

08/28/22

How Are You Living? Is It Worth the Loss of Your Soul?

Now after Peter declared Jesus as the Messiah, Jesus tells his disciples his purpose is to glorify God and build the church. But it will cost him his life.

Mt 16:21–26 (ESV) — 21 From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. 22 And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” 23 But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

What was the problem? He was setting his mind on the things of man and not the things of God. How are you living? Is your mind set on the things of God? Or the things of man? Are you sure? Is it worth the loss of your soul?

This was Satan’s doing. So, Jesus spoke to Satan who was in Peter trying to get Jesus to be mindful of what men would think. Satan always tries to get us to focus on the things of man and not the things of God. We are like Satan when we focus on things of man rather than the things of God and we will be judged negatively for it.

Think about that: In this life you have a choice to set your mind on the things of God for the glory of God, or set your mind on the things of man to please yourself or other men.

Satan does not want us to realize that our supreme purpose in life is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

Peter just did not like the idea that Jesus would suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed. But, that was God’s plan for the life of Jesus to glorify God. God’s plan and man’s plan are totally opposite. There is a way that seems right to the man but in the end, it leads to death.

24 Then Jesus told his disciples, (how to avoid focusing on the things of man) “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

We Must Set our Minds to the Glory of God!

Jesus was letting his disciples know they could not fully please him until they first dealt with self. Self will always seek its best interests. Self has to be denied for one to be fully focused on the things of God.

James 4:1 (ESV): What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?

We have got to realize that this life is not about doing things for the advancement of self; life is about living for the advancement of the purposes that God created us for. You are to live life doing things that give God glory. Your comfort is not of supreme importance.

If one really wants to experience life, he must be willing to deny his life as he desires to live it, take up the mission that God has called him to do and follow the word of Christ.

Jesus then summed it up this way, **25 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.**

Then, he says: **26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?**

What good is it if you focus on the benefits of this world and are successful at achieving them, but you lose your soul because you have displeased God? There is nothing that can equal the value of your soul. Your soul is more valuable than anything the whole world can offer!

So, before you decide to do a thing you need to consider, are you setting your mind on the things of God for his glory, or setting your mind on things of man for personal benefit?

23 But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

IF YOU ARE FOCUSED ON THE THINGS THAT PLEASE MAN, YOU ARE BEING LED BY SATAN

Jn 6:63 (NIV84) — 63 The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing.

**How Are You Living?
Is It Worth the Loss of Your Soul?**

Why the Soul Is Eternal

Let's talk about the soul for a minute.

God created the heavens and the earth, and then created man and placed him here to live on the earth.

Now listen carefully. How did he create him? **Ge 1:26 (ESV) — 26 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.**

God had man in his mind in the very beginning. But man did not exist in a form, man was just a thought in the mind of God.

Then God gave man an independent existence separate from himself. **Ge 2:7 (KJV) — 7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.**

Man became a living soul by the breath of God. Man was placed in a body made from the dust of the ground. Man was not the dust, man was the living soul in the dust! He now had a mind, a will, and emotions. The body was not his life. The body was just the shell of dust the man lived in.

The dust does not live! It is the breath (the Spirit) of God in the dust that lives! God gave man a part of himself – his image and his likeness and his breath – so that he would live. Since God does not die, the soul, which is from God, cannot not die. It too is eternal.

Then, when man sinned and ate from the tree that God said not to eat from, death entered the world, and the body made out of the dust, started dying. Because God said **Gen 3:17 cursed is the ground because of you**

Gen 3:19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

The body dies and returns to the ground, but the living soul that was attached to the body returns back to God. The soul cannot die, it is an extension of God himself! **Ec 12:7 (ESV) — 7 and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.**

The Bible tells us that when life in this body ends, life, which is the soul, lives on in another form and returns back to God.

We Lived in God before We Were Born

Now want to show you something else. Every human being existed in the mind of God before they were born. We know this because God tells Jeremiah **Je 1:5 (ESV) — 5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”**

Before you were born, he tells Jeremiah, I had you in mind and I had a mission for you to fulfill in the earth. This is one of the reasons why abortion is wrong. It was not man that created life in the womb; it was God and God has a plan for that life in the womb.

