

THE WORTH OF A SOUL

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

Christ always adapted His address to His audience. To these keen business men, whose standard of values was wrong, and who were in great danger of bartering away their most precious possession for things which perish in the using, Christ put this straightforward and business-like question, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" He thus appealed to their prudence and common sense. He would have all men come to their religion as to any other great interest, guided by reason and sound judgment, and accept or reject it on the ground of the world's great controlling questions, alike in His time, and our time, and all time, "Is it profitable?" "Is it worth what it costs?" "Will it pay?"

In the light of our subject, "The Worth Of A Soul," and of our text, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" I want to make four observations:

I. Man Has A Soul.

Our Lord never argued about the existence of the soul, because the soul is one of the many self-evident realities. The Bible never defines the soul, just as it never defines God; it assumes both. So it was with Christ. He never gave any definition of the soul, but He lived and spoke as if the soul was the one thing of great value. If we had no Bible, if we had never heard a sermon or a song, or a prayer, we would still know that there is something in us that will never die; there is something in us that cannot be buried; there is something in us that will never perish. That is why the untutored Indians whom our ancestors found in this country would bury the tomahawk and other hunting equipment with the dead Indian in order that he might have them in the Happy Hunting Ground. That is a crude conception, but it shows that the untutored Indian believed that there was something beyond this life. In all the pagan religions of the world there is something which corresponds to what we call the soul. When the day came for the greatest of our Greek philosophers, Socrates, to drink the fateful hemlock and die, his friends asked, "Where shall we bury you?" He said, "Bury me? You will have to take hold of me first. What you may do with this house, this body, I care not, but the soul, the soul that lives, you cannot take hold of, you cannot bury." So, there is no argument on the question of the fact that man has a soul -- that is assumed. Every person possesses an immortal soul.

II. Man's Soul Is Invaluable.

Four things rightly regulate the price of an article. Consider these things and apply the same principles to the soul to find its value.

1. The work done on it.

Experience and observation teach us that the more work done on any article the more that it is worth and the greater is its price. God's greatest skill is demonstrated in the plan of redemption wrought out to save the soul of man. Infinite is the price Christ paid for the salvation of the soul.

2. The durability of it.

This helps to regulate the value and set its price. It is an established fact within the knowledge of all that the longer the article lasts the more it is worth.

Whether the man goes to heaven or hell, the soul can never cease to be. The bliss of heaven or the horrors of hell have nothing to do with the duration of the soul; it is immortal, infinite in duration, therefore infinite in price.

3. The possibility of its development.
4. The demand for it.
All business firms and manufacturing establishments strive to create a demand for their output. All types of advertising have this one object, to create a demand for the products advertised. The demand regulates the price of the article as nothing else.

That the soul is invaluable is obvious when we consider:

1. The infinite price paid for it.
That price was not "corruptible things, as silver and gold ... But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." No one, who thinks for a moment of what it cost God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit to redeem the soul, can doubt its infinite worth. The richest blood, the bitterest tears, the sharpest pains, and the deepest groans ever known were all given for the souls of men.
2. The immensity of its capacities.
The human soul has measureless capacities and untold possibilities. Each birth begins a history, the pages of which are not written out at once. It can be a Saul or a David, a Nero or a Paul, a Byron or a Bunyan. The soul is a pearl above all price. It can go to heaven or to hell.
3. The immortality of its being.
The soul is the indestructible part of man, that which exists when the body dies. The immortality of the soul is a subject on which men of all descriptions have agreed; on which the best and the wisest have had their testimony confirmed by the most careless and the worst. Martyrs have shown their sense of its value by their sufferings. The dying saint, Richard Baxter, said to some friends who visited him, "You come hither to learn to die. I can assure you that your whole life, be it ever so long, is little enough to prepare for death. Have no care of this vain, deceitful world, and the lusts of the flesh. Be sure you choose God for your portion; heaven for your home; God's glory for your end; His Word for your rule; and then you need never fear that we shall meet in comfort."

