

Significant Deal – Wednesday of Holy Week

Lenten Midweek #6 – 3/24/21 – Mt. Calvary Luth.
Text: Luke 22:1-6 Pastor Keith Besel

v. 6 “**And they were glad, and agreed to give him money.**”

Introduction

- ⊗ Beginning in 1963, the television game show *Let’s Make a Deal* became one of the most popular game shows of its time.
 - Contestants dressed in flamboyant costumes, and Monty Hall, the host asked them to choose between one prize that they could see and one that was hidden behind a curtain, a door, or under a box.
 - Sometimes contestants made great deals – trading the prize they could see for something far better. But other times, they would do far worse, trading a great prize for something far worse – a prize called a “zonk”.
- ⊗ “Let’s make a deal” is what Judas proposed to the chief priests when he went to them as we hear about in our Scripture Reading tonight.
 - Yes, there we hear the sad and somber account of Judas Iscariot making a deal; a significant deal; a deal to betray Jesus.
- ⊗ Yet Judas’ deal was far more significant than he could ever imagine.

I. Judas’ deal is helpful to the evil scheme.

- ⊗ It was the Wednesday of Holy Week. As verse two tells us, the chief priests and scribes wanted, in the worst way, to arrest Jesus and kill Him.
 - These religious authorities viewed Jesus as a threat to their power and prestige.
 - The end of verse two says that “they feared the people”, because you see, Jesus was becoming increasingly popular with the masses. So in reality, these religious leaders were really afraid that they were going to lose their control over the people.
- ⊗ After all, Jesus made them look bad publicly on several occasions. More than once they tried to trap Jesus in a discussion but each time He bested them by asking questions that they could not or would not answer.
 - In the mind of the chief priests and scribes, Jesus was dangerous; dangerous because He wouldn’t bow down to their many self-made rules and regulations or to their unfaithful interpretations of Scripture; especially the ones that they used to try and define what they considered to be work on the Sabbath Day.
 - On top of that, Jesus associated and even ate with all of the “wrong people”: tax collectors, prostitutes and other public sinners. From the religious leaders’ perspective, Jesus was not looking and acting the way that the Messiah should look and act.
- ⊗ In their mind, Jesus had become far too popular with the people. They saw firsthand what happened on Palm Sunday when Jesus entered Jerusalem accompanied by crowds yelling, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest” (Lk. 19:38). So great was the outpouring of support for Jesus in fact, that John 12:19 says that the Pharisees watching said, “Look, the world has gone after Him”.

- This was the very thing that caused the chief priests and scribes to hold off on arresting and killing Jesus that Sunday when He entered the city. They were afraid of a violent backlash from the crowds if they acted in public. They needed help to work out a more sinister scheme – a way to get Jesus quietly and discreetly.
- ✘ So as verse five tells us, “they were glad” when Judas came to them and gave them exactly what they wanted and needed.
 - In our First Reading from John, chapter six, we heard how Jesus, as the Son of God, knew in advance that Judas would betray Him (Jn. 6:64). Jesus even said it there for all of the twelve, including Judas to hear, “Did I not choose you, the Twelve? And yet one of you is a devil” (Jn. 6:70).
- ✘ So in verse three of the Luke passage Scripture says that “Satan entered into Judas” (Lk.22:3) and led him to confer with the chief priests and the temple guard on how he might betray Jesus to them.
 - The plan would actually take place about 24 hours later; on the very next evening; what we know now as Maundy Thursday.
- ✘ Judas would leave the upper room where they would be celebrating the Passover Meal and go to the chief priests. From there he would lead the temple guard to Jesus as He and the disciples were in the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives; a place where Jesus often went to be alone with them.
 - This would be away from the crowds of people and under the cover of darkness. There, in the ultimate act of betrayal, Judas would walk up to Jesus and identify Him to the temple guard by greeting Him with a kiss.

II. Judas’s deal reveals the sorts of deals we make.

- ✘ The fact is though, this was not even the first time that Judas betrayed Jesus – or the other disciples, for that matter. In John 12, when Jesus is eating at the house of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, Mary anoints the feet of Jesus with expensive ointment, and what does Judas do?
 - He objects that this was a waste of that very expensive ointment. Judas used the excuse that the oil could have been sold and the money given to the poor. But John tells us that Judas was not really concerned about the poor.
 - No. You see, he was the treasurer for the disciples and he used to steal from the treasury for himself. Judas wanted more money in the treasury so that he could have more money at his disposal.
 - So it appears that he had to have already made a significant deal internally, with his own conscience, for him to be able to justify this continued betrayal of Jesus and the other disciples.
- ✘ Wow! All of this just wants to make us shake our head in disgust, doesn’t it? Clearly Judas had seen and heard enough of Jesus – the miracles that proved He had the power of God, and the teachings that showed He was the promised Son of the Most High.
 - This is part of why Judas’ name has become synonymous with betrayal.
- ✘ But folks, you know that Judas is far from the only one who has ever betrayed Jesus, right? In fact, in all honesty, we all can identify with Judas, more than most of us would like to admit.
 - It’s just that we have a different price. It isn’t thirty pieces of silver, but it might be a momentary pleasure that we feel when we see that racy image on the computer screen, or it’s the self-importance we feel when we are the center of attention as we gossip about a friend, or

the utter lack of sorrow and empathy – maybe even secret feelings of joy that we feel as someone else falters and we sense that twinge of superiority.

→ Yes, we betray Jesus every day, not with a kiss, but with our thoughts, and words, and deeds that look out for “me” first; that center everything above all else upon ourselves.

✘ And this comes from people who gather here in Christ’s Church and believe in and confess Him to be our God and Savior.

→ How can we do such a thing? Well, like Judas, we’ve all been quite creative at making significant deals away from the crowds and in the darkness of our own consciences; just enough sometimes to let a little bit of sin slide by. Yes, Judas had his price, and you and I have ours as well.

III. Judas’s deal set in motion Christ’s innocent death.

✘ Although he didn’t know it at the time, Judas’ betrayal and the events that would follow would be used by God to bring about things that Judas could never imagine.

→ It would not be thirty pieces of silver, but rather the holy precious blood and the innocent suffering and death of Jesus that would become the true required payment for sin; for all people, for all time.

→ Jesus would not betray you, nor would He betray the will of His Father. He voluntarily shed His blood and offered His life as the only price possible to pay for your sin in full.

→ And then, just as He predicted on multiple occasions, He would rise from the tomb on the third day.

✘ This is the deal above all deals friends; a deal that Monty Hall could never dream of offering as the ultimate deal of all time!

→ Yes, this is God’s deal between The Father and His only Son. So rest assured, Jesus will never, ever betray you. Instead He promises to be with you always even to the end of the age (Mt. 28:20). He promises never to leave you or forsake you (Heb. 13:5).

→ Why, even today, as Romans 8:34 assures us, Jesus “is interceding for us”, speaking on our behalf in the presence of the Father. And just as He promised, He will return on the Last Day and will raise you and all believers that we might have His gift of never-ending life in His presence.

Conclusion

✘ You see, the significant deal that Judas made with those religious leaders significantly set into motion the events that God would use to change everything between Him and mankind.

→ Though Satan, Judas, and the religious leaders schemed and believed they could use this deal for evil intent, God used it perfectly instead to exercise and display His great love and compassion for you and me and all people.

→ God used it to fulfill His plan, in His timetable, according to His perfect will. What a deal – a significant deal because it put the plan in motion for Jesus to save you! Amen.