

What Can a Man Give for His Soul?; Mark 8:35-37

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Because Jesus has, first of all, given this description, this is a descriptor. As we said, the last time we were in Mark, that Jesus calls them unto himself. And when we see that language in the scripture. This is saying to us that Jesus is not speaking to a mixed group of people. He's not speaking to a group of people, some who are believers and followers in Jesus.

Others are just merely curious. Others are there for the healing. Mixed in, there's maybe a few Pharisees that are listening closely for something they might trip Jesus up on. No, no. Jesus, when He calls them unto Himself, Mark clues us in to tell us Jesus is now speaking to a uniform group of people.

These are Jesus's called out people and to his called-out people. He then gives this description of what it is to be a follower of Christ. As we looked at last time, you must deny self, take up cross. And follow me now is as though Jesus senses their consternation. He senses they're wrestling with the words that he has just spoken.

Jesus picks up on the fact they are in their minds now perceiving that Jesus has described the hardest of all descriptions to deny self. As we talked about last time, Jesus doesn't say, deny yourself something. He says, deny self, take up cross. Follow me. As though they're wrestling in their mind to say, Jesus, what you just described is the hardest thing possible.

Now it's as though Jesus wants to follow that immediately with some motivation, some encouragement to those who are wrestling with his hard words now. And so he'll follow this up now with a series of paradoxes. In fact, this is a section of paradoxes. Five paradoxes in a row. Rapid fire. So, this being such a section of paradoxes, let's just pause for a minute and let's just recall what a paradox is.

We all might say, well, we know exactly what a paradox is. Well, we do, of course. But sometimes it's helpful to take the things that we know and put them into words because that helps us to grasp them firmly. And because this is a section of literally five paradoxes in a row, I think it's helpful for us to remind ourselves exactly what a paradox is.

A paradox is one of Jesus's, I think, second to the parable, Jesus's favorite method of teaching. He uses paradoxes all the time. And aside from the parable, this is his most common method of teaching, is to use the paradox. And then next to that would be the hyperbole. And we'll see both of those in this section here.

But now the paradox is something that Jesus uses that, well, what is a paradox? It, it is a, an apparent self-contradiction. It's a statement. that apparently seems to contradict itself. It seems to be opposed to common sense until you think about it more deeply or think about it in a different way or see it from a different aspect and then it makes sense.

That's what a paradox is. We sometimes use paradoxes in our everyday language. We might use something like, well, the, the one that I thought of is the paradox that says, that goes something

like this. Whenever I speak, I always lie. And you think, well, that doesn't seem to make any sense until you maybe think about it a little bit more deeply or think about it from a different angle.

And this is the type of tactic that Jesus used, and he used it often. If you think about his teachings, you will recognize the fact that the Gospels are filled with paradoxical language. Things that seem to defy common sense, or seem to be opposed to themselves until you think about it more deeply. So why does Jesus use the paradox?

Well, the paradox requires the listener, or the reader, to think more deeply about what has been said and in thinking more deeply about it you see it perhaps from a different angle or from a different perspective and then it makes sense. So the point the purpose of a paradox is to draw the listener in to think more deeply about what has been said thus what has been said resonates with the listener more.

So, for example, Jesus would use the paradoxical statement in a few chapters in chapter 10. He will say that, if you want to be first, you must be last. Because he who would be first must be servant of all. So you hear that paradox there. Whoever wants to be first must be last. Now, Jesus could quite easily have said, you know, my kingdom is a kingdom of servant minded people.

Servant minded people are the ones who excel in the kingdom of God. Those who put others first, because my kingdom is a kingdom that's about people who put others first. He could have said it, said it that way. But by saying it the way he said it, he who would be first must be last, he requires, he causes the listener to have to think more deeply about what he said, and in doing so, his words resonate and stick with us.

And so this is why I think Jesus uses the paradox so frequently. And so he's going to use the paradox here in the sayings that he gives, this paradox. In fact, five paradoxes. If you take a look at our passage, the paradoxes begin from last time when he says, whoever would save his life will lose it. I'm sorry, from verse 35, whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

So there's a paradox there. We'll look at that one today, followed out by another one. What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? So you say, well, that doesn't make a whole lot of sense. Gaining the world, forfeiting soul, wouldn't world be part of everything? How do you gain everything and then lose the soul?

So it's sort of paradoxical for us. He follows that up by another one. What can a man give in return for his soul? So you think, well, how can someone give something in return for their soul? Because their soul, we would think of that as our very person, it's who we are. How can you give something in exchange for yourself?