Our estimation of the worth of a soul differs from that of our Lord, because we do not know its potential, sublime heights and terrible depths as He does. In His sight, the worth of a soul transcends that of the world. The world is the sum of all the possessions, powers and pleasures which this earthly life offers, organized under the influence of Satan so as to leave God out. Regardless of how much of the world one may gain, three things are absolutely certain:

1. No one can gain the whole world.
The only things we can call our own are those things which become a part of us and which can never be taken from us.
2. The world does not last.
John 2:17 says, "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." Wealth does not last. There is no

permanence of possession upon earth. Your most cherished possessions will soon revert to others. Pleasures are as temporary as a bubble upon a roaring flood. Robert Burns said:

"Pleasures are as poppies spread;
You seize the flower, the bloom is shed.
Or like the snowflake on the river,
A moment seen, then gone forever.
Or like the borealis rays
That flit ere you can point the place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Vanishing amid the storm."

3. The world does not satisfy the soul.

Those who gain a portion of the world are not contented. Gain engenders a fresh craving for more. Wealth cannot make a person happy. I challenge the world to show me one happy rich person. Getting wealth is like drinking salt water, the more you drink the more you want and the less room you have to contain it. Riches take wings and fly away. If not, you go away and leave them. Honor cannot satisfy the soul. "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." Power does not satisfy anybody. Fame is as a vapor, for they that cheer you today will curse you tomorrow. How foolish then to forfeit your soul to gain what you know never satisfied anybody.

III. Man's Soul May Be Lost.

Such a loss is possible through rejecting Christ and persisting in sin. Such a loss is foolish. The loss of man's soul is deplorable. Moreover, it is irreparable. Other losses may be repaired. Lost friendships may be regained or replaced. Lost health may be restored. Lost property may be recovered. But the loss of the soul can never be retrieved. Furthermore, the loss of the soul is eternal.

When you come to the end of your journey, what are you going to do? You will be somewhat like one of the greatest financiers in the East awhile ago. His name placed on the wires would have made the financial world quiver, but when he came to the last day he sent for a friend, a man of God, a glorious preacher, and when the preacher went into his room at eventide the mighty financier said, "I wish to be alone with this preacher." When they were alone there, the minister said, "What is it you wish, Mr. Vanderbilt?" He said, "Oh, Mr. Deems, I want you to sing a song for me, and then I want you to pray, for I am dying tonight." The minister said, "What do you want me to sing, Mr. Vanderbilt?" And Mr. Vanderbilt said, "Sing that song:

'Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,
Weak and helpless, sick and sore;
Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity, love and power.'

Sing that for me. I am a poor sinner at the very best, and I need help from above." Not a word about his railroads; not a word about his stocks and bonds; not a word about the things human and earthly. He was sinking into the grave, and he needed more than earth could give him.

Another great financier of our nation was asked, "Aren't you exceedingly happy?" He answered, "Happy about what?" "Happy because you have so much wealth." He said, "All I get out of it is my board and clothing, and endless worry. That is all I get out

out of it." The poet was right when he said:

"This world can never give
The bliss for which men sigh.
'Tis not the whole of life to live
Nor all of death to die."

Caesar Borgia, who had lived in wealth and splendor, but had trifled with eternal things, said just before his death, "I had provided in the course of my life for everything except death, and now, alas, I am to die, although entirely unprepared."

Sir T. Smith, who was eminent for his wisdom and learning, but who had rejected the Saviour and was still unsaved, said, "It's lamentable that men consider not for what they are born into the world, 'till they are ready to go out of it."

IV. Man's Soul May Be Saved.

Since Christ died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins and to provide salvation for you, then come to Him and accept Him as your own personal Saviour. Do not neglect the salvation of your immortal soul. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Won't you surrender your soul and life to Him now, and come forward, confessing Him as your Saviour during the singing of the invitation hymn? Accept His offer of salvation without delay. Who will confess Him now?