

## **Mark 8:22-38 “The Ultimate Cost-Benefit” 8/21/22**

Outline:

- 1) Confession...and rebuke (8:27-33)

**2 Sam 7:12** When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. <sup>13</sup> He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. <sup>14</sup> I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. ... my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. <sup>16</sup> And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.’’

**Jer. 23:5** “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. <sup>6</sup> In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely.

**Matt. 4:8** ...the devil...showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. <sup>9</sup> And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’’

- 2) Visual parable (8:22-26)
- 3) Divine and human necessity (8:34-38)
- 4) What does this mean for us?
  - a. Note first the honesty and forthrightness of Jesus.

Matthew Henry, “When the devil is drawing away disciples and servants after him, he conceals the worst of it, tells them only of the pleasure, but nothing of the peril, of his service (cf. “*you shall not surely die*”); but what there is of trouble and danger in the service of Christ, he tells us of it before, tells us we shall suffer, perhaps we shall die, in the cause; ...he deals fairly with us, and is not afraid that we should know the worst; because the advantages of this service abundantly suffice to balance the discouragements, if we will but impartially set the one over against the other.”

b. Second, know the meaning of these words

“Unless we deny our own will, we shall never do God’s will.” Thomas Watson

“And if we obey God, we must disobey ourselves.” Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 48

C.S. Lewis, “There are three kinds of people in the world. The first class is of those who live simply for their own sake and pleasure, regarding Man and Nature as so much raw material to be cut up into whatever shape may serve them. In the second class are those who acknowledge some other claim upon them – the will of God, the categorical imperative, or the good of society – and honestly try to pursue their own interests no further than this claim will allow. They try to surrender to the higher claim as much as it demands, like men paying a tax, but hope, like other taxpayers, that what is left over will be enough for them to live on. Their life is divided, like a soldier’s or a schoolboy’s life, into time 'on [duty]' and 'off [duty]', 'in school' and 'out of school'. But the third class is of those who can say like St Paul that for them 'to live is Christ'. These people have got rid of the tiresome business of adjusting the rival claims of Self and God by the simple expedient of rejecting the claims of Self altogether. The old egoistic will has been turned round, reconditioned, and made into a new thing. The will of Christ no longer limits theirs; it is theirs. All their time, in belonging to Him, belongs also to them, for they are His.

And because there are three classes, any merely twofold division of the world into good and bad is disastrous. It overlooks the fact that the members of the second class...are always and necessarily unhappy. The tax which moral conscience levies on our desires does not in fact leave us enough to live on. As long as we are in this class we must either feel guilt because we have not paid the tax or [a cramping lack of resources] because we have. The Christian doctrine that there is no “salvation” by works done to the moral law is a fact of daily experience. Back or on we must go. But there is no going on simply by our own efforts. If the new Self, the new Will, does not come at His own good pleasure to be born in us, we cannot produce Him synthetically.

The price of Christ is something, in a way, much easier than moral effort – it is to want Him. It is true that the wanting itself would be beyond our power but for one fact. The world is so built that, to help us desert our own satisfactions, they desert us. War and trouble and finally old age take from us one by one all those things that the natural Self hoped for at its setting out. Begging is our only wisdom, and want in the end makes it easier for us to be beggars. Even on those terms the Mercy will receive us.” (from “Three Kinds of Men,” found in *Present Concerns*)

c. Third, we constantly do cost-benefit analyses. This is the ultimate one.

Jim Elliott, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”

**Php 3:7** But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

**Rom. 8:18** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

C.S. Lewis, “The New Testament has lots to say about self-denial, but not about self-denial as an end in itself. We are told to deny ourselves and to take up our crosses in order that we may follow Christ; and nearly every description of what we shall ultimately find if we do so contains an appeal to desire. If there lurks in most modern minds the notion that to desire our own good and earnestly to hope for the enjoyment of it is a bad thing, I submit that this notion has crept in from Kant and the Stoics and is no part of the Christian faith. Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased. (from “The Weight of Glory”)

d. Fourth, the implications of following Jesus are not only related to self-denial and death, but also resurrection and life!

e. Fifth, learn the rhythm of the Christian life.

Cornelius Plantinga, “Everybody wants liberty. The problem is that everybody wants it on his own terms. But salvation doesn’t work that way. God doesn’t save people (from slavery, from addiction, from sin and shame) and then cut them loose to do what they want, because without the guidance of God “doing what we want” is a recipe for falling right back into slavery.

So, to prevent a relapse, God preserves those who die and rise with Christ in baptism.... How? The Spirit of God empowers believers to “keep the rhythm going” where dying and rising are concerned. Yielding to the Spirit of God, a believer seeks the death of her old self and the resurrection of her new self. That is, she puts her arrogance to death and raises her humility to life. She puts envy to death and raises gratitude to life. She puts rage to death and raises gentleness to life. When she breaks this good rhythm for a time, she confesses her sins, which is another form of dying because it kills us to admit we are in the wrong.

What's wonderful is that when a person goes through the "little death" of confession to imitate Jesus' big death at Golgotha, she also rises toward new life, like Jesus walking out of his tomb. Confession of sin is an enormously *freeing* thing to do.

Once reformed, a Christian life needs continual reformation. Even our reforms need reforming, and especially when we grow proud of them or despairing of them. And the central rhythm of reform is dying and rising with Christ, practiced over and over till it becomes a way of being.

Take compassion as an example of dying and rising. A compassionate Christian feels distress at another's suffering and wants to relieve it. His willingness to "weep with those who weep" (Rom. 12:15) represents the death of scorn ("He made his own bed; let him lie in it.") and the death of aloofness ("Why should I care about people tortured by a military dictator in some country I can't even pronounce?"). Compassion represents the death of our old self, with its emotional stinginess, and the birth of our new self, with its emotional generosity. The compassionate person unites with Jesus Christ in "losing his life to find it" by getting out of his shell and into the full range of the world's joys and sorrows." (*Engaging God's World*, 83-87)