So a paradoxical statement followed up by another one. Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous generation, of him will the Son of Man be also ashamed when He comes into the glory of His Father with the holy angels. So you think, well, how can Jesus, how can the Son be ashamed in the presence of the Father.

That's a paradox because the Son cannot be ashamed in the presence of the Father. And then a final paradox in verse 1, truly I say to you there are some standing here who will not taste death

until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power. That's a fifth paradoxical statement that we'll get to sometime later.

So these five paradoxes in a row, Jesus plainly is wanting to say the things that he's saying in such a way that cause us to slow down and think more carefully about what he has said. So all of these statements, or at least the first three of the paradoxes, which we'll look at today, these are revolving around the question of value, or worth, which is going to cause us really to begin with the question, what is the most valuable thing in all of life?

What is the most valuable thing on earth? What is the most valuable thing to us here? What is the most valuable thing to you? What holds the greatest worth? So that's the question that's going to be the center of the verses that we look at today. What is the most valuable thing here in this life? Now as we think about value and worth and assigning value to things, this is something that as we think about this, I think you'll agree with me, really hinges on all of life.

All of life really centers upon the question of valuation and worth. So if you think about this, all that you do, everything that you do, everything that you're about, everything that you focus on, everything that you give energy to, everything that you give thought to, all of that is a result of valuation, of assigning worth.

Because those things that you assign worth to are those things which you pursue. Those things which you value are those things that you will give things for, including your time and efforts and your energy. And so all of life, really, is about what we value and what we find worthy. And we know how this process of valuing things, we know how all this works.

We remember back from economics class in high school or college, we remember about the price of things and the whole supply and demand, you remember that? Where you have this little graph, and one was supply, and one was demand. And, and as the graph went, as supply went up and demand went down, worth went down, or price or value went down.

Or the opposite was also the case when demand went up and supply went down, then the worth or the value of something went up. And so we know that formula and how that formula works. And that formula really speaks to all of the human experience, all of our life. It speaks to the things that we buy, the things that we use our money and our resources to acquire.

And so we know how all that supply and demand thing works. We remembered from just what a couple years ago when there was this pandemic thing and, and there were these events that were causing the supply of certain things to be reduced. We all remember probably going to the grocery store and the empty shelves.

And so supply is reduced, but then demand is still high. And so we all remember. What happened to the price of a dozen eggs or the price of a gallon of gasoline, those kinds of things. But then, conversely, we also know that when supply is very high and demand is low, then price begins to drop. And this works for all the commodities of our life, but it also works for those things that are low in supply.

Those things that can be unique and, and, and, all to themselves. The one of a kind of things. We've all heard the stories of the painting, the one of a kind painting that sold for some crazy amount of

money because it was one of a kind and painted by some, particular person or some item of jewelry that was unique or one of a kind and highly valued and sold for a lot of money.

We all know how that sort of formula works. I remember about, maybe about a month or maybe two months ago, I had for the first time in my life the experience of watching Antique Roadshow. Never in my life had the inclination to watch that, but I was in a waiting room somewhere, and that's what was on the boob tube.

So this antique road show, if you've experienced it, you know what I'm talking about, okay? So these people come, and they got these things, and they're either some, old item from their closet or their attic or something like that, and they'll wait in line, they'll come up there, and some guy will look at them, and he'll say, oh, this is this, and it came from this, and this is what it means, and, and so I would give it a range of value in about this range.

And then somebody else would come and they would have something and they would say due to the rarity of this thing, there's so few of these, it's really difficult to assign a value. So I would put it in this range and the fewer they were, fewer of the thing there were, then the higher the value would tend to be.

And so we understand that concept. We understand that when something is rare and in high demand, it could be of high value. I recently read of a watch company, a maker of custom wristwatches that made these very, very high-quality watches. They used the best material and incredible craftsmanship. And they made wristwatches.

I'm not kidding you or exaggerating. Some would sell for as much as a million and a half dollars for a wristwatch. So that informs us. It just tells us of what we instinctively know. That the value that people place on things really has a lot to do with what they see the worth in it and how much of that is available.

Now all of that feeds into the passage that is right before us. The passage that is before us is all about assigning worth and assigning value. Now the idea of assigning worth, or assigning value, or considering of worth, this is something that is actually quite fundamental to Jesus teaching. It's fundamental to all of the New Testament, but in particular, it's fundamental to Jesus teaching.

