

Maundy Thursday – April 9, 2020  
Text: Matt 26:17-30  
Theme: A Night of Betrayal

**Maundy Thursday is a night of betrayal. First we see Judas betray Jesus into the hands of the Romans and then we see Peter betray Jesus by swearing he never knew him. Jesus was betrayed even further. Where was someone to step forward and say this is wrong? Only the heathen, gentile, Pontius Pilate seemed to even mildly grasp it. Regardless of religious faith, he could see that this was wrong, but he was not willing to risk his political well-being in Rome to do anything about it. The thief on the cross finally made a confession of faith but he was in no position to help Jesus.**

**It is easy to cast stones at them. Peter should have known better. He was one of Jesus' closest friends. Judas should have known better. He heard Jesus preach the Gospel. The Gospel - directly from the Lord's mouth. Everyone should have known better. We should know better. We too have betrayed Jesus. Like Judas we have chosen to follow other gain or other wisdom in lieu of following Christ.**

**"I can't miss practice and go to church or Coach won't let me play in the game!"**

**"I can't go to bible study because I'm too tired from work."**

**“I know I should give an offering to Church but I need to pay for my vacation or car or outfit or (insert here whatever unnecessary thing you ever paid for instead of giving to the Church).**

**Every time we choose something of this world instead of Jesus, we are no better than Judas.**

**Like Peter, we have denied being a part of Jesus when it was inconvenient, embarrassing, or painful to be a part of Jesus. None of us are innocent.**

**“If I defend the person everyone mocks and ridicules, they might turn on me!”**

**“If I speak privately to that person about her sin, she might spread rumors to others about me.”**

**“If I take an unpopular stand for what is Godly, friends might abandon me. Society might ridicule me. The government might even penalize me.”**

**Me! Me! Me! We betray Jesus over and over again because publically connecting ourselves to him is often embarrassing and sometimes even dangerous. Our choice is not whether to betray Jesus or not. Sadly, we all sin and within that sin, there are always**

**variations of betrayal. Our choice is only what to do with the fact of our betrayal. What to do with the reality of all of our past betrayals?**

**We have two choices. Like Judas, we can kill ourselves and be done with it. Of course we can do that physically, but more often, people do it spiritually. They drift away from the Church, because being the body of Christ, we inherently remind of them of their betrayal. They will probably find some excuses for leaving. The pastor is boring or mean or uncaring. The music is old and stodgy. Those people are hypocrites. They act all goody-goody but I see them at the bars on Saturday night, or I hear them yelling at their kids in the backyard. It doesn't really matter. As long as someone has an excuse not to go and be confronted with his betrayal, he'll use it. But there is another choice. There is a better choice. It is the choice you all have made tonight.**

**Judas took the easy, common way out, but like Peter, we can do something really radical, far more radical than killing ourselves. We can do something far braver than killing ourselves and far wiser than just covering up our betrayals. We can confess our sin and be forgiven.**

**This night of betrayal is also the night our Lord instituted the Lord's Supper. On this night when everyone he loved was turning**

**their backs on him, he took bread and said, "Take. Eat. This is my body." He took the cup and said, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." There is no way around betrayal. We all have done it, and regardless of our fierce attempts to live a righteous life, we will do it again. The only good option for us is forgiveness, which was offered tonight in the absolution of your sins at the beginning of worship, when I, in the place of Jesus Christ himself, forgave you all of your sins, and it is offered as well here at the Lord's altar in the body and blood. Most of the Christians of the world are fasting tonight from the Lord's Supper but remember, when this most recent pestilence is over and gone, the Supper will still be here for you, waiting for you to come. Then you will eat and drink and receive the tangible forgiveness of all your sin on top of what the Word has already given you.**