

AN INDESCRIBABLE LOSS

MARK 8:35-37 • TV210B

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“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

I don’t want to be guilty of setting one Scripture against another. I don’t want to be guilty of isolating any portion of God’s Word for special attention, to the exclusion of the rest of the Word of God.

I hear people saying, “Now this is the most important verse in the Bible and this is my favorite verse of Scripture.” I don’t want to do that; I don’t want to set some verse out here and say, “now this is most important and the other is not so important.”

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What I'm trying to do is to get some interest on your part in this passage of Scripture. I believe that there is something very special, something very significant, something very solemn, and something very personal, about the words of this text that I am going to read.

My Scripture this morning, the one I have selected is found in **Mark 8: verses 35 through 37**. I wish that you would listen to it very carefully. I think it is pertinent and I think it is solemn and serious. It is the most personal comment. Our Lord Jesus Christ is speaking.

Listen to what He says; *“For whosoever shall save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”*

That is a very solemn portion of God’s Word, very solemn, and I believe, very personal. Let me read a part of it again. Our Lord said, *“What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”*

Now, the background of this comment is found back in **verse 31**; listen to it. Our Lord had taught His disciples the Gospel of the cross and the Gospel of substitution. That is right; go back to **verse 31 of Mark 8** and listen to the Master. *“And He began to teach them; He began to show them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be killed, and after three days rise again.”* He began to teach them, to show them the cross, the Gospel of substitution.

This is what I have tried to preach and teach on this television broadcast for these ten years. I am trying to show you that Christ must die in order that we might live. *“He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”*

“He was wounded for our transgressions.” It is *“by His stripes that we are healed.”* He must bear our guilt and be buried and rise again and ascend to heaven and intercede there for us that we may live. *“Without the shedding of blood there is no remission.”*

Almighty God cannot forgive sin without a sin-offering. He cannot forgive sin without a sacrifice. There has to be a lamb slain. There has to be a sacrifice for a sin-offering. The high priest must have a suitable sacrifice. There must be blood on the Mercy Seat covering the broken Law.

That is the message all the way through the Old Testament. That is what our Lord is teaching His disciples there in **verse 31**. *“He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things. He must be killed; He must be buried and rise again the third day.”*

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They didn't understand. They just didn't understand. In **verse 32** Peter took Him aside, (in other words privately), and began, the Scripture says, "*to rebuke Him*," to rebuke the Master for these thoughts.

Peter says, "Lord; talk no more of death. Let's talk of life. Talk no more of suffering; let's talk about living. Talk no more about sacrifice; let's talk about a kingdom. Let's talk about a powerful and political kingdom. Let's talk about a compromise. Let's consider ourselves. Let's not talk about death and dying, burial, and the grave. Let's save your life, don't destroy your life. You are here for a purpose. We have a wonderful purpose to accomplish."

"We have to blend with this world. We have to build a kingdom. We have to exercise our strength and might and power. We can't build a kingdom by dying. We can't build a kingdom by being put to shame, suffering, and reproach. Let's not talk about dying; let's talk about living."

In **verse 33**, the Lord rebuked Peter. He rebuked him before them all. Do you know what He said? He said strong words; He said, "*Get thee behind me Satan*." The Lord is saying, "This is satanic. This kind of talk is satanic. It is under the power and influence of Satan."

"Your regard is not for the will of God. That is not what you are interested in. You are interested in your flesh, Peter. You are not interested in the Word of God. Your heart is not concerned for the glory of God but your heart is concerned for those things that appeal to your flesh right now, that appeal to your own luxury, comfort, happiness, and success."

"You are not thinking of eternal glory; you are thinking of present comfort. You are not thinking of eternal glory. You are not thinking of eternal happiness. You are not thinking of the eternal purposes of God, the justice and the holiness of God. You are thinking right now of this flesh, this life, its happiness, its comfort and so forth. You are satanic in your thoughts."

In **verse 34**, that is when the Lord called the people. "*Then He called the people unto Him with His disciples*," (with the 12). He called them to Him. You might say, "Preacher, are you talking to all of these sinners out here?"

I am talking to you. "Are you talking to all the unbelievers?" I am talking to you and I am talking to myself. He brought the people and His 12 disciples and He began to teach them the law of discipleship. Here is the law of discipleship. Here is the law of redemption.

Here is the heart of true faith in **verse 34 and 35**. Here is what it means to truly live, to truly know Christ. Listen to it, and He said, "*whosoever will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me*."

