

The Gospel According to Mark - You Gain More Than You Give Up

You Gain More Than You Give Up!

Mark 10:28-31

Wow! These lyrics almost sum up my message for today! "You gain more than you give up!" When you decide to follow Jesus, He becomes the king of your heart and a mountain of strength where you can run when life gets really hard! He will be a fountain of living water to refresh and renew you, He'll become the theme song to your life! When you are frightened by the things this world will through at you, you can hide in His shadow! He'll become the wind inside your sails that gives you purpose in life, and He will be the fire inside your veins which will motivate you! You'll learn quickly, He will not let you down even when the world brings the worst! Let's pray and I'll explain why it's true "You gain more than you give up" when you follow Jesus.! Pray!

Remember last week I shared with you some principles Jesus taught with His life lesson on receiving the Kingdom of God like a little child! We talked about what it means to come as a little child and then about some principles we could learn from the struggle a young rich man had with coming as a little child to Jesus and trusting Him. Jesus asked him to be willing to give up the things that were most important to him and to come follow Him. However, the young man was very wealthy and his wealth was his god, his idol, his priority. The young man went away sad, and we know Jesus was sad too because He loved this young man and wanted to set him free from the things that were controlling his life. Things that would eventually destroy him. I ended the message by saying that a person who gives up something to follow Jesus will gain more than they give up! So today we will continue our study of Mark's Gospel and I'll explain this principle.

Mark 10:28 Peter said to him, "We have left everything to follow you!"

Mark 10:29 "I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel

Mark 10:30 will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields--and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life.

Mark 10:31 But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

Now let me explain something real quick. When Jesus is talking about leaving home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children, He's not talking about recklessly or irresponsibly abandoning your commitment to your family! I talked about that a few weeks ago. It's God first, ministry to family and then ministry to others. However, there are times when God will call a person to do something in His kingdom and it will mean sacrifices for the family. The disciples understood this and had put their entire lives on hold to follow Jesus, including their fishing businesses, their tax collecting businesses, etc. However, I believe when God calls someone to do this He will also call the person's spouse. There have been many examples down through the years where Christian couples have felt God's leadership to the mission field knowing there would be sacrifices for the family. But God called and led both of them. Now, if you have an unbelieving spouse, (((maybe you came to know Christ years after your marriage,)) and God is calling you to live for Christ, do that! Remember, your relationship with God should always be number one. But when it comes to ministry involvement, if you totally abandon your spouse to ministry activity, you may loose your ministry to your spouse. Trust God to work in the unbelieving spouses heart and let them see Jesus in the way you live your life. In fact, I've seen situations were someone became a more loving and caring spouse once they became a follower of Jesus and as a result, the unbeliever realized that Jesus had been good for their marriage and eventually became a believer! Not always, but it happens! Praise God!

Okay, here's what was happening in our text. The young wealthy man had just turned down Jesus' offer to become a follower, a disciple. As I said, he wasn't willing to give up his grip on the things of this world, so the things of this world would continue their incarcerating grip on his soul. Peter then reminds Jesus...

Mark 10:28 ..."We have left everything to follow you!"

Jesus then lets them know they will be rewarded in this life and in eternity, but He shares with them this truth in verse 31...

Mark 10:31 But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

When you give up your place in the line for the cause of Christ, you will find yourself miraculously

at the front of the line in a better way!

It's like this...

Those who have lived their lives with self as the number one priority will find themselves the losers in the end while those who have lived a life of selfless sacrifice for the cause of Christ will reap an eternal reward. However, the reward should never be the motive!

Frank Stagg put it this way in a Broadman Press Publication back in 1969...

"Jesus called for followers who asked for no 'bargain,' and whose concern was not for what he would 'get.' The disciple, like the bargainer, will 'get' all that is due him, but the bargainer will always be dissatisfied with what he gets. The greater rewards are for those who ask only the opportunity to work in his vineyard. His generosity is far greater than the wages guaranteed by any bargain. Jesus offers Himself to us without measure and calls us to Himself on the same basis. Our relationship with Him is to be one of trust and love, with generous giving and receiving. Bargaining is utterly foreign to this kind of relationship."

