

The Ides of March

In the ancient Roman calendar, each of the 12 months had an *ides*, the day intended to mark the full moon. The ides fell on the 15th day in March, May, July and October. In the other months, the ides fell on the 13th. Since the solar calendar months and lunar months had different lengths, the term lost its original purpose of marking the full moon. We associate *ides* with March, however, because the Roman emperor, Julius Caesar, was assassinated on this day.

In 44 B.C., Julius Caesar refused to accept a crown, but he offended the republicans, who opposed a monarchy, when he set up a statue of himself. As Caesar entered the senate chamber on the Ides of March, 60 senators surrounded him and attacked him with daggers. At first, Caesar tried to defend himself, but when he saw his friend, Marcus Brutus, with a knife, he gave up.

The Bible describes many examples of betrayal. David experienced it. When Saul became jealous of David's popularity, he tried to kill David. Later, when David was king, his son, Absalom, rebelled and tried to destroy him and take over the kingdom. One of Jesus' disciples betrayed Him, another denied knowing Him and most of the others deserted Him when soldiers arrested Him.

Few things are more painful than having someone you love and trust turn against you. But sometimes when we feel hurt by friends' words, they are trying to help us in a spirit of love. They may see some problem or sin in our lives that we may not be aware of. In such cases, "wounds from a sincere friend are better than many kisses from an enemy" (Proverbs 27:6).

Such words may hurt at first, but they can turn out to be healing. Just because we feel a stab of pain doesn't mean we are being stabbed in the back.

--Beecher Hunter