If you think with me for just a moment, I think you'll recognize the fact that Jesus teaching included this aspect of assigning the correct value, and it included this not sporadically, but actually all over the place. Think with me of, for example, Matthew chapter 13. There's those two parables in Matthew 13.

One was the, what we call the pearl of great price. And the other is almost like it. It's the treasure in the field. And both of those parables are essentially teaching the same thing, which is to say that there was this pearl, there was this pearl dealer, this pearl collector. who came across a pearl that was so spectacular, so valuable, so desirable that he assigned it this worth, he declared it to have such worth that he would sell all the rest of his pearls just to have that one.

Or the treasure in the field in which the person said, this treasure is of such worth that it is in my best interest, I will come out ahead. If I sell everything I have and use it just to buy that field because that field contains that treasure. And that kind of idea permeates Jesus teaching. The idea

that there is something of great immense value and the kingdom of God is made up of people who recognize that value.

So we come across things like Jesus conversation with the rich young ruler and what he'll say to the rich young ruler. How much do you value eternal life? Do you value it enough to sell off all of your possessions and follow me? Or the conversations that he would have with his soon to be apostles, in which he would say, leave your nets, follow me.

Or leave your tax booth, follow me. Consider me of greater worth than your nets, or your tax booth, or the possessions that you have. Or the, for example, the parable of the guy who had the bountiful harvest and tore down all his barns to build bigger ones. And then the point of the parable was That he was a fool.

You fool for your very life. Your soul is demanded of you this very night. Or many such instances in which Jesus would say things like count the cost. Nobody begins to build a building without counting the cost first. No king goes to war without first counting the cost. And many such instances we could see in which Jesus has as a very fundamental point of his teaching, the right assessing of the value of the worth of something.

This passage before us is perhaps the central passage in which Jesus teaches that the kingdom of God is made up of those who have assessed something to be of great value, and considering something to be of greater value than all other things, they will then Deny self, take up cross, follow him. So with that introduction being said, let's now read our passage from verse, I'll read from verse 34 down through verse 1 of chapter 9.

So beginning from verse 34, And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake and the Gospels will save it. For, what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?

For, what can a man give in return for his soul? For, whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels. And He said to them, Truly I say to you, there are some standing here

So in beginning the passage, you might have recognized as though I read it there, the emphasis that I placed, there's those four, sequential verses. That all begin with the word for, F O R. And those are indicating for us, each one of those words for, is indicating for us that the statement that follows that word is a statement that's in support of the previous statement.

In other words, verse 34 is the statement, and then verse 35, 38 are four, F-O-U-R, four supports that Jesus gives in support of the statement. Okay. Deny self, take up cross, follow me. Okay, so the first one for whoever would save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospels will save it for what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, forfeit his soul for what can a man give in return for his soul?

So that's as far as we'll make it today. So let's begin as we look at these passages and let's just begin by noticing a word and talking briefly about that word, because this is a word that really it's.

It's crucial that we understand the concept behind this word to understand where Jesus is coming from.

And the word in our passage is the word life and soul. So you see that word twice in verse 35. Whoever would save his life and whoever loses his life. And then verse 36, you see it again, but now it's translated soul. You see it again in verse 37 and again it's translated soul. So in our translation, and if you are using other translations, you probably are experiencing something of the same effect.

You're experiencing the editors and the translators of our Bibles struggling to translate something that in the Greek is one word. It's the word from which we get our word, psychology, psyche. And it's the single word that the Greek language has that would describe, as it's translated here, both life and death.

So a couple of examples in your notes here of how, for example, Matthew, the same writer, will use the same word to describe what we would use two words to describe. First of all, in Matthew chapter 2, rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel. For those who sought the child's life are dead.

And then again in Matthew chapter 10, same writer, he uses the same word in this way, do not fear those who kill the body, but cannot kill the And there it is, soul. Rather, fear Him who can destroy both soul and body and health. So, in the English language, we have the word life and we have the word soul.

And they describe two different things for us. Life is a word that describes the life. Not to use the word in defining the word, but the life that we have that's really attached to the physical body. That's what we think of when we think of life, is the existence that we have that's connected to our physical existence, the life of our body.

We think of the word soul as the existence that we have that's disconnected from our body, don't we? So if we think of soul, we think of the existence of a person apart from their existence in a body. However, the Greek language has no such distinction. It only has the one word which describes all of existence.

And so this one word will describe the existence that one experiences physically in this life, as well as the existence that one will experience after this life or separated from this life. And it's one concept, one word in the Greek. Interestingly, it's also one word in the Hebrew as well. And so, thereby, we have kind of a challenge.

