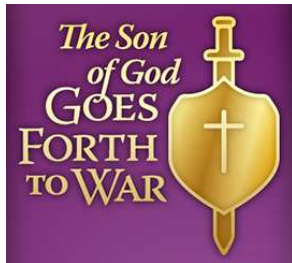


## Maundy Thursday Devotion

**Luke 22:47-48 – “While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, but Jesus asked him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”**



Benedict Arnold was an early American hero of the Revolutionary War who later became one of the most infamous traitors in U.S. history after he switched sides and fought for the British.

Benedict Arnold had served the Americans in the Revolutionary War. He had faithfully served under George Washington. Yet, Benedict Arnold never received the recognition that he thought he deserved. He saw Junior Officers being promoted over him. Resentment began to fill his heart.

But then Benedict Arnold seriously wounded the same leg he had injured at the battle over Quebec. Rendered temporarily incapable of a field command, he accepted the position of Military Governor of Philadelphia in 1778. While there, his loyalties began to change. It is reported that Benedict and his wife lived a life style well beyond their means. In short time, they began to accumulate a huge amount of debt. The debt and the resentment that Arnold felt over not being promoted faster were the motivating factors in his choice to change sides.

In 1779, he entered into secret negotiations with the British, agreeing to turn over the U.S. post at West Point in return for money and a command in the British army. The plot was discovered, but Benedict Arnold escaped to British lines before he could be arrested. West Point remained in American hands, and he only received a portion of his promised bounty. His name, Benedict, has since become synonymous in many people's mind with the word "traitor."

Today, the Gospel writer Luke speaks about another man whose name has become synonymous with the word "traitor." His name is Judas. With a simple greeting, a kiss, he betrayed the Son of God. Yet, Jesus was not giving up on Judas. He knew the struggle he was going through. To the very end, Jesus, the warrior, continued to reach out his hand to Judas.

There are times that we may fight the same battles that Judas faced. It could be some guilt from the past. It could be things that make us feel dirty and unworthy of Jesus. Maybe it's experiencing some kind of disappointment in life. We may feel abandoned. We may feel that our warrior Jesus is not fighting for us anymore. But Jesus has not abandoned you. The same hands that reached out to the traitor Judas, reach out to you as well.

In many Christian Churches, today is known as Maundy Thursday. It's a time that we focus on the love that Jesus gave to his church through the Lord's Supper. A special meal that God gives us the very same body and blood that he would shed on the cross to forgive our sins. Even though we may not be able to receive the Lord's Supper today because of COVID-19, we will again receive it someday. We will receive our warrior's flesh and blood through the bread and wine to strengthen us.

If we were honest with ourselves, we would see that we have all been traitors of Jesus. Every single day we sin against our God. Yet, every day we can take comfort that Jesus has forgiven our sins because he shed his body and blood for us. May that comfort rest with each of you always.

