

S. N. - May 23, 1952 A.M.

"TORN BETWEEN TWO WORLDS"

Mark 8:36

INTRODUCTION:

"What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul."

John 15:18 - "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it has hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. But because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."

I John 2:15 - "Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in Him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the boastful pride of life is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away and also its lust. But the one who does the will of God abides forever."

"We are in this world and many times, we become worldly minded. And we come closely attached to it."

An elderly (village) sinner who was at the door of death was visited by the Preacher, who had been sent for. And after a fervent prayer, the Preacher asked the dying man if he wished to say anything. He answered, I was just lying here wondering, "if it isn't about time to put the cabbage plants out." Even to his dying moment, he was attached to the world.

If I said to you, would you like to have a sundae - your mouth would begin to water. With bananas, bananas - yes, Cherries - oh yes. How about a few strawberries, or some chocolate sauce, or maybe a little butterscotch. And would you put a little whipped cream on top - about a foot - that is enough.

Now you say with the wildest fantasy, I wish I could eat it. And that is the way we are in the world.

Last Sunday night, a man appeared in a downtown restaurant in Norfolk, he was writing checks to anyone who could justify a need. The checks didn't bounce. People were surprised. One restaurant worker, who was up to her elbows in dish water heard about the man, giving away money - and she went right outside and asked him for a thousand dollars. If she really needed that much money, then he would have given it to her. She told him that I live alone, and that she had been a waitress for more than 15 years. And she had never been able to put aside any savings. She only had \$39 in her savings account. And I need some money for living expenses. She told him that \$500 would do. The man nodded, pulled out his checkbook from his back pocket, and wrote her a check for \$500. And scribbled the words "living expenses", in the memo space. She put the check in her white apron and went back to work. In the meantime, the man out on Granby Mall was writing checks. He gave \$25 to a man who was looking for a job. \$200 to a woman who was unable to pay her rent. \$37.50 to a man who needed a bus ticket, and to pay a hospital bill. In a telephone interview on Tuesday night, the man explained, he didn't want anybody to know about it. I am a rich man. But money almost ruined me, that is why I desired to have and to share.

He said he used to be greedy. I wanted to be a millionaire - he said. I wanted to be rich so bad, he said, I wouldn't spend my money - not even for things that I

needed. Then two years ago, he lost \$7,000 speculating. On a California soft drink company. And he had a nervous breakdown because of the loss of that money. And Sunday night, he used his checkbook and he gave away \$1,660.50, in an hour and a half. He said some people scoffed at him and at the offer. Others were afraid to take him up. But those who did take him up were rewarded.

The dishwasher returned to the restaurant. The young man who cleans up around there. And he told the man that he needed to buy a tombstone for his mother's grave. And he wanted \$40. The man told him that \$40 wasn't enough. He gave him \$100 - and on the memo he wrote "headstone". He says I don't give money to just anyone, he says, I am the Judge of people's character. If I feel that they need it, then I'll give the money. And if I don't, I won't give them a cent.

I thought that was a neat little story to fit in with the man torn between two world's. And our text that we have before us. We live an age of devaluation, the most precious things to our alarming extent, have lost their old time worth. Our civilization has grown materialistic in its ideas and in its values.

Materialism is a disguise and has a bearing upon our thinking. And it gets people to thinking no further than this world in which they live in. Even leading scientists, for instance, cannot distinguish between the economic and the spiritual values. And this has found its way into the lecture room, and it has found its way into the man on the street. And it has found its way in a higher proportion of people who have forgotten what is the most precious treasure that they possess - their soul.

Hence, I think it is important for us to re-examine what our Lord Jesus had to say.

No doubt you will recognize that from our reading today, Jesus faced men and women with their eternal destiny. He did not mix up any terms - he just simply declared what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his soul. And what shall a man give in exchange for his soul. V. 36-37.

You might rightly say here -- what is the soul of man. Well, the Bible answers that question. The soul is the invisible and rational part of our being which distinguishes us from the animal creation and makes us resemble our maker." The soul is the conscientiousness of your existence. The soul is a treasure in us which lives on eternally. Either one or two places -- Heaven or Hell.

Heaven, if in God and His keeping. In Hell, if it is in the Devil's keeping.

I want now to take this text as best we can, and say two or three things about it. And if you'll remember these - you will carry something away with you. Because when we begin to talk about what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world. Well, somebody would say, well, he has gained a plenty. And the pagan would say - I'll take the cash and let credit go. There are many people who are eager to gain the world. But what we want to think about is the wisdom of that choice. Money provides ownership - we know that. Treasures of art, music, and literature. Many people, many rich people - who belong in the home for the destitute because they lack appreciation. They buy a painting for enjoyment. They will buy \$100 tickets to the best seat in the concert. Their name is written in Dunn and Bradstreet, the social register. But not in the Book of Life.

The whole world, and they miss the glory of Christ living in you.

Let us re-examine this whole thing for just a moment. And talk about:

I. THE PRECIOUSNESS OF THE SOUL

"What shall it profit a man. This seems to be the preciousness of the human soul. That it may be accessed here even in this world.

Man seems to an estimate on it. They value the material world.

Siras, who was educated in the school of his day, declared I cannot imagine the soul only lives while it remains in this immortal body."

Socrates, the prince of Greek philosophers, in his last hour said to the Judges - we are about to part, I am going to die. You are going to live. Which of us goes the better way - it is known to God alone.

Sterne, an Englishman, brilliant intellect, in the 18th century said - I am positive that I have a soul. Nor can any of the books which the materialists have put out in the world, ever convince me to the contrary. Yes, the soul is precious and men have put an estimate upon it.

