

CHANGE OF HEART ☆

It's never too late to do the right thing.

TOPICS:

Easter, Honesty

DURATION:

Approximately 10 minutes

Many years ago, there lived a young couple who were of fairly modest means. They were Nathan and his wife Mara. One evening Nathan was busy looking over some scrolls. Once in a while he would have a strange smile on his face. Mara couldn't help but notice.



"How come you seem to be smiling to yourself?" Mara asked.

"I am so excited, I sold all my lambs," he replied. "You know, we would have lost a lot of money this year if I didn't sell them."

"But Nathan, some of those lambs were defective. They may have looked healthy on the outside, but they were not fit to be sold. A lot of people were looking for the best and healthiest lambs for the yearly offering. I hope you didn't sell those blemished lambs!"

"I know they were not the best lambs, but we needed the money," Nathan argued. "Besides, people won't know they came from me. I sold them to a good friend, Nicodemus. He was too busy following some prophet to notice the difference."

"How could you do that Nathan?" Mara asked. "I bet you got the idea of selling those lambs from that other friend of yours didn't you? What's his name?"

"You mean Judas?" Nathan replied.

"That's right. I really don't like him. He seems sort of dishonest, but I guess it is too late to stop you now. Anyway, I'm off to join Mary. She is going to see this prophet everyone is talking about. His name is Jesus, and he seems like a very good man."

"I'll go with you! Nicodemus will probably be there. He still needs to pay me the money for the lambs," Nathan said as he followed Mara into the night.

As they made their way to the meeting place, Nathan noticed that there was already a large crowd gathered around. But it was strangely quiet. Everyone was in a state of awe, as if they were waiting for something, or someone, important. Many people were sleeping, or perhaps praying. Mara found her friend Mary in the distance and ran off to meet her. Alone, Nathan noticed a man who seemed to be by himself and walked up to him.

"What's going on?" Nathan asked the man.

The man looked astonished, "Where have you been? Jesus is up on that hill over there praying. We're waiting for him to come down. He may be the promised Messiah!"

"I have heard a lot of good things about him," Nathan said. "I understand he performs miracles, like healing the sick and giving sight to the blind."

The man continued, "Once He healed one of my sister's friend from years of bleeding. And all of the prophecy seems to fit him. He must be the Messiah. That's why everyone here is following him."

"You may be right about this Jesus being the Messiah. Perhaps I will follow him too, but first I need to find my friend Nicodemus."

"Nicodemus you say?" I saw him just a moment ago, behind that tree over there."

With that, Nathan ran over to the tree, and yes, Nicodemus was there waiting like everyone else.

"Nathan my friend, it's good to see you," said Nicodemus. "By the way, I have the money for those lambs you sold to me. But do you know what. When the high priest looked them over, he noticed that they were blemished. They weren't fit for the offering. It was a terrible year for most livestock. A lot of lambs were defective. But I know you had no idea they were unfit, so a deal is a deal. Here is your money."

Nicodemus began to reach into a large leather bag, when suddenly a large commotion was heard. All the people were awake now and on their feet, all looking in the same direction. Jesus was coming down from the hill. Then unexpectedly, Nathan saw some Roman guards accompanied by someone. The man looked familiar. Then Nathan recognized the man. It was Judas! "Why was Judas there with Roman guards," Nathan wondered. Then, Judas walked slowly up to Jesus, and gave him a kiss. Nathan felt quite uncomfortable.

Then one of the men with Jesus drew a sword, and swung it at one of the guards. His ear fell to the ground. Everyone started to run in all directions. Next Jesus put his hand up to the guard's head and miraculously his ear was healed. Then the guards grabbed Jesus and took him away with them.

Nathan could not believe what he had seen. Judas was there with a very strange expression on his face, almost scary. He realized now that Jesus was the Messiah, and Judas had just betrayed him. "How could he do such an awful thing?" Nathan wondered.

After a moment, the commotion quieted down and Nathan turned to Nicodemus. "I have a confession to make Nicodemus. I betrayed you. I knew all along those lambs I sold to you were blemished. I can't accept any money for them. It wouldn't be right. In fact, I need to ask forgiveness from a lot of people."

Just then Mara ran up to Nathan and Nicodemus. "I need to go with Mary," she cried. "She is very distraught. She wants to follow the crowd to see where they are taking Jesus. He was a very good friend of hers.

Nicodemus started to follow Mara, but Nathan just stood there. "You go on ahead" he said. "First I must talk to Judas."

"Whatever for?" Mara asked in amazement.

Nathan hesitated a little, then answered, "I think I need to tell him he just lost another friend."