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We continue in Romans 8:14-17.

**The Narrow Gate**

One of the hardest spiritual principles to accept for most people is the fact that of the masses of humanity that have lived through the centuries, comparatively few will enter heaven. Yet, that is what the Bible tells us.

In Luke 13:22-27, we read, "And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem [that is, Jesus]. Then said one unto Him, 'Lord, are there few that be saved?' And He said unto them, 'Strive to enter in at the narrow gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand outside, and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open unto us;' and He shall answer and say unto you, 'I know you not whence ye are:' Then shall ye begin to say, 'We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.' But He shall say, 'I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.''"

So that the Lord Jesus made it clear that there would be a lot of people who would be associated with His name, a lot of people who claim religious contacts, but who when it came down to the issue of walking into heaven itself, the door would be closed. These people would be banging on the pearly gates saying, "But we have been religiously active, in this way and in that way!" And Jesus will say, "I never knew you. You're not in my family; you cannot enter here." And the answer to the man's question, "Will few be saved," is affirmative. Only a few will be saved.

Matthew 7:13-14 further reinforce this idea. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in that way: Because narrow is the gate [that leads into eternal life] and hard [or constricted on both sides] is the way, which leadeth unto life, and [then this chilling words, the sobering words and] few there be that find it."

So, it is a shock, and it is a difficult spiritual principle to accept that of the masses that have ever lived through the centuries, not many will find their way into eternal life. And, of course, one has only to look at the religious beliefs and the activities of the mass of humanity today to see why this principle is so true.

The masses, for example, in the various expression of eastern mysticism such as Hinduism and Buddhism and so on. They're all going to the lake of fire. The masses who are in Islam today, they're all going to the lake of fire. The enormous masses who are in the Roman Catholic Church, works-basis of salvation, they're all going to the lake of fire. The masses of liberal Protestantism who reject the Gospel of the grace of God and the deity of Christ, they're all going to the lake of fire. And there's the masses in the cults - the Mormons, the Jehovah Witnesses, the Christian Scientists, all of whom deny the person of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Way into eternal life - they're all going to the lake of fire.

So, as you run your eye over the masses of humanity and what people believe religiously, it becomes very, very evident that not many are going to find that narrow gate into that constricted way that leads into eternal life. All of these sincere people in these vast masses of humanity are going to the lake of fire simply because they reject salvation as a grace gift alone, apart from human works, based on the vicarious sacrifice of the death of Jesus Christ for the sin of mankind. Consequently, they are not the children of God, and so they will end up in hell.

Those of us in the human race who are indeed the children of God, in contrast, then, are a rare breed. And consider yourself graced out of all the masses of humanity because indeed you have to have been enlightened to have been called to have been brought into eternal life. The born again person, Paul has taught us, is indwelt and is led by God the Holy Spirit which leading identifies him as a child of God. The Holy Spirit, furthermore, legally adopts every Christian as God the Father's heir. The Christian, therefore, is at peace with the holiness of God. He does not fear death and the consequent facing of a holy God. The Christian's human spirit, which has been filled with his learning of the Word of God, has been filled with doctrinal truth, reinforces this testimony of the Holy Spirit that one is a child of God.

And as God's heirs, our passage here in Romans 8 has indicated, we are furthermore joint heirs with Jesus Christ. We are destined as His body and bride to share all that He is and all that He has. That means the sinlessness of His person. That means the glorified body that he possesses. That means freedom in time from all sorrow and experiencing indescribably joy and happiness. It means sharing in the ruling authority of Jesus Christ over the millennial world to the extent qualification to the extent that our Christian service in the Father's plan has earned us the right of exercising authority with Him.

**The Parable of the Talents**

Now, that comes as a shock: that there are limitations to what we will enjoy in sharing this inheritance as joint heirs of Jesus Christ. There is, of course, for each believer a termination in his opportunity in Christian service to determine his eternal standing in terms of his heavenly rewards.

And in Matthew 25:14-30 (we won't read that this morning, we'll just all your attention to it), you have the description of the talents which was a comparatively large sum of money which was given to different individuals. God did not give them more than they could hand. He gave them, as the parable says, commensurate with their ability, and they were expected then to perform up to their ability. We call it the spiritual gifts.