And the challenge is this. As you can see, the ESV translators are struggling to, or at least I should say, attempting, in their use of two different words, to follow Jesus train of thought. And that can be maybe helpful, maybe not so helpful, because the first two times they used the word, they translated life, For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the Gospels will save it.

That causes us to think about one who would forsake this earthly life, and they would say, out of faith and devotion to Christ, they would say, I will die for Christ. Like Peter will say, I'll give my life for you. And so by translating it, life, that leads us to think of giving a physical life or laying down our life.

I would die for Jesus. But then, as they use the same word translated soul, they are communicating an idea of an existence that is beyond this earthly existence. What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? Well, it's the same word as life right there. What would it gain a man to, to, what would it help?

What would it profit if you gained the whole world but you lost your life? What can you give in return for your life or your soul? It's the same word. Again, verse 37. What can you give in return for your soul? Same word as life. What can you give in return for your life? So you see the challenge that the translators are faced with.

If they translated life all four times, then the second two times we sort of lose the idea. Likewise, if they translated soul all four times, then the first two times, then we're also led in a different path. This is why when we looked at the previous verse and Jesus says, take up your cross and follow me, you might recall that we thought at that time, we said, well, a lot of, a lot of people will look at this and they'll say, what Jesus is saying is you must be willing to give your life for me.

You must willing to die to die for me, which is true, which is absolutely true. But that's not what Jesus was getting at. Jesus was not saying you must be willing to die for me. He was saying more than that. He was saying, remember we looked at Romans 6, and we said what the cross means for the believer is that we look to the cross And we see the old self on the cross dying with Jesus and we see the new self coming out of the tomb with Jesus.

That's what it means to take up our cross. It includes the reality that we would be willing to lay down our physical life for Christ, but it's much more than that. It's the forsaking of the old self. It's the denying of the old self. That old man, I don't know him. He's dead. He died on the cross with Jesus.

The new man, or the new woman, is what now lives. Okay? So, if Jesus, in verse 35, if we translate that, whoever would lose his life for my sake, or whoever would save his life will lose it, whoever loses his life for my sake in the gospels will save it, we might be tempted to think, once again, in terms of earthly life.

But it's important to see that Jesus is saying much more than that. Whoever would gain his Soul will lose it. Whoever would lose his soul, for my sake in the gospels will gain it. Okay? So this is not an easy concept for English speakers because all of our life, we've had two distinct words to refer to the two, two concepts.

But we must endeavor to try to merge them together in our mind, because that's what Mark did. That's what Peter did. That's what Jesus did. Alright, so let's think of this as our entire existence. Everything that is central to you, everything about you, which would include your physical body, your physical life here in the here and now, as well as the you that will continue to live after your physical body dies, which also will include the you that continues to live after your body is resurrected and reunited.

It's the entirety of who you are. It's the entirety of your existence. It is, if you want to use this word, your personhood. Okay, not an easy concept for us to get at, but we must try to get at it in order to follow God's, in order to follow Jesus meaning. So whoever would save his life, his soul, his existence, his personhood, will lose it.

But whoever will lose his soul, life, personhood, existence, whoever would lose himself, Now we're hearing echoes of let him deny himself. Remember that deny himself not deny yourself something But look to the old self and say I don't know that person. I have no relation with him I have no connection with him.

He's dead. He died on the cross Now the new person lives so you see the continuity Whoever would save that That, that you were supposed to deny. The denial of self. The looking at the old man and saying, he's dead. Whoever would try to save that, will lose it. But whoever forsakes it, you see the continuity.

Whoever forsakes that, whoever denies that, whoever looks to the cross of Christ and by faith says, that person's dead. Jesus says, That's the person who will gain it. That's his paradox that he's, that he's laying out for us. This paradox of the soul, the personhood, the core, the central reality of who we are.

Those who will deny that, for my sake, will gain that. Those who clinging to that will lose it. So here we have this paradoxical statement once again, verse 35, for whoever would save his life. We'll lose it. So here we have the principle that we come across so very often in the teachings of Jesus is the principle of saving by losing or gaining by losing.

And this is something that once again, like Jesus is teaching of the. Assigning a value of the assessment of value is something that is so fundamental to all of his teaching, the teaching of saving by means of losing or gaining by means of losing just a couple of examples in your notes of just how Jesus again and again and again will return to the same kind of thing.

Matthew chapter 10, a similar context. Do not think that I've come to bring peace to the world or to the earth. I've not come to bring peace, but a sword. I've come to set a man against his father, a daughter against his mother, a daughter in law against a mother in law. A person's enemies will be those of his own household.

