**“Significant Deal—Wednesday of Holy Week”**

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Luke 22:1-6

Lenten Midweek 6

In the name of the Father, and of the +Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Beginning in 1963, a television game show called “Let’s Make a Deal” became **one of the most popular of its type**. Contestants dressed in really crazy costumes, and Monty Hall (the host) asked them to choose between a prize that they could see and the one that was hidden behind a curtain, door, or under a box. At times, contestants would make **great deals**, trading the prize that they could see for something **far better**. At other times, they would **do far worse**, t**rading a great prize for something far worse—a prize called a “zonker.”**

“Let’s make a deal” is **what Judas proposed** to the chief priests in our text. It’s the sad and somber account of Judas Iscariot **making a deal** (a Significant Deal) … the deal to **betray Jesus**, yet

**that Significant Deal Was More (Far More Significant)**

**Than Even Judas Could Ever Imagine … and FOR EVERYONE**

**I**

The deal takes place on **Wednesday of Holy Week**. By now, the chief priests and scribes had grown to want (in the worst way) to arrest Jesus and kill him. He was a threat to the power and the prestige (authority) of these religious hypocrites. He was a threat to their **control** o**f the people** **for their own benefit**. He’d made them **look bad**, and in public ways, on several occasions, and they couldn’t have that. Trying to trap him in discussions on more than one occasion, Jesus **clarified to them** again and again by asking things they **could not or would not answer about themselves and the nature of true faithfulness**.

In the minds of the chief priests and scribes, Jesus was **dangerous**. He seemed not as concerned about doing what they considered Sabbath Day things and associated with wrong people: humble sinners. He didn’t look or act the way they thought the Messiah should from their imagination. He was not out for **power and prestige** but **service and forgiveness of those knowing they needed it**.

But Jesus had become **far too popular with the people**. They watched what happened on Palm Sunday (Jesus entering Jerusalem with crowds yelling, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest”), so concluded, “Look, the world has gone after **Him**” (as John 12 records them saying).

And it was **popularity by** **gracious compassion and an out-of-this-world authority** that caused the chief priests and scribes to **hold off until the right time** on arresting and killing Him. They **feared** a backlash from the crowds if they took Him away while He was out in the public (they needed help with their evil scheme—a way to get Jesus quietly and discreetly … and they **got it handed to them**).

Judas came forth to them and gave them exactly what they wanted. At the time appointed by God, Satan entered Judas, and Judas approached the chief priests and the temple guard on how **he could betray Jesus to them**. **When** would be **in about twenty-four hours**. On the next day, what we call Maundy Thursday (because of the mandate of Jesus to do the fellowship meal of eating and drinking of His sacrificed body and blood with regularity until the end of days), Judas would leave the room where that New Covenant in Jesus’ blood got instituted as the Sacrament of the Church, and (from there) go to the chief priests to sell Him out. He would lead the guard of the temple to where Jesus and the disciples would be in the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives, away from the crowds of people, and **there** (in the ultimate act of betrayal), walk up to Jesus, kiss Him, and **identify him to the guard for them to take Him**.

**II**

The fact is, this was not the first time Judas betrayed Jesus … or the other disciples, for that matter. When Jesus ate at the house of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, and Mary anointed the feet of Jesus with expensive oil, Judas objected about what a waste this expensive oil was, and its use. He argued that it could have been sold (the money given to the poor), but John tells us that Judas wasn’t concerned about the poor, but as treasurer for the disciples, stole from their treasury and he wanted more money there so **he** could have more money. He’d **already made** **a significant deal with his own conscience. That justified his final betrayal of Jesus** …

… and while **his name** has become synonymous with betrayal, he’s not the only one who’s betrayed Jesus. **We all** can identify with him … just, maybe, have a **different price**. It isn’t thirty pieces of silver, but it might be the momentary fun we have doing what we want that God wouldn’t want of us to do, or the self-importance that we’re given to feel being the center of attention of our world (self-centered for the sake of some form of power or prestige). It might be, for us, a lack of empathy and wherewithal to do something about it, even morbid happiness when someone else falls and we feel superior for it. We betray Jesus daily and not with a kiss, but **thoughts, words, and deeds** **self**-centered and **self**-serving, and us being people who **believe in and confess Jesus**. Yet, **we’ve each made significant deals with our consciences just to let some little things slide**. **Judas had his price**, and **so do we all**.

**III**

Not knowing it, Judas’ betrayal on that day were **under God’s control … and that to bring about something Judas could never have imagined**. Thirty pieces of silver couldn’t have done it, but rather **the holy precious blood of Jesus and His innocent suffering and death**, **THAT** could **pay the price for sin (all of it for all people for all time, THAT would do it)**.

See, Christ Jesus would only **bless you and I in this**. He wouldn’t bypass or betray the will of his Father, but voluntarily **let Himself be taken, given-over to have His blood shed and offer what was necessary (His death) to pay for your sin**. And, then, He’d not **stay dead**, but (as predicted) rise again on the third day to **still live**.

**Jesus will never ever betray you**. He promised to **be with us as His Church (even to the end of the age)** and **never leave nor forsake**. Even today, He’s **interceding for us in Him, speaking on our behalf in the presence of the Father as the Great High Priest (how Hebrews calls Him)**. And He’ll **return on the Last Day to raise you with all believers and grant to you with all believers never-ending life that’s in the presence of Him in His Paradise prepared for us**. ….

The Significant Deal that Judas made with the religious leaders then on that Wednesday set into motion the events **God used to change everything between Himself and man**. Satan, Judas, and those religious leaders, the Romans, and even the people calling out “Crucify Him” **God used in accordance with his love and compassion for you and everybody**. It was **His plan** and **His timetable**, all according to **His will**. And it all got set into motion, then, with **this Significant Deal**.

**Thanks be to God**, in +Jesus’ name. Amen.