Being Born Is a Time to Choose an Eternal Destiny

Then when a person is born into the world, God gives them the opportunity to choose by words and actions to live for the glory of God or for their own purposes. And we are also told we will be held accountable for the actions we take in this life, **Heb 9:27 (ESV) — 27 And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment,**

We live this life on earth in a body made of the earth to live on the earth and choose where our soul will spend eternity. When we were in the mind of God, we had no choice but to be with God, but when God gave us life in a body, he gave us the opportunity to choose whether we wanted to be with him or not.

When we transition from this dust body, we are changed to another form, and we will be tried and judged according to the way we chose to live in this body. It will be determined whether we honored God's son and lived a life for his glory in this body or if we rebelled against the Lordship of His son to live life in this body for other purposes.

If we honored his son, we will spend the rest of eternity in the presence of the God as his children. If we rebelled against his son, the wrath of the Lord – the Bible says - will be poured out like water on us. He will be angry with us for ignoring and disrespecting the sacrifice he made when he sent his son to die for us.

You need also to be aware, this life is choice driven, you live or die by the choices you make, not only here in this age but in the age to come. Each day you live in this life, you are making a choice between heaven or hell. Life or death. Eternity with God, or eternity without him. That's why Jesus said

Mt 16:26 (ESV) — 26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?

Peter was thinking about the things of man and not the things of God when Jesus called him satan. We all need to be careful what we are thinking about and doing. We need to carefully consider, are we setting our mind on the things of God for his glory, or setting our mind on things of man for personal benefit? The things of God will be for our eternal benefit. Focusing on the things of man are a waste of time because it means nothing in eternity.

Paul said it this way:

Ro 8:5–8 (ESV) — 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. 7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Do you have a mind to please God or please man? Consider what you are spending your time and money focusing on. The things men say that are important, or the things God says are important?

How Are You Living? Is It Worth the Loss of Your Soul?

Now, let me provide you an illustration:

- the rope represents our life.
- before we were born, we existed in the mind of God
- when we were conceived in our mother's womb, we were given a body to live in and born into the world represented by the red mark
 - Our minds will be focused on the things of God or the things of man
 - Most will focus on the things of man in the red area with very little consideration to the part after the red
 - Thinking more about making the red area as comfortable as possible we do whatever it takes to get ahead.
 - By our actions we choose life for our eternal soul with God or
 - life for our eternal soul apart from God.
- when this life is ended, there is judgment by the righteous judge
 - heaven
 - hell
 - The rest of eternity is spent in this condition

Now,

Mt 16:26 (ESV) — 26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?

How can you expect to live with God forever and you have lived this life ignoring him? Do you confess God in church, but when you're with your friends or when you vote do you refuse to glorify him? Do you put the things of man above the things of God? Are you willing to go out of your way to do things that men say are important but not willing to go out of your way to serve God?

Jesus said ***Mk 8:38 (ESV) — 38 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.***

We have these earthly dirt bodies for only a short time to determine the state of our eternal existence. That is the only reason God has given us this life. The time soon will come when we must give up these bodies and transition to continue life in another form.

Soon This Body Will Come To A Dead Stop

At the time of death, when we transition, the opportunity to repent ends. Death is the end of the game. What was done in the body has been done and there will be no changing it. There is no repeating of life. There will only be judgement. The time for salvation is over. No turning back! After you die it is too late to ask for mercy!

Do the right thing and honor God with your body in everything now because when death comes, you have no further opportunities to get life right.

Re 22:11–12 (ESV)— 11 Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.” 12 “Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done.

JESUS IS OFFERED TO US AS A SAVIOR WHILE WE LIVE, WHEN WE DIE, HE IS NO LONGER OUR SAVIOR, HE IS OUR JUDGE.

Therefore, we all need to live each day as though it could be our last day. We need to spend more days with a mindset for living for the things of God than we do days living for the things of man. This will prepare us for death, and the moment of transition.

The scripture says very few people will live their life for the glory of God including church people, but I am here to remind you it is appointed unto man once to die and there will be a judgment by the one you dishonored. Wake up people!

We will not know the day when we transition, so we need to take each day as a day it could occur. Young and old are taken from this life every day to transition to their eternal form, so don't take comfort in your age. Life is uncertain: you do not know when this body will die, so you need to always be ready to be judged.

So many of us work very hard to better our life and condition here in this body. Yet this is a world that will pass quickly away We need more consideration to our eternal soul's condition. That is an error with tragic eternal consequences for so many. It is sad but more people will go to hell than will go to heaven.

