

WHAT ARE YOU LIVING TO DO?

ATTENTION:

Let's take a trip back to the 1st century time of Jesus to a place called Caesarea Philippi,

- A Roman city located north of the Sea of Galilee.
- A huge rock cliff dominates the landscape.
- At the base of the cliff a stream flows to the Jordan River.
- It is a critical moment for Jesus.
 - All Israel is talking about this man from Galilee.
 - Who is he?
 - By what power does he perform his miracles?
 - What does he want?
 - Jesus has a wide following among the common people.
 - But among the rich and powerful, opinion is slowly crystallizing against him.
 - The drums of angry opposition are beginning to beat.
 - Before long, their sound will become a deafening roar.

ATTUNE:

Jesus was aware of the future events that would bring Him to the cross to die.

³¹ Then he began to teach them that it was necessary for the Son of Man to suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, be killed, and rise after three days. ³² He spoke openly about this. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³ But turning around and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! You are not thinking about God's concerns but human concerns."

Mark 8:31-33

- Knowing what was coming for the disciples as they followed Him into those times of challenge Jesus....
 - ...calls them and others to a deeper commitment than they had yet considered.
 - It is here Jesus asks the famous question, *Who do people say the Son of Man is? Matthew 16:13*
 - Peter then makes his confession, *You are the Christ, the Son of the living God Matthew 16:16*

- But the conversation does not end there
 - **Jesus now leads them to more than a confession; He also asks them for a commitment:** *"Now that you know who I am, are you willing to commit your life to me?"*
 - This is how Jesus puts the issue in [Mark 8:34-36](#):

³⁴ Calling the crowd along with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of me and the gospel will save it. ³⁶ For what does it benefit someone to gain the whole world and yet lose his life?"

With that background, we may paraphrase these verses this way:

"Now that you know who I am, are you ready to take up your cross and follow me? Before you answer, let me warn you that following me will seem in the eyes of the world as if you are wasting your life.

"The people of the world will never understand what you are doing. It will seem to them that by following me, you are throwing your life away.

"You always have another option. You can try to save your own life by following your own desires. Lots of people do that. They live as if their career was all that mattered. But the people who live only for this life in the end will find they wasted it on things that don't really matter.

"They try to save it by living for themselves, but in the end they will lose it. They have wasted their lives on trivial pursuits.

"But if you follow me—though the way will not be easy, and you will often be misunderstood—in the end you will save your life. And the people who laugh at you now will not laugh at you then. They will see you were right and they were wrong.

"After all, what good will it do if you become the richest man in the world or climb to the top of the corporate ladder or rise to the highest salary level in your company or win the applause of the world, what good will all that do if in the end you find out it was all wasted? What good will that shiny new Lexus do for you then? Will you be able to trade it in for another life?"

"No, you won't. "But if you want to live that way, go ahead.

"Millions of people do. In the end they will be sorry, but by then it will be too late to do anything about it.

"So what will it be? The way of the Cross or the way of the world? You've got to invest your life somewhere"

BODY:

(LET GO OF THAT HAND FULL OF TRINKETS)

- In daily life the world offers us a lot of trinkets.
 - Things that appeal to our curiosity, wants, interests, etc.
 - Self-indulgent, self-gratifying
 - Life turns into one big visit to a souvenir shop
 - What do you buy at a souvenir shop?
 - Overpriced trinkets made in Taiwan
 - Gadgets, imitations,
 - Things which catch our eyes but don't work.
 - Things that appear to have promise but soon disappoint
 - As long as we hold on to the trinkets we'll miss the real life
 - We'll hang on to the souvenir shop trinkets refusing to let them go!

CONTRASTING LOSING AND GAINING LIFE

Let's illustrate what it looks like to live as one saving their life compared to one losing their life.

- Living life as a career or a mission
 - It's not that believers don't have careers.
 - Some of us are painters, business owners, some are computer specialists, military, some are nurses, some are teachers, etc..
 - The difference in the winners and losers of life is, *The people of the world live for their careers; the people of God don't.*
 - When career is central in your life = you are career-driven and career-minded while you climb the career ladder.
 - Everything is calculated to get you someday to "the top."
 - All decisions made by considering the impact on one's career – Family – moving with no thought of church, etc
 - I am suggesting that the career-minded person as described is an example of what Jesus was saying when He said, *He who would save his life will lose it.*

- You gain your life = Get what you want – from world... But life used up on self and not given to God for mission!
 - Your career is the answer to the question, ***“What do you do for a living?”***
 - Your mission is the answer to the question, ***“What are you living for?”***
- Career is a ladder to climb - mission is a journey you take.
- Career takes you to the top - mission leads you to the cross
- Career makes you a professional - mission makes you a disciple.
- Career is about the here/now - Mission is about eternity.
- If you are just here to eat, sleep, go to school, get a degree, get married, get a job, have some children, climb the ladder, make some money, buy a summer home, retire gracefully, grow old and die, your life is about career!
 - Nothing inherently evil in those things
 - If that's all there is to life, how are we different from the average person in the world who lives their entire life for self-gratification?
 - Getting everything we want out of life = saving life.
Giving God everything He wants in our life = losing life.

- In one of his sermons Ravi Zacharias tells the story of Robert Jaffray of Canada.
 - He came from a wealthy family - heir to a large newspaper fortune in Toronto.
 - Jaffray became a missionary in Southeast Asia in spite of his father's refusal to give his son a penny for his mission efforts.
 - When he was a young man, he learned the Chinese language and was offered a large salary by Standard Oil of New York if he would forego his missionary career and work for them.
 - He refused, so they doubled their salary offer.
 - He refused again.
 - They cabled him with this message: *“Robert Jaffray. At any cost.”*
 - He cabled back, *“Your salary is big. Your job is too small.”*
 - He spent 35 years as a missionary in China and helped translate the Bible into Cantonese.
 - When World War II broke out, he and other missionaries were placed in an men's internment camp that had once housed pigs.
 - The men suffered dysentery.

- Shortly before his death, Robert was transferred to an even worse camp.
- He died on, July 29, 1945.
- Did I mention that from a young age Robert had suffered from a heart condition and diabetes?

PROJECT:

- The martyred missionary, Jim Elliot said, ***“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”***
 - If you live for the accumulating of stuff, what difference will it make 10 seconds after you die?
 - If you live for the good of the kingdom of God - 10,000 years from now you won't regret it.

Our moment in the sun will be over sooner than we think!

“What do you do for a living?” and *“What are you living to do?”* are two very different questions.

May our lives for God rise far above everything else.

ACTION:

Release the trinkets that keep you stuck with your hand in a whole!

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Mark 8:34-36