Now, this parable is not about salvation. It is about rewards for service. Every servant's performance is evaluated in terms of his divinely given capacity and abilities. The greater capacity, of course, requires greater performance by the Christian. The man who did nothing with the one talent was totally condemned, and the worst thing of all (and that's the main thing that I want you to notice to the parable), is that what he had to work with was taken away from him. The capacity he had with which to store treasures in heaven, he lost. He lost it forever.

And that's what happens to people today. High, wide, handsome riding along until all of the sudden, God says, "That's it [click-click]. Out of this life. You're through." Somebody lives in a way that is wrong, and so God brings the discipline of the judgement of death. And all of the opportunity snapped to a close immediately at that one point. Faithfulness on earth brings great honors and great authority in the heavenly inheritance.

2 Timothy 2:12 puts it this way, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us." And that means deny him in terms of our service, in terms of our capacity, then at the judgment seat of Christ, he denies us in terms of reward. So, the self-centered, indulgent Christian in time will lose his opportunity for service. He will be demoted while others in heaven are promoted.

The basic qualification, we pointed out, for divine heirship, is the personal possession of eternal life. And I cannot stress that enough, because it all begins with being born again. It all begins with being in the family of God. And that is the one thing that the masses of humanity do not care about. They do not care about being born again. They are not interested in that. They do not think that's important, and consequently, they lose it all.

**The Parable of the Rich Young Ruler**

This morning, I'd like to direct your attention to Mark 10, beginning at verse 17: the parable of the rich, young ruler. Mark 10:17, "And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to Him [that is, to Jesus], and asked Him, 'Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?'" This rich man (which Matthew 19:22 also tells us was a young man, so we call him "the rich young ruler") came to Jesus, and he wanted to learn how to inherit eternal life.

His question was the result of the fact that the Jews viewed eternal life as a future possession rather than something that they had currently in this life. It was a future possession that was given to those that God deemed worthy to receive it. The word "inherit" reflects this concept of meritorious securing of eternal life at some time in the future world.

So, this young man thought he must do something good to inherit eternal life. Matthew 19:16 says that he asked for a good thing to do. Now, while it is true that one must be worthy to enter eternal life in heaven, there is no way that a sinner can become worthy. Worthiness means having absolute righteousness. That is the worthiness required for entrance into heaven, and there is no way that any of us can secure that.

2 Timothy 1:10 tells us it was the Lord Jesus Christ who brought to light the divine solution for this problem of worthiness. 2 Timothy 1:10 says, "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to life through the gospel." The secret was the gospel message: the fact that God would make a provision on the basis of what His Son did apart from anything that the human being does, that the sinner does. So, it was Jesus Christ who revealed that it was possible for a sinner to be made worthy of eternal life as an immediate possession, but only as a gift from God. It is God who makes us worthy to inherit eternal life.

In John 5, therefore, in verses 24-25, we read, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life [not something future; you've got it now], and shall not come into judgment; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." So, eternal life of heaven becomes an immediate possession of the one who believes the gospel.

John 3:36 puts it this way, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." So, it is important right off from the beginning to realize that any inheritance in heaven, any eternal rewards, are, first of all, structured on the reality of being born again. The rich young ruler understood that that was an important starting point. "How do I get it?" And he thought it was by something good that he was to do.

Well, immediately in Mark 10:18, Jesus raises a question. "And Jesus said unto him, 'Why callest thou Me good? there is none good but One, that is, God.'" The rich young ruler, because he was acquainted with scripture, and the Lord could sense that he was, was aware of the fact that the Bible taught in Psalm 14:3 that there is only one person who has divine good, and that's the good he's talking about here, good in its ultimate sense, and that is God.

Psalm 14:3 said, "They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one," in describing the human race. So that among humanity, you could not call anyone "good." Only God can be good. Now, if Jesus was really good, then He must be God who alone is good because only God is absolute righteousness. And the rich young ruler had to make his mind when he was calling Jesus good whether he really understood that to mean that Jesus was good in the divine sense - that He was good with absolute righteousness and thus that he was looking at someone who was truly God.

You see, this was what every unsaved person has to face. This is what the culture resists. This is what the Jews resist. This is what the Muslims resist. This is what the eastern mysticists resist. They do not want to say that Jesus Christ is true God. Very God of very God.

And so, the rich young ruler had to face this issue, too. He had to see the contrast between what he viewed himself as good in himself and what he was talking about when God referred to what is good. The rich young ruler then had to be confronted with a standard of righteousness. And so, in verse 19, Jesus points him to the Mosaic code, the moral code, "Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother." And in Matthew 19:19, reporting this same incident, it adds the summary of the law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," so that the whole thing was summarized as love - a love which could not possibly function unless you were born again and had this love produced through God the Holy Spirit.