Whoever loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. You see, worth, value, again and again, worth, value. Whoever finds his life will lose it. Whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

See it there. You see it again, Luke 17. Whoever seeks to preserve his life, same word. Whoever seeks to preserve his soul, his life, his existence, his core being, his personhood, will lose it. But whoever loses, again, same word, his life will keep it. Or look at John 12, Truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone.

But if it dies, it bears much fruit. Do you see, do you hear the echoes there of deny self, take up cross, seeing old self as dead on the cross with Christ? Whoever does that bears much fruit, Jesus says. Whoever loves his life, same word, whoever loves his life, loses it. Whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

If anyone serves me, he must follow me. Where I am there, my servant will be also, and on he goes, continues from there. And many other places we can see a similar thing. Fundamental to Jesus teaching is the core teaching of gaining by losing or saving by forsaking. So he says, whoever would

save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life And for my sake, now we could easily skip over that and miss a very valuable point.

The point is to notice the self-perception of Jesus. Notice how Jesus perceives himself. He perceives himself as nothing less. Then the fulcrum on which everyone's eternity balances. In other words, your relation to him is what determines everyone's eternity. So, once again, this, the foolish nonsense that just won't die, that we just keep hearing over and over, this nonsense that Jesus never thought of himself as divine, never thought of himself as a deity, he thought of himself as just a teacher, just a rabbi, maybe a prophet from God, but after his death, his disciples came and stole his body and then invented the story about him being God.

Utter nonsense, because over and over again, Jesus says things that requires us to understand that He perceived Himself. as something very different than just a person. He perceived himself as something far different than a prophet. For no prophet ever said, whoever denies this for my sake, it is he who will have life.

No prophet ever spoke like that. Jesus had a perception of himself that was nothing less than the perception of deity, one who has equality with God. So this self-perception, whoever loses his life for my sake, and then notice what else he says, and the Gospels. So what this is saying to us, once again, that salvation and discipleship, far more than some sort of mystical connection.

to the Jesus of your perception. Instead, Jesus Himself and the entirety of the New Testament say to us, salvation and discipleship is a matter of connection to Jesus and total and complete submission to His doctrine and His commands as given to us in the Scriptures. He says, whoever

So Jesus is saying to us very plainly that the path of discipleship is not just attachment to me as a person is not just attachment to me by way of love. Remember Peter, as we talked about Peter's confession, you are the Christ. And we talked about how Peter's confession was a confession of love. But love alone is not enough.

It's not enough just to love Jesus, you. Peter loved Jesus. But what Peter needed to hear was he needed to hear Jesus's words. He needed to receive Jesus's doctrine, Jesus's commands. Here again, Jesus is saying that discipleship is much more than just a matter of, of connection to the Jesus that you want to think about or that you perceive.

Instead, it is connection to Him as a person and it is also complete and total submission to his doctrine and to his commands. So he says, whoever would save his life will lose it. But whoever loses life for my sake and the Gospels will save it. Verse 36, For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?

For what can a man give in return for his soul? So here now, Jesus invites us to re-valuate all of life. Now I want to use that word reevaluate. I want to use that intentionally because I could say reevaluate because that's what reevaluate means. But instead, let's use the word re value. To force ourself to see what Jesus is saying.

To re value. To value something again. To go back and say, let me reconsider. Let me rethink the worth, the value of everything. Alright? Jesus is saying to us. If you would come after me, if you would be my follower, if you would be my disciple, if God has placed in your heart this desire to be my follower, then my followers are those who have re valued all of life, re-worthed all of life.

They've reassessed the value of life. So those who would save their life, their personhood, their existence, those who would save that will lose it. Those who will lose it for my sake will have it. Now, think back to the context. Let's remember the context. The context is Peter's confession. You are the Christ.

And then, Jesus statement, Jesus teaching. Okay, here's what the Christ is here to do. I'm here to suffer. I'm here to die. Peter says, oh no, not you, Lord, not you. Alright, far be it that that would ever happen to you. What Peter was doing, and this is important to see, what Peter was doing was saving his life.

Now, it might not sound like that, because Peter's words sound like words that are words of concern over Jesus, and they are. Peter loved Jesus. Peter did not want to think of Jesus crucifixion, of his death, of his suffering. And so, yes, Peter is speaking out of a concern for Jesus, but It's really important to see that Peter, more than anything else, is speaking of a concern to save his life.