Satan will use any means necessary to put enticements and temptations from the world in front of you. As prince of power of the air he will use radio, TV, social media, authoritative people, political parties, shame, whatever to get you to not live your life for the glory of God. He will try to get you to act in ways contrary to the will of God. He will offer you the things of man and the world that will provide you self-gratification and pleasure. He does not want you focusing on living for the things of God and the glory of God.

You need to be careful before you do anything. Is it for the things of man or the things of God?

**How Are You Living?
Is It Worth the Loss of Your Soul?**

Two Stories

Mt 16:26 (ESV) — 26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?

Jesus rebuked Peter for being focus on the things of man. I want to tell you two stories about people who focused on the things of this world and not the things of God and it cost them the loss of their soul.

The Bible tells us of a certain man **Lk 12:16–21 (ESV) — 16 And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, 17 and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ 18 And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my **soul**, “**Soul**, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.” ’ 20 But God said to him, ‘**Fool!** This night your **soul** is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ 21 So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”**

Unfortunately, many people focus on this world like this fool and are trying to store up treasure here in this world. He is called a fool because the Bible says people like this are really storing up something else **Ro 2:5–8 (ESV) — 5 But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed. 6 He will render to each one according to his works: 7 to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; 8 but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, **there will be wrath and fury.****

Every day that passes is a day that means eternal gain or eternal loss. We should not be fools and live each day without a focus towards what it means for eternity.

The Bible teaches most people will not choose Jesus as their savior and when he judges them, they will be subject to his wrath for rejecting his offer of amnesty while it could be found. God is long-suffering, but he will bring judgment. **2 Pe 3:9 (ESV) — 9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.**

Nu 14:18 (NIV84) — 18 ‘The Lord is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. **Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.’**

God does not want anyone to experience hell. That is the reason he sent Jesus but he will not let the guilty go unpunished. There is no escaping the judgment of God. You may get away with it for a while, but it will not go unpunished. It could cost you the loss of your soul if you are not careful.

We may live on this earth, at the longest in these bodies, for a hundred or so years, for some, less. Then, we will leave everything we gathered to be burned up. The flesh counts for nothing. But remember, our soul will live forever, either in God's presence and favor, or in his absence enduring his wrath for our disrespect shown him.

Our spouses, children, and extended family members will also spend eternity in either heaven or hell. We should make the effort to tell them to live with their mind set on the things of God. We should let them know that the death of the body is not the end of life but the time of judgment. They should therefore be encourage by us to choose each day to glorify God and learn to enjoy him now so that they may enjoy him forever!

2 Thessalonians 1:7–9 (ESV): *the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels & in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,*

Finally, Hell is Real

We need to take serious consideration as to where we will spend our eternity. There are those that do not believe in hell, but Jesus described hell. He defines it as a real place of eternal torment for a soul. He tells the story of the **rich man and Lazarus** to make it clear that life goes on after death. The soul will go to one of two places to live out the rest of eternity.

Lk 16:19–31 (ESV) — 19 *“There was a rich man (this is not a parable, note the rich man is nameless) who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. 20 And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, 21 who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 The **poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried, 23 and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.***

24 *And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in **anguish in this flame.**’*

- The rich man was alive in hell; Lazarus was alive in Paradise
- The rich man saw glory; Lazarus was in glory
- The rich man was alone; Lazarus had fellowship
- The rich man had a burning sensation; Lazarus had water
- The rich man was tormented; Lazarus was comforted
- The rich man’s only vice was that he focused on riches; Lazarus name means God is my helper

Hell is real! The Bible, especially the New Testament makes that fact clear. If God can do exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or imagine, then let us realize that suffering in hell is well beyond our ability to comprehend what a soul will experience.

Remember, hell was not created for man, but for the devil and his angels. You ought not want to spend eternity there. Eternity never ends! ***Mt 25:41 (ESV) — 41 “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.***

So, before you decide to do a thing or how you will spend this day you should ask yourself the question:

**How Are You Living?
Is It Worth the Loss of Your Soul?**

Heaven is also real. So, as we spend our life in these bodies, let us remember we are a living soul, and we will determine how we spend eternity by the life we live today.

Mt 16:24–27 (ESV) — 24 Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. 26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.

**How Are You Living?
Is It Worth the Loss of Your Soul?**

Saved from What? – Hell!

Saved for What – Heaven!