

## Sermon for Lenten Midweek #6

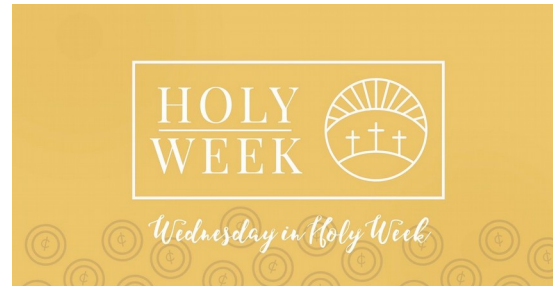
**Date:** March 24, 2021

**Location:** St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

**Old Testament:** Exodus 21:28-32

**Epistle Reading:** Hebrews 13:1-8

**Gospel Reading:** Luke 22:1-6



**Sermon Text:** Luke 22:1-6

**Sermon Title:** Significant Deal: Wednesday of Holy Week

significant

**Psalm :** Psalm 64

### Hymns:

LSB 444 – No Tramp of Soldiers' Marching Feet

LSB 445 – When You Woke That Thursday Morning

LSB 439 – O Dearest Jesus, What Law Hast Thou Broken

### Liturgy:

Creative Worship



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## **Text: Luke 22:1–6**

Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called the Passover. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to put him to death, for they feared the people.

Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve. He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them. And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. So he consented and sought an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of a crowd.

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Grace to you, and peace, in Jesus' Holy Name. Amen.

The game show *Let's Make a Deal* became one of the most popular shows on TV. Contestants dressed in all sorts of costumes, and the host Monty Hall asked them to choose between a prize they could see and one that was hidden behind a curtain. At times, contestants would make great deals, trading the prize they could see for something far better. At other times, they would do far worse, trading a great prize for something far worse, a prize called a "zonker."

Today we heard Judas say, "Let's make a deal." He had a proposal for the chief priests. It is a sad account of Judas Iscariot making significant deal. A deal to betray Jesus. The thing is Judas' significant deal was far more significant than he could ever imagine.

This all takes place on Wednesday of Holy Week. Jesus' last days before the cross. By now the chief priests and scribes wanted to kill Jesus. He was a threat to the power and prestige of these religious authorities. He was a threat to their control of the people. He had made them look bad publicly, on several occasions. They tried to trap Him in discussion on more than one occasion, but Jesus bested them again and again by asking them questions they could not, or would not, answer.

In the mind of the chief priests and scribes Jesus was dangerous. In their mind He was dangerous in that He was not concerned about putting on a good show for the Sabbath Day. He associated with, and even ate with, all of the wrong kind of people. He was not looking and acting the way they thought the Messiah should look and act. He didn't want the money, the power, or the prestige they had, and they could offer.

In their mind Jesus had become far too popular. They witnessed what happened on Palm Sunday when Jesus rode into Jerusalem, just like Solomon had so many years ago. Jesus rode in accompanied by crowds shouting:

Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the  
Lord!

Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.<sup>1</sup>

So great was the support for Jesus that the Pharisees watching it said:

<sup>1</sup> Luke 19:38

Look, the whole world has gone after Him.<sup>2</sup>

It was the popularity of Jesus with the crowds that caused the chief priests and scribes to hold off on arresting and killing Him. They feared a violent backlash if they tried to take Jesus away while He was out in public. Especially during the Passover celebration, when Jerusalem and the surrounding area were bursting with an endless throng of people. The Temple authority needed help with their devious scheme. They needed a way to get Jesus quietly and secretly. The problem is Jesus didn't hang out with the people they did, and they had no way of knowing where He would be, or where He was going.

So you can only imagine their excitement when Judas came to them to give exactly what they wanted. Satan entered Judas, and Judas had a conversation with the chief priests on how he could betray Jesus to them. It would take place in less than twenty-four hours.