In fact, a parable in Matthew's Gospel explains this concept...

Mat 20:4 He told them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.'

Mat 20:5 So they went. "He went out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour and did the same thing.

Mat 20:6 About the eleventh hour he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, 'Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?'

Mat 20:7 "'Because no one has hired us,' they answered. "He said to them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard.'

Mat 20:8 "When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.'

Mat 20:9 "The workers who were hired about the eleventh hour came and each received a denarius.

Mat 20:10 So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius.

Mat 20:11 When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner.

Mat 20:13 "But he answered one of them, 'Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius?'

Mat 20:14 Take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you.

Mat 20:15 Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?'

Mat 20:16 "So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

Each laborer received the same wage, but this is not the point. The parable is not meant to suggest that everyone will receive the same reward in heaven. The point is that the landowner was generous and wanted to give a full day's pay to the ones who only worked an hour. It's not that they deserved the same, but the landowner was generous. The parable is meant to show the grace and mercy of our loving God even though man's pride sometimes protest this. We struggle with grace. We struggle with free. We struggle with mercy. We struggle with forgiveness. We struggle with the fact that salvation is one thing we can't do for ourselves! The religious leaders of Jesus' day struggled with the concept of grace and being willing to come as a little child, and letting go of religious pride and their illusion of being first place in line when it comes to God's love for people. Listen to this description found in Luke's Gospel...

Luke 15:1 Now the tax collectors and "sinners" were all gathering around to hear him.

Luke 15:2 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

Those who thought they were first in line were going to be disappointed because they did not understand the concept that you gain more than you give up when you decide to humble yourself and accept God's grace and mercy as a little child! Why does it always have to be, "What's in it for me?" Some live their lives based on what's in it for me?

When they don't get recognition and rewards, they find no satisfaction or happiness.

Hans Van Meegeren was an artist ignored by the critics. Spent years perfecting forgeries of famous 17th century Dutch master Jan Vermeer so he could one day dupe the "experts". Finally one of his copies was found and thought to be an original Vermeer by the best critics. The truth was discovered and the experts were shamed. This delighted Van Meegeren. He was eventually arrested for creating and selling forgeries. He died of a heart attack at age 58 before he was to serve a one year sentence. What a sad life. So many

in life live to prove their critics wrong. When you do this life loses its joy. You no longer enjoy your work, your music, your art, etc. How tragic that one's only purpose in life would be to prove his critics wrong. There are a lot better reasons to live your life than always trying to be first in line, most popular, most successful, and the one with the most things! Why not live your life for the one who gave His life for you on an old rugged cross?

Many times the things you give up are responsible for the gain!

Mark 10:28 Peter said to him, "We have left everything to follow you!"

Peter was talking about homes, jobs, family, etc. But what do you really give up when you come as a little child and surrender your life and your will, to follow Jesus? Well there's a pretty long list. You might even call it a laundry list!! Here's some of the things you give up when you allow Jesus to become your Savior and begin allowing Him to become your Lord on a daily basis, and I realize some of what I'm about to tell you doesn't happen over night, but may be a process, but at any rate, these are some of the things we begin to give up when we follow Jesus...

Guilt over past failures/Fear and uncertainty of the future/Things that never really satisfied/Discouragement/Depression/Lack of Purpose
Anxious Thoughts/Loneliness /A life of substance abuse/A life of broken relationships/the rat race/

And the list goes on and on and on. The good news is found in 1 John 5:4

1 John 5:4 for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

A well known missionary, Jim Elliot, who actually gave up his life to share the gospel with an unreached people group, once said this..."He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose!"

Paul The Apostle Put It This Way . . .

Phil 3:7 But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

Phil 3:8 What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ.

Phil 3:13 Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,

Phil 3:14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

So some of the things we give up are responsible for the gain. Some things are good to give up!

You gain more than you give up now and later!

Mark 10:29 "I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel

Mark 10:30 will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields--and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life.

