

PROFIT and LOSS

TEXT: *Mark 8:34-37:*

34 And when He had called the people unto Him with His disciples also, He said unto them, Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

35 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.

36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

INTRODUCTION: If you would test your faith; if you would know how much of the Spirit of Christ is living in you . . . think about the Scripture just read.

Jesus lived what He preached. He had just told His disciples of His coming suffering, rejection, and death and resurrection. He was telling them the right way to judge profit and loss. Because it is such an important teaching, He did not limit His audience to the disciples, but called in the people from the area around Caesarea Philippi. It was a necessary teaching because Peter, and probably most of the others, was startled at news that His ministry was soon to be regarded by the multitude as a failure! They needed to know what a profit and loss is based on eternal values.

They had evidence of right values from the past.

For example, Egypt, at the time of Moses, was the greatest monarchy in the world. It was tops in culture, knowledge, and military power. The gods the Egyptians worshipped were considered by surrounding nations to be the most powerful. But Pharaoh rejected

God and God's Word. Pharaoh told Moses he would be ruined if he ran his country the way God wanted him to run it. He saved his good living -- but then he lost his life, not only at the Red Sea, but forever!



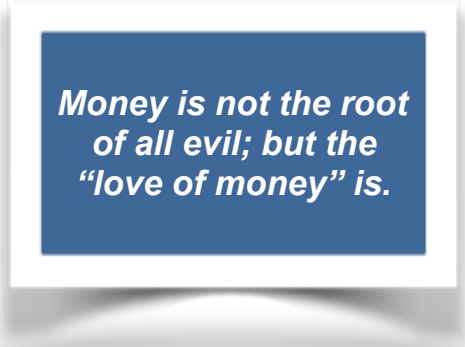
What kind of ruin do YOU want?

There was evidence of placing wrong values in Jesus' day. Right there at Caesarea Philippi was a great white marble temple honoring Caesar Augustus. The Caesars were rulers of most of the known world, but they were plagued with unrest and deceit.

The temple had been built by Herod (here, as well as in Jerusalem). Now, Herod the Tetrarch ruled over the Jews in Galilee for Caesar. The Jewish religion had become a lifeless form. Sinful pleasures crowded God out of their lives. They were now paying for it by being slaves of Rome. This was the result of people given over to self-seeking and worldly ambition.

Jesus shows us God's way for man: the self-denying, cross-carrying way. Our best efforts and deepest devotions must be directed to the things of God.

Remember: Jesus didn't condemn riches and power — only the misuse of them. He had a wealthy friend, Joseph of Arimathea, who used his wealth for good. Money is not the root of all evil; but the "love of money" is. Jesus recognized a need for authority over people by government, and never called for civil disobedience.



Money is not the root of all evil; but the "love of money" is.

Jesus made self-denial one of His key themes. He said the meek shall inherit the earth. Satan says: Express yourself! Jesus says:

Matthew 5:8: Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God!

Satan says: Indulge yourself! Jesus says:

Matthew 5:7: Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy!

Satan's creed is: Do to others before they do to you.

Self-denial is not a token thing, like not smoking or not eating candy during Lent — but it is a way of life.

The widow giving the mite fulfilled this qualification better than the rich, young ruler did in paying his tithe on his fortune!

Satan wants you to find the “good life” here in this world. He wants you to work so hard for “things” that you don’t have time to pray, to do good works. and to witness. He wants you to have such a big house you have to devote your life’s energy to furnishing it and keeping it up. Your *showplace* can be your downfall.

Satan wants you to decide to be the most popular person in the city, so you will spend your time learning how to please people instead of searching your Bible and studying how to please God. Well, have the “good time” here — for you won’t have it hereafter if you follow satan’s enticements. You will have lots of company, for wide is the way and broad is the path — and there is a lot of traffic on it — headed for destruction.

Jesus is not asking us to do anything He didn’t do. He not only is The Way, but He showed us the way, then said, “**Walk ye in it.**”

John 14:6: Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.

Deny self. Does this sound like a loss? Who needs a faltering, failing “self” when God will give us His power and fill us with His love?



Take up your cross. Does this sound like losing your life? No, it is finding it! It is a stumbling block only to those who still have a bothersome “self” to assert.

Jesus said: “Follow Me.” This is the reward. We follow Him, not only in self-denial and in cross-

carrying — but to Life eternal!

The cross is not greater than the crown! All we do is exchange what we are for what Christ is; exchange what we could attain of worldly prominence for all that we will receive as an eternal inheritance in glory!

Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, and repented too late. Lot chose the best pasture, selfishly — the land near Sodom, and he lost everything. Pharaoh defied God and perished. Godless nations of this present day are doomed. All those who devote themselves to this world will have no part in the better world to come.



Then, all you give up to find Christ and the Gospel, put in the profit column. All that you gain for selfish pleasure put in the loss column. What is your soul worth?

Mark 8:36: For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

***“My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my
pride.”***



Akron Shalom Bible Learning Center

www.AkronShalomMinistries.org