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That was in direct reply to what Peter had said. He taught them about sacrifice. He taught them of the cross. He taught them of the alienation of this world, the hatred of this world. He taught them that sin must have a sacrifice.

Peter said, “Oh no, let’s build a kingdom. Let’s not talk about dying; let’s talk about living. Let’s not talk about sacrifice, suffering, and that entire sort of thing. Let’s talk about success, health, wealth and prosperity.”

“God doesn’t want you to die; God wants you to live. God wants you to be happy. God wants you to have a castle. God wants you to have a mansion. God wants you to have a bank account. God wants you to have a boat and an airplane. God wants you to have all of these things.”

“Let’s not talk about suffering.” That is when He said, “Satan, you get behind me. You savourest not the things of God. You don’t understand the glory of God.”

That is when He called the people around Him with the 12 and He said, “Let Me tell you something, and you get this loud and clear; whosoever shall come to me.” Would you come to Christ? Would you have life eternal? Would you “*win Christ and be found in Him?*”

Would you be His disciple? You must come to Christ, not to a doctrine, not to a denomination, not to a tradition; you must come to Christ. He said, “Whosoever will come to me; let him deny himself.”

This is where the battle is fought. Here is where it is won or lost; “*no man can serve two masters.*” Self and Christ cannot both reign. I know a lot of people try it. A lot of people talk good religion while they serve themselves but it is an impossible task.

Paul said, “*I am crucified with Christ. (I died), nevertheless, I live. The world is crucified to me.*” I am talking about the social world. I am talking about the material world. I am talking about the political world and brethren; I am talking about the religious world.

“The world is crucified unto me. Christ is my life and I am crucified unto the world.” Are you crucified to Christ? Here is the law of discipleship if you are coming to Christ. That is the reason He sat down and said, “*Sit down and count the cost.*”

This is not some hasty, sudden, decision that you made while walking an aisle, shaking the preacher’s hand and saying; “I’ve decided to let Jesus save me.” This coming to Christ is coming and denying self, being crucified to the world.

Wait a minute; He is not through! He said, “*Take up your cross.*” Do you know what the cross is? It is a symbol of death. He said, “*You take up your cross and follow me.*”

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This is what Paul did. He lost his friends; he lost his family; he lost his companions; he lost his prestige; he lost his power and he lost his possessions. He lost everything but he said this; *“what was gain to me I counted loss for Christ.”* In fact, he said; *“I consider all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord.”*

And furthermore Paul is saying, “I count them, this political world, this world of prestige and power, this world of glory, this world of so-called health and wealth, this material world, this social world, and this ungodly, religious world, with all of its profiteering and commercialization, and con-men; I count it but dung. I count it but rubbish and garbage, for the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord.”

That’s the law of discipleship, to come out from among them and be separate. It is to be dedicated and committed to Jesus Christ the Lord. I’m talking about the Lord, “not the sweet, little, Jesus boy,” not the “Jesus Christ superstar” and not the Jesus who is ringing His hands hoping that someone will let Him have His way.

I am talking about the reigning, conquering, anointed, Son of God who has *“all power over all flesh.”* It is His kingdom; *“He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.”*

“If any man comes to me.” There is no discharge in this battle. It is raising the flag of King Jesus as the total commitment. It is the laying down of us and taking up of a cross and following Christ.

Listen carefully; this is the alternative. You might say, “This is the new alternative.” Oh yes; there is an alternative and I will give it to you. That is when He said, in the next verse, that is my text, **verse 35**; that is when He said this; *“whosoever will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”*

That is when He said, that is the alternative, *“whosoever shall save his life (or preserve his life on the earth).* That is what He is saying, preserves his fleshly comfort. Someone might say, “I am not willing to come to Christ under those terms. I am not willing to be crucified with Christ. I am not willing to turn my back on those things that are important to me in this world.”

“I’m just not willing to lay down my life and sacrifice my way.” Then, ok; preserve your way, preserve your life, preserve your standing and preserve your social influence. Hold on to them; that’s all right. That’s what the Master is saying.

Here is the alternative; *“whosoever shall save his life shall lose it (or preserve it on earth, his worldly existence at the expense of his relationship with me will lose his life eternally).*

But; *“Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it.”* Be willing to lay down his life, give up his present world, which is in conflict with God, this social world, which is in conflict with Christ, this political world which is in conflict

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with Christ, this religious world which is in conflict with the claims, to the royal claims of King Jesus.

