayed him, also stood with them. Now, when he said to them, I am he, they drew back and fell to the ground. Then he asked them again, whom are you seeking?

And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he. Therefore, if you seek me, let these go their way. That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spoke, of those who you gave me, I have lost none.

[12 : 19] Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. So Jesus said to Peter, put your sword into the sheath.

Judas, handpicked by Jesus, was a phony.

He was in the presence of Jesus every day, but he wasn't the real deal. So maybe you're thinking, how does the fact that Jesus chose Judas, then Judas would turn on Jesus, sell Jesus out, turn Jesus over to those who would put him to death, how does that do with anything, with what I was talking about, watching out in the church?

Do you know that Jesus and Paul warned us to be on the lookout for people like Judas? Do you know that Scripture is full of warnings for the children of God about things that would disrupt our relationship with God?

Do you know the warnings came very early in Scripture? In fact, the warnings came with the first people mentioned in the Bible. God warned Adam and Eve about a certain tree not to eat the fruit of.

[13 : 43] And they did. And since that time, there's been warnings throughout the Bible about protecting what God has given us, a relationship with him. The enemy's focus is to disrupt that relationship that we have with the Father.

And that relationship continues today in the church. There's warnings about what to watch out for. Matthew wrote to watch out for false prophets. Outwardly, they look just like us, the sheep, but inwardly, they're wolves.

Do you know the enemy comes to church dressed just like us? Scripture tells us that. Watch out. That's a warning. Don't think it couldn't happen here at Faith Bible Church.

Everything's cool here. You're cool. I'm cool. Everything's cool. We're all cool. But the Scripture says, Watch out. Watch out.

I've got four things to watch out for this morning that we're going to run through really quickly because Russ needs to go to lunch. Number one, we have to comprehend what we have to watch out for.

[15 : 01] Comprehend means to understand what to look for in people who aren't one of us. Usually, you want to be around people who are just like you.

So it's curious why someone who is not just like us would want to be with people just like us. Why would a wolf hang out in a sheep pen?

Judas was one of the twelve. Crimb of the crop, best of the best, handpicked by Jesus. He was recognized as a disciple. He was recognized as one of Jesus' own disciples.

But there he was in the middle. And Jesus knew what he was getting when he picked Judas. And guess what? Jesus knew what he was getting when he picked you. But there are people in churches today that have been baptized, teach classes, serve on boards, serve on committees, give to the church, attend church, look the part, dress the part, speak the part, try to walk the part who really aren't a part of the family of God.

I've worked at Johnson Funeral Home for a couple of years and I know you've been there and heard some of the things that people say about someone who has died.

[16 : 27] They're in a better place and I hope that's true. I want to hear that. But I don't know. And here's some other bad theology too. You know, well he's on the shores of the river in heaven fishing right now.

You know, I could correct all kinds of bad theology but that's not my job. My job is to say sorry about your loss and yeah, he may be fishing. I hope he catches a big one while he's there. But there's people who don't even have a clue what it means to be a child of God and don't even know what it means to be in heaven when you get there if you get there.

And my heart hurts for people like that who don't have the correct theology but there are people who come to church with that kind of theology and that theology is not from God. That theology is from Satan who wants to deceive people and people who are dressed in sheep's clothing who are actually wolves are trying to deceive.

And maybe they don't even know it. It's scary. Judas was the treasure for this group. The disciples. They trusted Judas with money. And while they were trusting him of course you know the story he was taking money from them.

What's amazing about Judas is he knew so much about Jesus and where Jesus hung out that he knew exactly where Jesus could be found when it was time to arrest Jesus and take him away. He knew a lot about Jesus.

[17 : 52] He had been with Jesus for three years. He had heard Jesus preach saw miracles perform heard the message heard the only way to the father was through him. He heard all this stuff and somehow it didn't connect with Judas.

Judas was in it for himself. Verses one and two when Jesus had spoken these words he went out with his disciples over the brook of Kidron where there was a garden which he and his disciples entered and Judas who betrayed him also knew the place for Jesus often met there with them.

So he was one of the twelve. He was on the inside. He knew what was going on. Man that's scary. There are people who know the routine and who seem to fit in.

They're faithful but that doesn't necessarily mean they know Jesus and are a part of the family of God. Judas knew so much about Jesus that he knew where Jesus would be found when it was time for him to be arrested.

So the first thing to watch out for is to comprehend or understand what to watch out for. Second thing is capability. What are wolves in sheep's clothing capable of doing?

[19 : 18] Back in the 13th chapter of John flip back there 13 chapter of John verses 21 through 27. John 21 or John 13 21 through 27.

When Jesus had said these things he was troubled in spirit and testified and said most surely I say to you one of you will betray me. Then the disciples looked at one another perplexed about whom he spoke.

Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of them that he spoke.

Then leaning back on Jesus' breast he said to him Lord who is it? Jesus answered it is to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it in and having dipped the bread he gave it to Judas Iscariot the son of Simon.

What a shock. One of the twelve cream of the crop best of the best will betray Jesus. He even shocked them. They were asking who is it? Is it me? Could it be me? Could it be you?

[20 : 33] So what is a wolf in sheep's clothing capable of doing? Mainly deceit. They can deceive other disciples they can deceive each other they can even deceive themselves but they can't deceive God.

