



**The Pretender**  
**Matthew 19:17; 26:6-16; 27:3-5**  
**John 12:4-7; 13:21; 27-28, 31**  
**Message from Pastor Martin Hawley**  
**April 23, 2017**

**The Bottom Line:** At some point, all of us are tempted to trade our relationship with Christ for something or somebody, usually because of disappointment. What are you most tempted to trade Jesus for?

**Introduction:**

Every try to bargain with God? We all try to get God to do what we want. There's something in us that wants to leverage God and His power for our ends.

“If you will ..., I will ...”

We bargain with: prayer, attendance, giving, breakup, obedience.

Or, perhaps that's in the past for you.

“Since **God** didn't ..., forget it!”

**If God had behaved the way you thought God ought to behave, you would have behaved ... you would still believe.**

Today's character tried to get Jesus to do his bidding, and when Jesus didn't he bailed. The truth is there's a little bit of **him** in all of **us**.

When there was something in it for him to follow Jesus, he followed. When it became apparent that there was more to be gained by siding with those who sided against Jesus, he flipped. He was a **pretender!** He was **Judas Iscariot**.

Judas' story is relevant to us because there is something in all of us that wants to leverage God and his power for our ends. When He is no longer willing to work for us, we turn away. When He won't bargain, we bolt. We've all tried to bargain.

Some of you walked away from God because He didn't keep His end of the bargain—the one He never really agreed to in the first place. Some of you walked away from God in spite of the fact that he maintained His end. *It wasn't enough.* But as Judas learned, God doesn't bargain. He can't be suckered into our schemes. We have no bargaining power. He needs nothing from us.

**For Judas, Jesus was always a means to an end – His end (Matthew 19:27).**

He thought Jesus was a Messiah that would deliver Israel from Roman oppression as a military and political ruler; that Jesus would restore Israel to the golden years of David and Solomon.

But Jesus did not hate the Romans; He even paid taxes, and He wouldn't cooperate with the Jewish rulers. He wasn't building a war chest of money. He wasn't acting like the Messiah Judas expected.

**When Judas finally realized that Jesus was not going to cooperate, when he saw this three-year investment turning bad, he flipped.**

Matthew 26:6-13 was the turning point for Judas. This was the moment when Judas just couldn't take anymore.

John 12:4-16 provides a little more detail.

Then, Judas acted...

Matthew 26:14-16, "Then one of the Twelve – the one called Judas Iscariot – went to the chief priests and asked, 'What are you willing to **give me** if I deliver him over to you?' So they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver. From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over."

**The Outcome (John 13:21-31 & Matthew 27:3-5)**

All went as planned as God's hand cannot be forced. His will cannot be thwarted.

Judas gained 30 pieces of silver, but lost his soul. Too many

- ❑ **Memorize: Matthew 26:13.**
- ❑ **Reflect: What are you tempted to trade for Jesus?**
- ❑ **Stop resisting and bartering. Surrender that to God.**
- ❑ **Pastor, today I surrendered my life to Christ.**
- ❑ **Come back next week for part three of *The Bad Boys of Easter*.**

people reject Jesus to preserve something they lose anyway and hurt themselves along the way.

### **Application:**

When we barter rather than surrender, we are **responsible** for the outcome of the journey.

God usually does not get in the way of you having your way. He won't rob you of your responsibility for your decision. That should scare us.

When he couldn't get Jesus to do his bidding, Judas traded his relationship with Jesus for thirty silver coins.

When you opt for your way, you do the same. Like Judas, it immediately begins diminishing in value. Bartering is easier than surrendering. But ...



Like Judas, the moment you make that trade, the value of what you received begins to diminish.

**When we surrender, God takes responsibility for the outcome of the journey.**

What are you tempted to trade for? A relationship? Acceptance? Control?

### **Conclusion:**

The safest, most-secure, most purpose-filled place in the world, is the center of the will of God. Stop resisting and bartering.

**Surrender.**

Whatever you are tempted to trade for that, it's a bad idea.

That's the lesson from the life of Judas ... one of *The Bad Boys of Easter*.

### **NEXT STEPS:**