Whosoever shall be willing to give that up for Christ's sake and for the Gospel's sake, that may include your pastorate; that may be the church which won't let you preach the true Gospel, the one you compromise with to save your job; to save your life; to save your salary; to save your prestige; hang on to it and lose your life.

But, "*whosoever shall lay down his life for my sake or the Gospel's sake,*" he will save His life. He will preserve his life unto eternal glory. That is when He said, "*what shall it profit a man* (if he saves his life, if he holds on to these things, if he preserves his position, power, prestige, salary, influence, friendships, and family? If he holds on to these things and saves them and he gains the world), *if he gains the whole world and lose his soul?*" It is not worth it. It is not worth ten million worlds.

That is what our Master said and we always quote it; "*what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?*" Did you hear what He said prior to that? The meaning of this verse is built on the foundation of what is said before.

He said, "You save your life; you preserve it; you conserve it, your prestige, power and position, at the expense of your relationship with God. You will save your life. You won't have to suffer in this world. You won't have to suffer the reproach of Christ. You won't have to suffer for the doctrines of grace. You won't have to suffer for the true Gospel of God's glory."

Oh no! "Save your life; don't suffer, but you will lose it." But, whosoever is willing to bear whatever reproach, persecution or trial, that may come your way for Christ's sake, you will save your life." Or, "*What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?*"

My friends, before very many days have passed by, I must go the way of all flesh. I started this television broadcast when I was about 47 years old. Now I am 57. These ten years have gone so quickly. In ten more I will be nearly 70.

One of these days the doctor is going to make his last visit to my room and the family is going to be called in. My children, grandchildren, wife, or whoever my friends are will be called in. Some comment will be made and life will slip away.

The eyelids will close; the strings will break. The mortician will come and bring his hurst, haul my body out and put it in the back and take it down to the funeral home. They will fix me up so I will be presentable to look at.

The friends will come calling and they will express their sympathy to my family. Like so many times that I have been in services like this, they will close that lid; I have watched them close hundreds and hundreds of them over these 30 some-odd-years.

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The funeral director will nonchalantly without any feeling at all, will tighten those bolts for the last time. It is shut; he will tighten them up.

Some preacher will follow the hurst out to the cemetery and there will be a hole already dug in the ground. They have already got that prepared with flowers piled over the dirt. They are going to drop that coffin down in that vault.

Everybody will kiss and hug and say goodbye. They will put the lid on that vault and start throwing the dirt down on my coffin. They are going to plant some flowers. The boys will take their shovels and pack the dirt. They will put their jackets on, turn and walk off. There I am; that is where my body is.

Now then, let's talk about values ok? Now, let's talk about important things now. The grave is an awful leveler; it is an awful leveler. What is really important now? You come on; you tell me what's really important now?

Maybe I have been wealthy but I am a poor, poor, poverty-stricken, dead mass of flesh now; I don't have a dime, not a dime. There are no pockets in funeral suits. *"Naked I came into this world; naked I am going out."*

I may have been healthy, had health and bragged about it. I took my vitamins, all my minerals, and those sorts of things. I ate right, slept right, did right, and walked right. Now, I am just a poor, rotten mass of flesh, just like everybody else.

I may have been famous and well thought of. I will grant you this; in two months I will be forgotten; *"the place thereof will know it no more."* They will talk about you for awhile but not for long. Somebody will move into your place real quickly.

I may have been religious but I am, still, now, facing the Judgment. Are you with me? *"What shall it profit a man if he gain this whole world, and lose his own soul?"*

I will tell you this; one day the value of all things is going to change drastically. You are sitting there with your diamonds on. One of these days, diamonds and gold won't be worth dust in the street. That is what somebody said, "The hour cometh when money, bank notes and bonds, will be no more than wastepaper."

Diamonds and gold will be like dust in the street. Houses and land will be as worthless as children's old, worn out, toys. Fame and honor will be no more than fading flowers and dying grass.

One of these days, our glory will be our shame. One of these days, those things in which the natural man has gloried in will be his total shame. That which men have been ashamed of will be somebody's glory.

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“Ashamed of Jesus, yes I may
When I’ve no sins to wash away.”

One day our glory is going to be our shame. The things that we have been ashamed of are going to be somebody’s glory. The time will come, I guarantee you, as sure as God reigns and the Bible is His Word; one day the time will come when a man will trade all that he ever had, all that he ever knew, all that he ever accomplished for one Gospel sermon and just one grain of faith.