Peter had just placed all of his eggs in Jesus basket. He had just completely identified himself with Jesus as Messiah, Jesus as King, Jesus as Ruler, Jesus as Leader. And now, for Peter, the thought of this glorious, Victorious ruler, suffering and dying. For Peter, that means me. Because I've identified with him, you see.

So Peter is engaging in self-preservation, self-promotion, self-protection. Those things that we talked about in the denial of self. You remember the Alaskan salmon swimming upstream, or you remember the merging in the traffic, right? Peter is doing the merging in the traffic thing. If I have cast my future upon you as Messiah, and now you're talking about suffering and dying?

So Peter is stepping forth to save his life. And this is what prompts Jesus so appropriately now to give this teaching. Whoever would do what? Save life? Well, you'll lose it. Peter, you are seeking to save yourself. Even though I'm the one that's talking about suffering and dying, you are the one who has invested yourself in me and your perception of me, your perception of my glorious rule.

And so my speaking now of my suffering and dying is causing you to revolt in an effort to preserve self and save self. And this is why Jesus then goes to whoever would save will lose. Whoever would lose that from me will save it. He's calling Peter to reassess the value of everything. Because Peter has valued above all, what has he valued above all?

Himself. Remember the merging? Because we're all me monsters. We're all me, me, me. Me first. And so Peter, in his me-monsterness, is saying, no, no, no, no. We can't do that. Because that would be bad for me. We can't do that. That would be a bad reflection on me. And so Jesus is now saying, wait, wait, wait, Peter.

Here's what we've got to do. We've got to re value everything. And we now have to re determine what is of ultimate value and what is of lesser value. For what would you give in exchange for your soul? What would you give in exchange for your life? And in the re valuing of things, This is where Peter is going to begin to get it.

So Jesus is inviting him to revalue all of his life and to reassess that which is most valuable. Because that which is most valuable is that which we would give the most for. Just like the unique

painting, just like the unique work of jewelry, just like the thing that is in high demand but low supply.

That's what we would give the most in exchange for. Look at me at the words of Thomas Manton in your notes. Here's how he puts it. Here in his wisdom, see how men throw overboard the lading of the ship when it becomes a question of saving their lives? Reason teaches them that the less precious must go first.

So you get this picture in your mind of people on a sinking ship and what do you do on a sinking ship? You start throwing over the least valuable things. Don't you remember Paul and Ax when they were on in the on the sea and the storm and they start throwing over the wheat? The least valuable of all.

They start throwing it all over. They don't throw over the gold first, they throw the wheat over first. So he says reason teaches us, all of us, by instinct we know that when it becomes a matter of life and death, the least valuable goes first. They don't throw all over the, first their gold and then their corn.

Neither do they lose their lives to save their ingots. Let us, so let us, above all things, care for our souls and their eternal interests. He whose house was burned to ashes kneeled down and thanked the Lord because his child was safe. And he who loses the whole world but obtains eternal salvation has so much to rejoice in that he would waste his tears if he shed them over his losses.

So therein is the Common sense. Valuation. What can be exchanged for the life? If someone loses a house, what's that in comparison to the life? If someone loses a house, what's that in comparison to the child that was saved? If you have to throw over wheat in order for the boat to survive, what is that? If you have to throw over the gold, what is that if it saves the life?

And so he says, by reason, your common sense tells you that when it comes to a matter of life and death, Even the things that you might think would be of great value are of little value compared to that which you have determined is of the greatest value. So now let's plug this back into Jesus words. He who would save life, soul, personhood.

He who would save that will lose it. Why would you save that? Why would you be one to say, I must save that, I must save self, like Peter. No Lord, that's not going to happen to you. Why would you say that? Because that's what you consider of greatest value. And you throw overboard that which is of lesser value.

You see? You throw overboard the cross. You throw overboard the Messiah. You throw overboard the Christ. When you consider person, self, soul to be of greatest value, just like Manton says, everybody saves the most valuable for last. Everybody is willing to throw everything else overboard to save that which you consider of greatest value.

And Jesus says, here is discipleship, to revalue everything. Reassessing worth, reassigning worth, and giving greatest worth to what? Your eternal soul.

We all have a soul which will live forever. All of us, made in the image of God, we all had a beginning. We're not like God. God didn't have a beginning. But we are like God in that we have no

end. Having been created, we all have a soul. that will exist forever, for eternity. We will either live before God or eternally die before God's wrath.

And Jesus plain and straightforward point here is to say there are two valuations to take place here. And the one who comes after me is the one who recognizes that The eternal soul and its value and says that's the last thing to go. That's the thing that stays on the boat. Now he says of what sort of exchange would it be if all of the world was offered in exchange for that, for that eternal soul?

