



WORKTALK WEEKLY

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## Welcome to the new format WORKTALKweekly

### Special announcement

**Geoff Shattock's new book *Jesus and the Racing Rat* is available now please visit [here to order your copy](#).**

### Learning from the Shadows 2- Money?

It is not possible in a piece such as this to capture the complexity of any character. We are always catching glimpses and sampling tasters. It is possible to sense the mood of the rest of Jesus' team in the reaction to the activities of Judas Iscariot. To a man they resent him and have no good words to say about him. Most scathing is John - Jesus' closest friend - who would have also written his gospel in close communication with Mary, Jesus' mother. It is John who gives us a picture of a Judas who had a poor relationship with money.

Keeper of the purse, Judas was charged with receiving money, paying any group expenses and giving gifts to the poor. John tells us that Judas didn't care about the poor and that he helped himself to the funds whenever he liked.

Judas' attitude to money contributed to his downfall. First and foremost he did not understand that the money was not his to use as he chose. Theoretically he would have been aware of this but, by stealing, he revealed that his theory was just that.

Here we find him again in the shadows. How many businesses fail because personal and corporate finances become blurred? Those who are supposed to handle the accounts end up distorting them and pocketing the balance. It is betrayal and sows the seeds of destruction in the betrayer. Financial short-sightedness does not simply relate to a poor understanding of corporate and personal finances, but can inhibit us seeing that all finance - personal and corporate ultimately belongs to the Owner of all things.

Judas not only stole but lied. His show of indignation at the woman whose extravagant generosity drove her to pour ointment on Jesus was just that - a show. Judas' public persona was in direct conflict with his real self and the public face was a lie - something would have to crack.

There is always a difference between the face you and I present to others and the private person inside. The problem becomes toxic when the difference is not merely due to the fact that our private lives are more complex and messy - which is true of us all, but when there is a direct contradiction. For Judas, his concern with the poor was not just an incomplete image, it was a complete lie.

Finally Judas had convinced himself that everyone has their price. He had concluded that there was a price that would be right for him and the authorities which would seal the deal of Jesus' fate. Judas had equated his life and the life of his Master with a sum of money. In his case thirty pieces of silver. In doing this deal he sold himself and reduced his life to the currency of money.

Next time you hear or speak the question "how much is he or she worth?" you may like to reflect that it is the wrong question altogether. It starts you down the road to ruin for it equates people with currency.

In the end Judas was a materialist, susceptible to greed and with a tendency to become a servant of money. Somehow his relationship with money polluted what he lived for, each coin becoming a seed of his own destruction. The difference we pray, between ourselves and Judas is not to do with materialism, greed and a tendency to serve money, for indeed we share that with him. The real difference is that we, learning from his sad story, must so shape our lives insuch that they are not so distorted by our financial values that our true selves are lost.

Money is not Judas' whole story but his errors in thinking about it fed his errors in thinking about reality - they always do.

Work well  
Geoff Shattock

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## **BIBLE SECTION**

### **John 12:1-8**

1Six days before the Passover, Jesus arrived at Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. 3Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

4But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, 5“Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages.” 6He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

7“Leave her alone,” Jesus replied. ” It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. 8You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.”

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