



INTRODUCTION

There's something in us that wants to leverage God and his power for our end. We all try to get God in on our thing. We try to bargain with him through prayer, church attendance, giving, or short-term obedience. We promise to do what we think he wants us to do, if he will do what we want. In the Easter story, Judas was like that. He tried to get Jesus to do what he wanted, without regard for Jesus' ministry and mission. That may seem ridiculous, but there's a little Judas in all of us.

Meanwhile, Jesus was in Bethany at the home of Simon, a man who had previously had leprosy. 7 While he was eating, a woman came in with a beautiful alabaster jar of expensive perfume and poured it over his head.

8 The disciples were indignant when they saw this. "What a waste!" they said. 9 "It could have been sold for a high price and the money given to the poor."

10 But Jesus, aware of this, replied, "Why criticize this woman for doing such a good thing to me? 11 You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me. 12 She has poured this perfume on me to prepare my body for burial. 13 I tell you the truth, wherever the Good News is preached throughout the world, this woman's deed will be remembered and discussed."

*14 Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, went to the leading priests 15 and asked, "How much will you pay me to betray Jesus to you?" And they gave him thirty pieces of silver. 16 From that time on, Judas began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus. **Matt 26:6-16***

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What is something that was important to you in the past that no longer seems important? What change in your life caused a shift in your priorities?

What are some reasons people try to bargain with God? How does that bargaining affect their view of God?

There's a little bit of Judas in all of us. We're all tempted to try to manipulate God for the benefit of our own agendas. Do you agree? Why or why not?

Talk about a time when you became impatient with God. How did you respond to that impatience? How did God respond?

Read Matthew 26:6–16. Do you relate to the disciples' reaction to the woman's behaviour toward Jesus? Why or why not?

For what or whom are you tempted to trade your relationship with Christ? What is one thing you can do this week to surrender that part of your life to God? How can this group hold you accountable?

MOVING FORWARD

At some point, all of us are tempted to trade our relationship with Christ for something or somebody. But like Judas, the moment you make that trade, the value of what you received begins to diminish. Eventually, you'll regret the outcome. You'll wish you could go back and undo that decision.

When we barter rather than surrender, we are responsible for the outcome. When we put aside our agenda and surrender to God, he takes responsibility for the outcome.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

*The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me. When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial." **Matthew 26:11–12***