Remember the warning Jesus gave back in Matthew 7 21 and 22? Look at that real quick. Matthew 7 21 and 22 Not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord shall come into the kingdom of heaven but he who does the will of my Father in heaven.

Many of you will say to me in that day Lord, Lord have we not prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and then I will declare to them I never knew you depart from me you practice lawlessness.

Do you know that unsaved people can do all kinds of things without being saved? Unsaved people get up every day and go to work unsaved people go to Walmart and shop unsaved people have jobs unsaved people can be mayors police chiefs sheriffs presidents people can do all things and even come to church and be unsaved so if a wolf doesn't know Jesus the sheep better watch out they're capable of deceiving which means they can lead the sheep astray number three are the contradictions of a wolf contradictions Judas life was filled with contradictions he could have left the twelve at any time remember the time when all the disciples or the followers of Jesus or a good many of them left and so Jesus turned to the twelve and said will you leave too and Peter said well where will we go if we left you so we're going to stay well Judas had the opportunity to leave but he didn't there was something in it for Judas remember back in John chapter twelve

Mary took some expensive perfume and poured it on the feet of Jesus and there was one person one disciple who said what a waste we could have taken that perfume and sold it and made a lot of money and given it to the poor who was that disciple that was Judas there are people who come to church who look good who play the part do good things say good things but don't know Jesus and the Bible says watch out Judas was prompted by greed driven by greed and may not always be greed for money that prompts some people to be deceitful in church it could be people who are greedy for power could be people greedy for a position watch out for contradictions Judas did what he did because he wanted to do what he did but he was about to self destruct but there's a message for us this morning about the life of

[23 : 55] Judas and pay close attention to what I'm about to say and I don't want to step on any toes but hear me out sometimes when people make up their minds to do what they're going to do there's nothing that we can do to stop them I get it we want people to make the right decisions we want people to make the right choices we want to protect what we've got here we don't want someone coming in and disrupting where we're going and what we're doing and the progress we're making in the future we see for Faith Bible Church we don't want people coming in to upset what we're doing and when we see it on the periphery and we see what the potential of what might be some disruption some turmoil in the body we want to make sure that we stop it we want to do that but we hold back a little bit because we don't want to offend anybody I get it but here's what I don't see in scripture

I didn't see Jesus taking Judas aside and saying think about what you're doing here or let's get some counseling for you or let's pray about this situation what does scripture say that Jesus told Judas do what you got to do now listen to this if you haven't heard anything else here it is we cannot save people we know that but we cannot also save people from themselves it's tragic we don't want to stand by and watch somebody that we love and care for to self destruct this was the plan of almighty God for Judas to simply self destruct and to take Jesus with him he took

Jesus to the cross basically in his actions that was part of the plan in fact that was the plan sometimes we step in God's way by trying to right every wrong in everybody's life and making them live up to our expectations and not theirs and we need to leave people alone sometimes and not get involved in what they're doing let them go it happens there's prayer lists nothing wrong with that complete we recommend counseling but in the end people do what they want to do we had a lady in our church in Leesville who never could get this message my heart broke for her and Barbara's heart broke for her because she believed everybody was supposed to be saved and she would put herself in danger nothing wrong with that but this frail little lady would go out into some bad parts of

Leesville and at night and see somebody standing on the corner and just want to pick them up and just take them wherever they wanted to go and sometimes to her house and her family was in shock you know don't go out on the streets and pick up somebody and take them to your house but she did and she would see people on the side of the road I mean all the time and I mean great testimony wouldn't you want to be that way but it's not always the same thing to do but she would always come over to our house on my day off and I told her one time Friday is my day off and she would I know I can find you at home then and she would share with us all these experiences we would just tell her be careful out there we can't make everybody do what we want them to do so we looked at comprehending understanding capabilities contradictions and finally condemnation of a wolf and I know you're like me you want everybody who walked through these doors everyone who walks into our lives to know

Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior we want that after Jesus was arrested I don't know if suddenly Judas got a change of heart because it says in scripture that Judas tried to return the 30 pieces of silver and he couldn't and what did he do with the money he threw it on the ground wasted money wasted life and then Judas suddenly realized who he was and what he had done he looked himself in the mirror couldn't stand what he saw made him sick and he took his life Jesus or Judas was in the presence of the great counselor who had the answers for Judas life and Judas couldn't comprehend it couldn't understand it and was only in it for himself and it all caught up to him and when Judas saw for himself who he was he took his life so as I close here's the deal this church can be the perfect church it all begins with knowing who

[29 : 36] Jesus is son of God sent to earth to live a sinless life so that he could die for sinful people so that we could have a relationship with God but also Jesus said watch out because while we have a special thing here there are people maybe unintentionally sent here by the enemy to disrupt what we have and where we're going I hate to tell you but that's the nature of things the way they are until the day Jesus returns in the air there was another disciple who caused a lot of trouble amongst the twelve as well he's the guy with the temper he's Peter he's mentioned in the passage I read John 18 1-11 he pulled out a sword cut off the ear of

Malchus he did some other things too that's pretty crazy but eventually Peter got it and eventually Jesus trusted Peter to start the church do you know that the Bible is full of people who almost self destruct who in the end before they did got it and made a turnaround there's never no hope but sometimes people do what they choose to do because that's what they choose to do there's always room in Faith Bible Church for people who get it but in the meantime Jesus warned while we may get it there's some people who never will watch out