Now, the rich young ruler has no hesitancy to say, "Oh, wonderful! I've done those things all my life since I've been a child!" In Mark 10:20, he responds, "And he answered and said unto him, 'Master, all these have I observed from my youth.'" Now, that's not true. The rich young ruler had not kept these laws all the time any more than anybody else had. He thought he had because he lowered the standard to fit what he needed to make it possible for him to claim that he had kept them. He removed all the mental attitude sins right off the bat.

Well, the eagerness of this young man and indeed the morality that he sought to follow touched the heart of the Lord Jesus. We've all had that experience. We've seen people who are out of the family of God, they're lost, and they're something about them that suddenly their worth comes through for us - the worth of a soul for whom Christ has died. And our heart goes out to him. And that's what happened here in verse 21, "Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, 'One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.'"

Jesus is directing him toward an inheritance beyond this earth. The Lord wanted to show that he didn't keep all the laws. There was a mental attitude sin of covetousness. See, all these other laws are outside, but this one is up in the head. This one is inside, covetousness. And he wanted to show him that he wasn't about to love his neighbor as himself and to demonstrate it by accepting the word of this good man who, if He was good was God, and God was telling him to get rid of his funds, distribute it to the poor, would he do it? If he was not a violator of the commandment of covetousness, he would have risen immediately to have done it. Jesus was calling him to a discipleship and to a trust in Him as Savior.

Well, he went negative to the invitation. Mark 19:22, "And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions." The rich young ruler lacked saving faith in Jesus Christ, the basic problem that people have today. He really was trusting in his material possessions, so he was unwilling to give that up. That's where his trust was. That's where his love was. He did not hear what Jesus was saying to him as the voice of God.

So, the rich young ruler was not good himself as he claimed to be. He failed to see, however, that Jesus was good. The rich young ruler was selfish as all unbelievers are and as all carnal Christians are. If he really loved his neighbor as himself, he would have invested his money in his own eternal inheritance.

So, the response of the rich young ruler was a great disappointment. He went away sad, and for all we know, he now sits grieving over this great mistake in hades at this moment. But the disciples who listened in were shocked at this whole procedure. Mark 10:23, we read, "And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto His disciples, 'With what difficulty shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!'"

It is tough to be wealthy and to get into heaven at the same time. . . . And I'll tell you something else, it is tough to be poor and to get into the kingdom of God, to get into the eternal life, and then to become rich and to stay stable. It is just as tough to store treasures in heaven when you're rich as it is tough to get into eternal life when you're rich to begin with. And the Lord Jesus observed this particular problem.

Now, the disciples were knocked back on their heels when they said that. Verse 24 says, "And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, 'Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.'"

Well, that's impossible. No camel can go through an eye of a needle. There's no question what he was saying. It is near impossible for a rich person to be born again. He's got so much self-confidence. He's got everything he needs. There's nothing that he cannot handle in life. The greatest curse to the human race is always man's confidence in himself.

That's a problem in American society today. The confidence that we have in ourselves. The Globalist 2000 group who is creating the vision of a world, a new, revised world by the year 2000 based upon the New Age Movement principles are all following the drastic delusion that man can solve his problems. It is enormous confidence in man himself. That's been the curse of the human race from the word "go."

So, here is this young man, confident, he's lost. The disciples can't believe that people of wealth, which, you see, they viewed as people that God favored. If you're rich, it's because God favors you. It's the poor bums that God is not particularly fond of. Now, if you're rich, God favors you, and you're telling me that that is the kind of person that nearly will never get into heaven? And the disciples concluded then, in verse 26, "And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, 'Who then can be saved?" If a rich person can't be saved, who on earth can be saved? If a rich person under God's special blessing, who on earth can be saved?

"And Jesus looking upon them saith, 'With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.'" Meaning that even among certain of those who are well off, God can bring them into eternal life, and God can bring them even as Christians into a prosperous Christian life. Some can be brought into the inheritance of eternal life.