Wait a minute? Was that a mistake? A typo? A misinterpretation? Jesus is talking about the things we will get back in this life and in the age to come if we are willing to surrender our will to Him, but all of a sudden there's this word "persecutions" thrown into the mix! What's that all about? Well, Jesus wanted His disciples to understand and for us to know that even though there are great and mighty rewards for trusting and following Jesus, there will always be the trials, the tribulations and even persecutions. Jesus didn't want anyone thinking He had sold them a bill of goods when they faced difficulties in life. Folks I know this may seem like a theme in my messages at times, but we all must realize that while there are great and wonderful benefits to following Jesus, and I wouldn't want to live life any other way, there are still spiritual battles we all must face! Satan will never stop trying to deceive and discourage the followers of Jesus! However, we have this promise...

1 John 4:4 You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

Now, having said that, we're just going to touch the hem of the garment, so to speak, when it comes to the

amazing things we gain when we become like a little child and take the Heavenly Father's hand and allow Him to begin to change, transform, and guide our lives! For starters...

We receive forgiveness of sin!
We receive eternal life!
We receive a personal relationship with God Himself!
We receive purpose and meaning in this life!

But also we get to be a part of the coolest family on earth, the family of God! God's family all over the world! Henry Turington put it this way...

"In the present the reward is found in membership in the family of God, a fellowship of sharing. Compared to what one is and has, the new relationship in God's family is superior by a hundredfold."

You see all followers of Jesus have been adopted into the family of God! So even if your earthly family thinks you've lost it for following Jesus, just keep loving them and praying for them. You will have the strength to make it and to continue to be a witness to your earthly family because God has given you a support system through your heavenly family! Paul stated it powerfully in his letter to the church at Ephesus...

Eph 1:4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love
Eph 1:5 he predestined (pre-chose) us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will--
Eph 1:6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.
Eph 1:7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace
Eph 1:8 that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.

And I love what Peter said in his first letter...

1 Pet 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.
1 Pet 2:10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Max Lucado put it this way...

"The work of Christ is the bungee cord for the soul. Trust it and take the plunge."

And when you take the plunge to trust the work Christ did for you on the cross, you're going to begin discover a purpose in life you never had before and it will not be a desire to work for treasures of this world, but you'll begin to have a deep desire for friends, family, co-workers and even people you've never met, to come to know the acceptance, forgiveness, peace and purpose you've found in Christ! In a loving, non-obnoxious way, you'll want to share the Good News of Jesus' love and offer of redemption! Why will this be such an important thing to you? Because of how it changed your life to give up the bad stuff and how your relationship with Jesus is changing your life from the hopelessness you once felt! The world needs hope, it always has! Listen to this quote back in 1933 from Carl Jung, a Swiss psychiatrist who is credited with founding analytical psychology...

"It is becoming more and more obvious that it is not starvation, not microbes, not cancer, but man himself who is mankind's greatest danger"
(Carl Jung, "Epilogue," *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, New York, Routledge Books, 1933).

And then this quote from Albert Einstein...

"The real problem is in the hearts and minds of men. It is not a problem of physics but of ethics. It is easier to denature plutonium than to denature the evil spirit of man."
Albert Einstein, cited by Mead, p. 192).

We must connect disconnected people with God through Jesus Christ and build bridges to the lost by getting to know them! Showing them we care by serving them. Let them know they have a standing invitation to be adopted into the family of God! That adoption is of course very costly, but the price has already been paid.

We gain more than we give up because of what Jesus gave up to gain our adoption!

The next few verse of Mark's Gospel explain...

Mark 10:32 They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him.

Mark 10:33 "We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles,

Mark 10:34 who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise."

What a price Jesus was willing to pay so you could gain more than you give up when you decide to follow Him! And once you realize the price that was paid on your behalf and for others your new purpose in life should be solidified and these words from Paul sums it up...

2 Cor 5:14 For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.

2 Cor 5:15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

2 Cor 5:16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.

2 Cor 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

2 Cor 5:18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

2 Cor 5:19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

2 Cor 5:20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

Let's pray!!