Somebody said, “Oh what a day that will be!” That’s the reason our Lord knew. Our Lord knows these things. He said, “*What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world?*” It is his, lay it in your lap and lose your soul.

I want to consider briefly, three things and I want you to think about them:

First of all: There is the loss of my soul.

That’s me; you see I have a body; I am a soul. I hear men say, “Man has a soul.” No he doesn’t! Man is a soul. He has a body and the soul dwells in this tent, this tabernacle. The tabernacle will be laid aside but I am a living soul; it will live always.

The loss of my soul is an indescribable loss. I have been to an asylum where it is just full of retarded, mentally retarded, people. That is sad. A lost mind is sad. They can be recovered.

Then, search parties out on the side of a mountain with a lost child, that is sad but that child may be found.

I’m telling you, a lost soul, now that is something else. Oh the eternal wail of a lost soul, to hear Christ say, “*I never knew you; depart from me into everlasting condemnation; I never knew you.*”

Bind him hand and foot and cast him into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

A lost soul, to lose my soul, this is the reason I said when I started this message; this is the most solemn, serious, and personal comment I could ever read to you.

The hymn writer said:

“I dreamed that the great Judgment morning had dawned
And the trumpet had blown

I dreamed that the nations had gathered for Judgment
Before God’s white throne.

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From the throne came a bright, shining, angel
And he stood on the land and the sea
And he said, with his hands raised to heaven;
Time will no longer be.

The rich man was there at the judgment
But his riches had melted and vanished away.
A pauper, he stood before God,
His debts were too heavy to pay.

The moral man came to the Judgment
But his self-righteous rags would not do.
The people who had crucified Jesus,
They had passed off as moral men too.

Oh what a weeping, what a wailing as the lost were told of their fate.
They cried for the rocks and the mountains.
They prayed but their prayers were too late.”

This is an indescribable experience, a lost soul, forever, and forever, and forever.

I will show you something else: How do men lose their soul?

Well, I will give you briefly four or five things to consider. I will tell you how a man can lose his soul. He can lose his soul by open rebellion and sin against God. *“The fool has said in his heart, no God for me.”* That is a lost soul.

If there is no God there is no redemption. If there is no God there is no salvation. If there is no God, there is no glory.

So, you can lose your soul by open sin and rebellion against God. Just go on the way that you are going.

Secondly: A man can lose his soul by ignoring the means of grace.

What are the means of grace? Preaching the Gospel; *“God hath chosen by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”*

I know, my friends, that there is very little, true, real, Gospel preaching, going on today; I know that. I know that most churches are social clubs, entertainment centers, in competition with other religious, organizations.

But somewhere, in this land of ours, surely there is somebody who has the good of people and the glory of God at heart and is preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Go and hear it; get you a tape. Tune into the television. Go hear somebody preach the Gospel.

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Go hear someone who does not promote his school, promote his kingdom, promote his family, but who promotes Christ and calls your attention and faith to the Son of God. Go hear him!

Don't ignore the means of grace. Without the preaching of the Gospel there is no faith. *"You can't call on Him in whom you haven't believed. You can't believe in Him of whom you haven't heard and you can't hear without a preacher."*

Thirdly: Then, a man may lose his soul by adopting a false religion and following a false preacher.

There is just one Gospel, not several, just one. You might say, "Well; all of them have got something." There is only one Gospel. Christ said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me."*

"Without the shedding of blood there is no remission for sin. There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, Christ Jesus."

"We are redeemed not with corruptible things such as silver and gold from our vain conversation received by tradition from our fathers but with the precious blood of Christ."

Do not adopt a false religion. Don't just adopt a religion because it is convenient. Some say, "well, my religion lets me be what I am and do what I do." I know it, it is a convenient religion and it is a damning religion.

The only religion that saves is the religion of Christ and that is substitution and satisfaction, redemption, the blood and sacrifice.

Fourthly: Another way a man can lose his soul is by holding on to a false profession of religion, conformation as a child, sprinkling as a child, making a decision in early youth and an old experience.

Listen to me; the name of Christ on your lips means nothing if Christ does not live in your heart. Being baptized with water does not mean anything if you have never been baptized into Christ by the Holy Spirit.

Circumcision and sacraments, traditions, and customs, are outward folly without faith in Jesus Christ. *"He that hath the Son of God hath life and he that hath not the Son of God shall not see life."*

"What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?"

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