At this point, Peter, who has been sitting here silently, uncharacteristically, listening to all this, now comes up, and he's got to say something. And, he's been adding up figures in his head, see. And so, at verse 28, "Peter began to say unto him, Lord, we have left all, and have followed thee. [What's in it for us? Jesus makes a very wonderful statement to them in response. The Lord had previously taught them to store treasures in heaven as part of their eternal inheritance. You had these passages in Matthew 6:19-21 that says, "Store those treasures in heaven." Luke 12:32-34, "Store the treasures in heaven." Spend your life investing in eternal rewards and treasures. And so, here is a divine command that takes steps to store treasures in heaven.

So, if you don't store treasures in heaven, you should understand that it is a very grievous sin. If you are not going about storing treasures in heaven by what you're doing with your life, it is a very serious sin. This is a divine command. And our interests are going to lie indeed where our treasures are. If your treasures are hidden off in some bank on this earth, then that's where your interests are going to be. If your treasures are hidden in heaven, then that's where your interests are going to be.

So, Peter asked, "What's in it for us? We left it all." Verse 29, "Jesus answered and said, 'Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the age to come eternal life. Many that are first shall be last; and the last first."

That's an enormously encouraging statement of divine truth. Enormously encouraging. And it was encouraging to Peter. Those who have given it all up. Those who have put it all aside. Those who have not been preoccupied like the rich fool with building a bigger barn. Those who have said, "I'm putting it all on the line for eternity; that is my objective. That is my goal. I am not going to be pursuing the lower level of just temporal things."

And in the process, these, for example, who are missionaries, these who are traveling evangelists in those days, they could understand what this was to be leaving family and to be leaving relatives and to be leaving possessions. But in the very process, they found they had people who were not blood relatives who became true brothers and sisters to them and who treated them as family members and who supported them and cared for them as true family members whose possessions were placed at their disposal as if they were true family members. And so, indeed, they found that here on this earth, they did not lack. They may not have been wealthy, they may not have been riding in the lap of luxury, but logistical grace came through and provided the needs to function and to operate.

And indeed, it was a great encouragement to the disciples as it must be to us that the high and the mighty on this earth are low on the totem pole when it comes to heaven. They are at the bottom rung. And do not be intimidated because you find yourself in the bottom rung on this earth because you are pursuing the things above. Do not be intimidated because you visit somebody that's got a much more magnificent house to live in than you do, who does a nicer car, a later model than you do; who has the accoutrements in the household that causes people to "ooh" and to "ah" when the walk in, who has all of the ability to travel.

I would like to be a world traveler. World travel is one of the great things. I read through National Geographics, and I look at these places, and once in a while, I saw a television program the other day, and it was centered in the Marienplatz in Munich, where they have the bell tower and the little figures that go around when the bell rings. And I said, "Look, I stood right there and saw that! The good old Marienplatz. I remember it well. I'll never forget it!" And every now and then, I see something that I've seen before, and then I see all these places in the world you'd love to visit, and yet there are people all around me that are doing it. They're getting on the jets, they're going high on the totem pole. But God says, "Just wait. You don't have the capacity. You don't have the means. Don't let that intimidate you. If your investment is genuinely for eternity, you are going to come out on top."

And you are going to find that you are not going to be last when it comes to God's life in heaven as you may find yourself comparatively last now. The rich young ruler's heart was in his earthly possessions. That's all the vision he had, and he could not raise his sights beyond that. And so, the Lord Jesus gives Peter a very exciting report here concerning the exchange for earthly loss for eternal gain. Obedience to Jesus Christ not only enriches one's earthly lot but also secures the eternal life with God in heaven in the future.

**Sharing Christ's Suffering**

Now, Paul in Romans 8 goes on to add another thought that we need to pick up concerning the inheritance which is ours, our joint heirship with Jesus Christ, and that is that we are going to be heirs with Him, if so, be that we suffer with Him that we may be also glorified together. Suffering is going to come before glorification. This word "if so be" in the Greek language looks like this, "ei per." The word "ei per" is the emphatic form of the word "ei" which is the word for "if." And this is a first-class condition "if," which means that it's a reality, so we translate it as, "if indeed," or "since." This is a truth. This is not something that's questionable. So, you have to read it, "since we suffer with Him."

And the word "suffer with" is the word "sympascho." "Sympascho" means to suffer with another, to share in suffering in some way. This word is used only one other place in the Bible. It's only used twice: here and in 1 Corinthians 12:26, which gives us a pretty good idea of what it means.

1 Corinthians 12:26 talks about the human body. When one part of the human body becomes ill, verse 26 says, "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." If some part of the body becomes incapacitated, all the rest of your body sympathetically suffers with it. When one part of the body comes into a good function after being incapacitated, the whole body rejoices.

