

# THE GOSPEL OF MARK

So Close But Yet So Far  
Mark 14:10-21



## SYNOPSIS

This message, focusing on the events leading up to Jesus' betrayal, specifically Judas Iscariot's plan to turn Jesus over and the Last Supper preparations. Jesus' actions demonstrate God's willingness to be "uncomfortably close," even to those who are distant or planning betrayal, emphasizing a "plan of love" that includes everyone. The piece also emphasizes the disciples' reaction to the announcement of betrayal, noting their introspection and the importance of self-examination when facing sin or failure.

## QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to be "So Close But So Far" from God?
2. How does Jesus respond to those who are distant from Him?
3. What is the "Plan of Love" described in the passage?
4. How can we show our love towards God according to the source?
5. What was the disciples' reaction when Jesus announced the betrayal?
6. What is the recommended response when confronted with sin or failure?

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## ANSWER KEY

1. The concept of being "So Close But So Far" illustrates the paradox of being physically or outwardly involved in spiritual activities or environments without having a genuine, internal connection with God. Judas is used as a prime example; he was one of the twelve disciples, physically close to Jesus, yet his heart was distant. This can manifest as being a spectator of religious things rather than a true worshipper, where the work of God is around you but not actively working in you.
2. The source highlights that Jesus responds to those who are distant, even those planning to betray him, with grace and a desire to get "uncomfortably close." Despite knowing Judas' intentions, Jesus included him in the Last Supper, and other Gospels mention Jesus washing Judas' feet. This demonstrates that even when we are doing things contrary to God's will, He moves closer to connect with us, not out of lack of love, but because of His genuine love.
3. The "Plan of Love" refers to God's divine orchestration of events, even in the face of human betrayal and hate. While Judas was plotting his betrayal, Jesus was making plans that included Judas in the Passover meal. This is exemplified by Jesus' specific instructions to his disciples on finding the location for the Last Supper, highlighting how God meticulously arranged the circumstances. The "Plan of Love" also involves the loving obedience of the disciples who followed Jesus' instructions without question, demonstrating that obedience is an act of love towards God.
4. According to the source, we can show our love towards God through loving obedience to His word and commands. Specific examples provided include reading and obeying God's word, sharing our faith, engaging in prayer, and tithing the first 10% of our income. Conversely, neglecting these actions is seen as ignoring the act of love towards God and Jesus.
5. When Jesus announced that one of them would betray him, the other disciples were profoundly "saddened" or grieved. Their reaction was not to accuse each other but rather to introspect. One by one, they asked Jesus, "Surely you don't mean me?" or "Lord, is it I?" This demonstrates a recognition of their own potential for failure and a turning to Jesus for truth about their own hearts.
6. When faced with sin or failure, whether in ourselves or within the church, the recommended first response is introspection and turning to Jesus. Like the disciples, we should not immediately point fingers or despair but rather seek His truth, forgiveness, and strength. The core action is to ask Jesus, "Lord, is it I?" and be open to hearing His answer through His Word and the Holy Spirit. The source explicitly advises against blaming external factors for personal shortcomings.