On the very next evening, the day we now call Maundy<sup>3</sup> Thursday, Judas would leave the upper room, where He had been with Jesus and the other disciples. He would go to the chief priests. Later he would lead the Temple guard to Jesus and the disciples, in the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. It was away from all the crowds. It could all be done quietly and secretly. In the ultimate act of betrayal, Judas would walk up to Jesus and identify Him to the Temple guard with the kiss of peace. The very same greeting we share still in our churches, now called the sharing of the peace.<sup>4</sup> That greeting of welcome, graciousness and good Christian favor. Just as we shake hands, so they greeted with a kiss. Even Judas' signal was seditious in its simplicity.

Now this was not the first time Judas betrayed Jesus or the other disciples. In John chapter twelve, when Jesus is eating at the house of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, Mary anoints Jesus' feet with expensive ointment. Judas objects that this was a waste of expensive oil. He argued that it could have been sold and the money given to the poor. That's what he said, but John tells us Judas was not concerned about the poor. He was the treasurer, and he would steal

2 John 12:19

3 'Maundy' is a Latin word for 'Mandate' or 'Command.' Jesus said, "A new **commandment** I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." [John 13:34-35]

4 The 'kiss of peace' was culturally similar to shaking hands, but was also a sign of respect.

from them. He wanted more money in the treasury so he could have more money in his pockets.

The name Judas is often associated with betrayal, but Judas is far from the only one who betrayed Jesus. The truth is, if you peer into your own heart, you too can identify with Judas. We probably have a different price, but betraying Jesus is on the table, for all of us. It might not be thirty pieces of silver (the price of a dead slave)<sup>5</sup>, but it might be a different number, or a different enticement that calls your name. It might be the feeling of power we get when we gossip about our neighbor. It might be the lack of empathy at someone else's pain. It may be secret feelings of joy when someone else falters.

We betray Jesus every day. Not with a kiss of respect, or a hand shake of greeting, but with our thoughts, words, and deeds that are self-focused and self-serving. It all happens, and it all happens from people who believe and confess Jesus as their Lord. We've each made significant deals with our consciences. Judas had his price, and so do you.

Judas didn't know it. His betrayal and the events that would follow, would be used by God to bring about riches to you Judas could never imagine, and would never realize.<sup>6</sup> It would come not at the cost of thirty pieces of silver. It would come by the holy innocent precious Blood, and the innocent suffering and death, of Jesus. That would be the cost. This payment for all sin, for all people, for all time, to purchase for us life eternal in peace.

Jesus could have betrayed you. All that is required of Him is to say, "I never knew you."<sup>7</sup> He could have skipped the cross and betrayed you, but He didn't. He couldn't. He would not betray the will of His Father whose desire it is that you be saved.<sup>8</sup> He could not deny and betray His own heart for you and your soul. He would voluntarily shed His Blood and offer His life as payment for yours. The battle for your souls didn't stop there. One more enemy needed to fall. On Easter Sunday morning that enemy was engaged. The battle was epic, but short. Just as He said, on many occasions, He rose, and walked out of that tomb. Death was defeated. Life is now yours.

5 Exodus 21:32 – If the ox gores a slave, male or female, the owner shall give to their master thirty shekels [about 11 grams] of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.

6 Acts 1:25

7 Matthew 7:23 – ...I [Jesus] declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, ...'

8 1 Timothy 2:4

Jesus will never betray you. He promises is to, “be with you always, even to the end of the age.”<sup>9</sup> He promises never to leave you or forsake you.<sup>10</sup> Even today, He is interceding for you, speaking on your behalf before the throne of the Father. Just like He promised, He will return on that day we call the Last Day, and will raise you and all believers to never-ending life with Him.

The significant deal Judas made with the Temple authority set into motion the events that God would use to change everything. Satan, Judas, and the Temple leaders would employ this deal with sadistic intent. God would use it in accord with His love for you. It was all part of the plan, His plan. It was all in conformity to His timetable, and His will. It was all set into motion, on Wednesday, with this significant deal.

Amen.

**Proclaim God's Word,  
Encourage one another in faith,  
Witness to God's love and  
Serve all people**



9 Matthew 28:20

10 Hebrews 13:5