And that's the idea here that we are experiencing something together with Jesus Christ. It's in the present tense, that means this is in the continual status of the Christian suffering with Christ. It's active voice, our personal experience. It's indicative mood, meaning it's a statement of fact. Now, of course, the Christian does not suffer with Jesus Christ in terms of paying for sin. The suffering of Christ in that respect was totally unique.

Hebrews 2:9-10 say, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death [made a litter lower than the angels because He had humanity so He could die], crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became Him, for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

The suffering that brought Christ to perfection in terms of His life was the suffering of the cross. We as Christians do not share that kind of suffering. The suffering that is referred to here is the kind of suffering that Jesus Christ experienced which He didn't deserve. It is suffering that we don't deserve. It is in that respect that we share the suffering of Christ. Lord Jesus was sinless. He always pleased the Father, but He suffered human attacks even unto death. It was undeserved suffering because of godliness. When we have that kind of suffering, it is a great honor to us personally.

Philippians 1:29 says, "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but to suffer for His sake." When we have suffering that we deserve, that comes from the justice of God. We have that coming, and that is no honor. The spiritually mature Christian who is active in God's service will come under undeserved suffering. You can count on it.

Many Christians, however, I should caution you, who do experience suffering are actually receiving divine justice. So, you've got to make the difference. Some Christians are suffering but not because of your godliness. You are suffering because of your ungodliness, and that suffering is not an honor; it is a dishonor. That suffering comes as a divine discipline from the justice of God, but the suffering you do not deserve, that comes from the grace of God. That is a suffering which will ennoble you and produce your rewards in Heaven.

And, of course, the Bible is replete with many passages concerning the suffering of Christians. Christian suffering, well-born, demonstrates that you have the spiritual capacity for blessing which doctrine has built into you. And then, when you are suffering, you see, your focus is on doctrine. Your focus is not on your suffering. That keeps you from whining because you have built the capacity for doctrine in your soul. The suffering comes when your eye is on doctrine, just like on the cross.

The things that went through the mind of Jesus Christ were the principles of doctrine, of what was going to be the result of His death and all the marvelous things that were going to follow and in the intense suffering, His mind was not on His agony; His mind was on God's Word. Now, that's maturity capacity, you see. And the suffering of the godly is inevitable.

**The Saving of Your Life Through Suffering**

So, the question is: the use of our lives. And I want to tie this up this morning with three principles that should knock most anybody in this room off their heels when you grasp the significance of them. The saving of your life through suffering. The capacity to save your life through suffering.

First, the principle in Mark 8. Will you turn there? Mark 8:34-35, "And when He had called the people unto Him [Jesus] and His disciples also, He said unto them, 'Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 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.'"

I want to tell you that this word "life" here - it's important that you understand this - in the Greek Bible is this Greek word "psuche." Psuche. I also want to tell you that this word is sometimes translated "soul." It is "soul life." It is basically better to be translated as "life." We're talking about what you're doing now: breathing in and out. Your life capacity. Your existence as a human being who is functioning where your soul and spirit are residing in your body so that you are alive. And every day, you've got a bit of life to use, to invest, to do something with. That's what we're talking about.

This passage is not dealing with the issue of salvation. It is a call to Christian discipleship. The free gift of salvation is not secured by what you do with your life. As the Christian, you do not have a life of self-sacrifice and investment to God in thus to gain eternal life.

Now, the audience, however, must have wondered how this kind of a contradiction was possible. Because Jesus said that you could save your life by losing it. Now, how could you save your life by breathing in and out every day by losing by breathing in and out every day?

Well, first, Jesus was speaking about saving one's life from an earthly perspective and losing it in terms of an eternal perspective. Saving my life in terms of what I do on this earth, losing it in terms of the consequences in heaven. A Christian martyr, for example, may suffer the loss of his life on earth, but he will find it preserved in values in eternal rewards in heaven. A Christian may choose to preserve himself in suffering and God's service on earth but lease the value of his life in terms of eternal rewards and the degree of glorification. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself lost His human life on the cross, but he thereby gave His life, permanent eternal value, as the ground of human redemption.

So, the principle here in Mark is you can do something with your life on earth and save it. That is, you can do what you want with it. But you want to remember that you will at the same time have lost it in terms of eternity.