What sort of exchange would that be? What could you give in exchange for your soul? Who would forfeit your soul in exchange for the whole world? Now Jesus is the only one. Who has ever lived that could truly make that choice between all of the world and the eternal soul? None of us could ever make that choice because none of us have ever been faced with that reality Jesus is the only one that was remember in chapter 1 he goes into the wilderness and Remember the tempter comes to him the adversary comes to him and in Matthew's account in Matthew chapter 4 the tempter comes to him And shows him we're told all the kingdoms of the world and says all of these are yours If you'll bow down.

So Jesus faced that reality. We don't. There's been many people who have tried to. There's been many people who own vast resources, vast lands, vast fortunes, but not the whole world. But nevertheless, the point is the same. Jesus using hyperbole here says, what if the choice were between all of the possessions in existence?

What if the choice were between all of the lands? All of the possessions, all of the gold, all of the precious stones, all of the possessions known to man, the choice between that and eternity, the eternal soul, Jesus says, what sort of comparison is that? This is inviting us to put ourselves into the very difficult position of asking this question, of imagining this question being asked to us.

Yes, in that moment that Revelation speaks of on that day when Jesus will say, depart from me, I didn't know you and be thrown into the pit that is prepared for the devil and his angels. And in the moment, if you can just imagine the horror of hearing those words, I don't know you depart into the pit. If you could just imagine, in that moment, the angels whom Matthew 13 tells us in that parable of, of the net, and how Jesus says the kingdom of God is like a net, and in the net were bad fish and good fish, and at the end of the age, the angels will sort them out.

Or, in the same chapter, the wheat that grew alongside the tares, and Jesus says, in the end of the age, the angels will sort that out. And so in that way, if you can imagine those angels that come and grab you and are casting you into that pit in that moment, the question is, what would you trade?

Would you trade half of your possessions? Would you trade three quarters of your possessions? Would you trade every possession that you've ever owned for one more hour? For one more minute, would you trade everything in that moment? And Jesus says, it's like the ship that's going down. Everybody throws overboard that which is of less value.

And this is Jesus point. What would anyone give in exchange for an eternal soul? Your eternal existence? There is nothing. That can be given in exchange for that, even if you had all the possessions of the world. What would it profit a man to gain the whole world? Forfeit his soul. For what can a man give in return for his soul?

So, Jesus is saying here, there's a clear comparison. Those who are my disciples, deny self, take up cross, follow me. Re evaluate all of life. Re evaluate all the things of this life, all the things of this world, and say in their heart, I value Him and my eternal soul with Him as far greater than all these things.

It's a simple message, it's a straightforward message, but it is a powerful message that Jesus is giving to us here. So let's recognize that all of us, all of us, have an attraction to this world. All of us do. I don't care how spiritual you are. I don't care how long you've been a follower of Christ. I don't know.

I don't care how devoted you are to Christ. If you search your heart, you won't have to search long and you will see that you still have affection for this world. As James will say in James chapter four, verse one, we all have passions. We all have earthly worldly passion. And as much as we would like to say with the Psalmist and Psalm 73, nothing on this earth compares with you.

What have I in heaven or earth besides you? You are everything. As much as we would want to say that, we all must begin by saying we can't really say that. Because all of us still have worldly, earthly passions. For us to deny that would be 1 John 1 verse 8 saying that we have no sin. It would be tantamount to us declaring ourselves to be the moral equivalent of Jesus.

Jesus, who had no earthly passions, who had no worldly desires, He had no competition in His heart with the love for God. His love for His Father was a love that was unthreatened by anything in this world. And so we recognize that we still live in a world that has attraction for us. We still live in a world in which our heart is connected to this world in deep ways.

And this is, by large measure, God's process of sanctification, of weaning us from this love of the world that Jesus says, Most fundamental to those who follow me are those who have reassessed the value. Now, what I want to point out now, just in our last few moments here, is it seems that in verse 36 and verse 37, Jesus is now going to make something of a pivot, something of a shift in his thrust.

He says, What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul? So, the paradox is What can you give in return for your soul that that something that seems to defy common sense of giving something in return for a soul. So let's now make just a little bit of a shift.

I think that we're following Jesus's train of thought. If we make a little bit of a pivot and we think now of soul in these terms, the image of God that we bear the soul that God created. There is one reality about our soul that is very important for us to see. One of the things, one of the many things that makes us different from everything else that God has created is that He created us with a soul and our soul has the capacity, has the capability of knowing and loving God.

