**LET’S MAKE A DEAL**

***The Worst Trade In History***

Monty Hall hosted the very popular TV game show *Let’s Make A Deal* from 1963 to 1993. It was a lot of fun to watch because it not only offered fantastic prizes like cars, boats and exotic vacations, but it also had my favorite thing: Zonks! Oh, let me tell you, I loved the Zonks. What? You don’t know what a Zonk is? A contestant, called a “trader,” might win a nice prize like a dining room set, or an entertainment system worth a few thousand dollars. But then, with a bird in the hand, they would be tempted by Monty Hall to trade it for the “two birds in a bush.” Behind Door #1 could be a Corvette Sting Ray sports car, behind Door #2 an all-expense paid vacation to the Bahamas, or behind Door #3 a beautiful yacht. Then again, it could be a donkey eating hay, a set of Matchbox cars, or a Barbie doll. When someone would take the risk and lose they would get ZONKED! I loved it when that happened. Yeah, call me cruel.

In the world of professional sports there are blockbuster trades that help a team win a championship, or catastrophic trades that nearly destroy a franchise. Without doubt the worst trade in sports history was when the Boston Red Sox traded a young kid named George Herman Ruth (also known as “Babe”) for $100,000. He had helped Boston win 3 World Series from 1912-1918. But 1919 became known as the year of “The Curse of the Bambino.” The Yankees would ride Babe Ruth to seven AL pennants and four World Series championships. The Red Sox would not win another World Series for 86 years.

But trading a dining room set for a donkey, or Babe Ruth for a century long curse, pales in comparison to those we read in our Bible. I presume you have heard the phrase “What was he thinking?” when someone makes a bone-headed decision. The Bible is full of examples of “What was he thinking?”

Jesus once asked the greatest question every man has been forced to answer: “*What profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul*? *Or,* *what would a man give in exchange for his soul*?” (Matt. 16:26). If that was the entire pop quiz Christ gave you, and you were forced to answer it, not with a pencil, but with your life’s decisions, what would your score be? Does that scare you? It frightens me from the hair on my head to the nails on my toes! Every decision I make when faced with temptation reveals my answer. To sin against God is to make the worst trade in history!

Let us examine two cases from Scripture to answer Christ’s pop quiz:

1. **Esau’s Bowl of Soup**.
Every Bible student saw this infamous “worst trade” coming. Surely he had heard repeatedly growing up what his birthright would include. His grandfather Abraham, and his father Isaac, had both been given special revelations from God as to their future inheritance. Through their “seed” would come a great nation, a great promised land, and a great salvation (Gen. 12:1-3; 25:23). Even knowing this we now read:

29 Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary. 30 And Esau said to Jacob, “Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary.” Therefore his name was called Edom. 31 But Jacob said, “Sell me your birthright as of this day.” 32 And Esau said, “Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?” 33 Then Jacob said, “Swear to me as of this day.” So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. 34 And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright. (Genesis 25:29-34)

Okay, let us all say it together, “What was he thinking?” That has to rank near the top of the worst trades in history.

2. **Judas’ 30 Pieces of Silver**.
If Esau’s trade can be topped it would surely be the one Judas Iscariot made when he asked the Sanhedrin Council for 30 pieces of silver for a kiss on his Savior’s cheek. In my mind, the reason this has to be possibly the worst trade in history is because he had spent over 1,000 days in the presence of the greatest life ever lived! Along with Peter he had confessed Christ to be the Son of God (Matt. 16:20). At the table in the upper room on the night he sold his soul to the devil he had asked Jesus, “*Rabbi, is it I*?” Jesus replied, “*You have said it*.” Moments later after Peter had strongly stated he would never deny Christ, Matthew tells us, “*and so said all the disciples*” (Matt. 26:35).

Something in Judas snapped. His love of money is well known as he had embezzled money from their treasury (Jn. 12:6). But 30 pieces of silver, the blood money he received for betrayal, was only the price of a slave (Exo. 21:32). He was either a very poor negotiator (he was low-balled by the Jewish leaders), or something else was at work in his mind. I suspect the latter, but can’t prove it. Whatever it was that motivated him we soon learn that he screamed in agony “*I have betrayed innocent blood*!” In shame he “*went out and hanged himself*” (Matt. 27:5).

Yes, there were also great deals made in history. Moses “*chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin… for he looked to the reward*” (Heb. 11:25-26). Paul gave up fame as a rising star in Israel to say, “*what things were gain to me I have counted loss for Christ… yes I count all things loss for the excellence of Christ Jesus my Lord… and count them as rubbish that I may gain Christ*” (Phil. 3:5-10).

Which leads me to the deal we are now making with either the Devil or Christ. The difference we have that Monty Hall never gave to his “traders” on *Let’s Make A Deal* is that we clearly can see what is behind Door 1, Door 2 and Door 3. We can know what we are trading when we make a deal for our soul. And that, dear friend, as far as you are concerned, will determine if you have made the best, or the worst, deal ever.

The pop quiz is before you. “What would you give in exchange for your soul?” By the life we are living today we are making that deal.

Choose wisely. - Rick