**Losing One's Earthly Life in God's Service**

Principle number 2. John 12:24-26, the same concept, Jesus puts it this way on this occasion, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life [his psuche] shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour."

Losing one's earthly life in God's service is like the death of a seed that you plant in the ground. Yieldedness to the will of God is described here as hating your life in this world. Now, that's strong language. How many of your life HATE your life where it is has to be invested in this world? How many of you HATE finding yourself trapped and caught up in all of the things of this lifestyle? Instead of selfishly using our lives to fulfill all of our ambitions for a brief time on earth, we can preserve our life in values gained for eternity.

This is the same concept in Matthew 7:24-27 about the man who built his house on the solid ground of the Word of God and the man who built his house on shifting sand. That's again talking about life. You're building your house, your life. And when death comes, it's all going to be wiped out, or it's all going to be preserved.

**Storing Treasures in Heaven**

Now, back to Mark 8 - the third principle. Mark 8:36-37, "For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Now, I want to point out to you there that they translated it so it is the same word "psuche" that we have in all these other passages and in fact that we just read in verse 35 ("whosoever should save his "psuche" should lose it, whosoever should lose his life for My sake and the gospel") translated as life, not soul. Or at least as "soul life." It's talking about the same thing.

What shall it profit a person if he gained the whole world and lose his life? What is the value of using your life to gain everything that the world has to offer and then you lose the potential of your life for storing treasures in heaven. That's the question. Earthly rewards gained in the use of your life are worthless in comparison to the eternal rewards in heaven. And yet, how many Christians are making it only in terms of earthly objectives, earthly ambitions, earthly goals, earthly positions, earthly status, earthly ideals they want to fulfill. And God says, that's a house built on sand, and when you die, it's going to collapse. But what you could be building [is] a house that stands on the rock of the Word of God and the person of Christ, and out into eternity you go with enormous rewards, taking it all with you.

Mark 8:37 says, "What shall a man give in exchange for their life?" What will you give in exchange for your life? What will you give if you squandered your life and you lose your life at some point before you have opportunity for all the treasures that you could store in heaven? The Luke 12 passage about the rich fool, you see that his love was for bigger barns, and then verse 20 says, "But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul [and it is psuche again, translated "life"; this night, your life] will be required of thee: then whose shall these things be, which thou hast provided?"

You piled them up for yourself. Oh, you got them. You got them so big you had to build more storage bins! But, you idiot, what do you have now? I'm going to take your life! Up to now, you've had your life, and you could have said, "Only what's done for Christ will last. That's what I'm going to do with it." Right? I can't travel. I can't have this. I can't have that. I can't do this like other people can. But I can invest for eternity.

And the rich fool is the classic example of the man who lost his life. That is, he squandered it. What is the value of gaining all that the world has and losing the potential of heaven? This loss of life invested in earthly glories is true whether the rich fool was a lost person or a saved. Either way, he leaves the world impoverish.

And Jesus followed this parable, you will notice, of the rich fool by an admonition to His disciples in verse 20-30 in Luke 12 against excessive concern for material necessities of life. He followed that because He was trying to say, "Set your eyes on where your real treasures should be."

Luke 12:22, "And He said unto His disciples, 'Therefore I say unto you, Do not be anxious for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on [logistical grace]. The life is more than meat, the body is more than raiment. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barns; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? And which of you by being anxious can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then are not able to do that thing which is least, why are ye for the rest?"'

"'Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the Gentiles of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. [Instead, Jesus points their eyes upward. Verse 31, He says,] But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.'"

'"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which grow not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.'"

And you see, there are so many Christian service opportunities where the treasure of earth and the treasure of heaven are the competitors. And we see it all the time. We see young people being trained by their parents, "Go for the treasures of earth, not the treasures of heaven. You can do that some other time." That's what the rich young ruler thought. How wrong he was. That's what the rich fool thought. How wrong he was.

You have a life, and it takes that life to make those treasures in heaven, and I can guarantee you that all of you have got it for a very, very short time. Most of you are on your way out pretty soon, so count on it that now is the accepted time of investment. Service to reap a bountiful harvest of rewards. We really find our lives when we engage in that self-denying service that fulfills the will of God for us. Please beware of the eternal tragedy of misguided use of your life. There is no return from a tragedy like that, and it will effect the kind of eternity you have.

So, add up your hours. Compute your time. See how much of your life has been invested this week in the eternal things and how much on the things that are going to quickly be gone forever.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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