And that is the difference, or one of the differences, that is the difference between us and everything else that God created. We have the capability of having a loving relationship with God. Nothing else does. Nothing. Psalm 19 tells us that the creation can and does glorify God. The stars in heaven glorify God.

Only those who have a soul are capable of knowing Him and loving Him. This is the sense in which Jesus is saying, There's an exchange and what would you exchange for that in you which is capable

of knowing and loving your father? What would you exchange for that? What would they, what would that be worth?

What would you exchange for the relationship of love and acceptance offered to the followers of Christ? What would you exchange for that? What would you exchange for that infinite worth, the infinite value of an eternal, never dying soul that was capable of knowing and loving Him? Yet was exchanged, that capability of knowing Him was changed, was exchanged for anything else.

Even up to all the kingdoms of the world. That's Jesus forceful point. That's Jesus exclamation point, that He's saying, This, disciples, you have heard me describe the disciple. The one who denies self, takes up cross, and follows me. The hardest thing you can imagine. Denying self, taking up cross. The hardest thing that you can imagine.

Let me give you some encouragement. Let me give you some motivation. Contemplate this. Meditate upon this. What I offer to those who are my followers can't be compared to all the treasures of the world. What I offer to those who are my followers can't be compared. If you possessed everything, there's still no comparison.

Because the human soul has infinite worth. Infinite worth.

Brothers and sisters, this should do a number of things in our soul. If we meditate upon this, one of the things that it should do is this should really shape and form how we think of everyone that we interact with. Notice what Jesus says. Jesus doesn't say, what would you exchange for the soul of one who's been redeemed?

Of one who is a good follower of me. Jesus puts it in universal terms to say, all souls have this value. All souls have a value that cannot be compared to every possession known to man. All souls have an infinite worth. If we could really marinate that into our souls, what a difference would that make? If we would truly have the ability, have the sanctified ability to see others as Jesus see them, seeing the most distasteful, the most unpleasant people in our life as possessing of the infinite possession of a soul.

The possession that cannot be compared to anything here on earth. That which was made in the image of God and possessing of eternal life, either life with Him or life apart from Him. If we could see all people through that lens, what a difference would that make? Seeing the infinite value of all people with whom we interact.

But then the last thing that we can point out would be this. Just meditate upon what I would call, I don't know if these are the best words, but this is what I came up with. The sorrowful burden of God. The sorrowful burden of God. We think of the world population, we're told that some 160,000 people pass from this life into the next life every hour.

Globally. If we do the math, that comes to about two people a second. Now, if you were to say, well, not all those people that pass into eternity are passing into an eternity of eternally dying. But the statistics are not very comforting because we're told that some, maybe 8 percent of the world's population identifies as evangelical Christians.

And we know the tendency of people to claim that title when they really don't have saving relationship with Christ. But let's just go with 8%. Let's just go with 8 percent and say 8%. Which

still doesn't make a dent in the two people per second. And just imagine for just a moment, of every second that passes, two infinitely valuable souls pass into eternity.

And the sorrowful burden that God must bear for that. Now, we believe firmly, and we believe deeply, that the Bible teaches us that God has a chosen people. That are His people that He has sovereignly acted upon to bring salvation to their heart. We believe that because the Bible tells us that all over the place.

But we also believe that the Bible teaches us, quite plainly, that God, though He has a people that He has chosen to act savingly upon, Nevertheless, doesn't sit back at those who pass into eternity without a knowledge of him. He doesn't look back and say, I don't care about them whatsoever. Instead, the scriptures teach us that each one that passes into eternity without knowledge of Christ is a tremendous burden for him.

Ezekiel 33 in verse 11 tells us quite plainly, God says, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked. None. Or the words of Peter, in 2 Peter, where Peter says quite plainly and quite clearly. It is God's desire, in some way, that all would be saved and come to a knowledge of Him. Now, this touches upon matters that we, as humans, we cannot fully understand.

We cannot fully understand a God who sovereignly chooses His people, and yet also sovereignly chooses to pass over others, and yet is sorrowful over all. We can't understand all that because we are human. Nevertheless, the Scriptures teach us. That there are souls of infinite value who do not know Christ in a saving way that pass into eternity and God is burdened by that.

We should take from that that our hearts should be burdened by that which burdens God. That we should train our hearts and our souls to see all people as God sees them as possessing of infinite worth and infinite value such that Jesus will say, nothing on earth could be exchanged for that soul.