Satan has put an estimate upon it. He knows that the human soul is precious. That is why he blinds men's eyes to everything but the materialism which damns the soul. Listen to the Bible. If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to damn them that are lost. In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them, which believed

not. Less the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ shall shine in them. 2 Chron.
4:3-4.

God has put an estimate upon the soul which is more important. He made this world. He looked upon his only and (beloved Son,) and said - is the value of precious souls. No wonder we read that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son - that whosoever believeth in him should perish, but have ever lasting life.
John 3:16.

He gave all that he had to redeem man. And man was not redeemed with the corruptable things of the world. Such as silver and gold. But with the precious blood of Christ. I Peter 1:18.

The Holy Spirit has spoken convincingly to men, about the value and relation of their soul, about sin and righteousness, and judgement.

The church has always prized the preciousness of human souls. Think of the stories of men and women who have burned at the stake, shot, hung. Because they sought the salvation of men's souls.

Think of that missionary who was compelled and returned to his country. To find a home for a few months old baby boy. It was not long before this, he had lost an elder child with a disease contracted in the forest of the congo. His devoted wife, he had to bury the little boy. Some quiet spot behind the little thatched house.

That was a big enough heartbreak. Worse was to come. Soon after the birth of a second son, his wife - his partner in service had a merciless fever. And lingered a few days and passed on to her reward. He buried her (without) an earthly friend to share his sorrow. So he had to come home. And then, he returned and he himself had a fever in his body. Someone spoke to him about it and he says, "brother, have you no care for the souls of those men and women. Who are without God and without hope.) The value he had learned of a human soul.

As I worked on (this sermon this week), the telephone rang and I was interrupted with a conversation that went something like this. "I am so and so, You married me about a year ago. I am calling to tell you, my husband died last night." And two or three other statements were made. Yes, he had had a (check-up this past week). He was fine. And then I turned back the wheels of my memory and I remember speaking to this man and this woman, about a church relationship, and about getting into church. I did further than that - I gave their name to another pastor and another church. And I said, now, perhaps, we cannot reach them - but perhaps you can. The (preciousness of a soul).

Little Child -

II. THE PROFIT OF THE WORLD

In this text, I see something about profit. It has to do with gain.

The world has hated the church down to this very hour. There are thousands of thoughts that go through my mind as I think about the millions in the cities, and the thousands in our city. And those in the wide-spread countryside around. You can warn the boatsman before he enters the current. And then if he is swept down the rapids,

he destroys himself. You can warn the man before he drinks poison and tell him that it is deadly. And then if he drinks it, his death lies at his own door.

But man says, my work will endure forever. That he is going to be disappointed. The age following the flood, they gathered their brick, they worked on the tower of Babel, and these shall last forever they said. But God came down and confounded the language, they did not finish it.

Pharaoh heaped up his pyramids. And they said, they will stand forever. Indeed, some parts are still standing today. But time and age shall devour these.

Men built temples and they write "Everlasting" on them. And God has ordained this end, but these too shall pass away. Most stable things are but shadows.

Where is Ninevah, where is Babylon, where are the high places of Edom. Where are the temples and their heroes. Where is the host of Xerxes. The last army of the Roman Emperor. They have passed away.

In their pride, they said - this monarch is an everlasting one. They have fallen, and they sink like a millstone in a flood. And man calls his work eternal but God calls them fleeting. Man says they shall never be shaken. God says they are built on sand. And they are passed by and gone forever as a flower.

A beast thinks this world is enough. Taking some kind of medicine fills your

mouth with the flavor. Whatever you eat, you acquire a taste. And with your mouth full of the profits of this world, you are eating from a basket of apples shipped in from Sodom.

A visit to the Middle East will reveal the ruins of ancient Greece.

Nebuchadnezzar, as he walked through Babylon said, is it not this the great Babylon which I have built, Daniel 4:30. A man, a king said I. But you see him crawling later on his all fours. His hair like eagles feathers, and his fingernails like the claws of a bird. Yes, he was a man but he was set against God. He humbled not himself. And he said, there is no God beside me. He worked for the prophets and the profit of the world.

Belshazzar, Dan. 5, drank out of the sacred vessels. Set himself up as the King of the earth. One day saw the hand writing on the wall and knew what was happening. Everything was dead.

In the New Testament, we recall Herrod. And the people heard him speak they said, Acts 12:22 - "it is the voice of a God and not of a man." In V. 23 - he was eaten by the worms when he died.

Many of God's children has had days of ease and prosperity when things were going well. But alas, the Christian finds himself worshipping the God's of materialism. Wealth, riches, comfort and enjoyment. These things come first in his life.

God has been put on a lower shelf. Sometime I think chastisement, affliction, sorrow, and trouble, and other experiences - God is going to teach a lesson to some people who treat him like he was second.

I want to tell you a story about a man in Southern California, he was a Doctor. He worked among the Mexicans. One day he turned on a T. V. and he was taken up by Senator Barry Goldwater. Who had just been nominated as President of the United States. The Doctor had never thought of himself in political terms. But that day, he was so taken up with the fact that Goldwater urged business men and prison men - he asked them to get into politics. So this man filed for the U. S. Congress. No one in his district had ever heard about him. But he sort of caught on - he talked straight. He had not learned yet how to speak two different ways with a forked tongue. He made it to the run-off. And he was second with the strongest political man in that area, who had been in office for 20 years. Now in the run-off, it was heated. And suddenly this man would see billboards up, that he did not remember authorizing. There would be new ads, radio ads, and he thought it was wonderful that his friends were rallying around him. But he lost the race. Now a few weeks went by, and months, and it seemed like an eternity - but the bills were coming in. These unauthorized bill boards, radio and T. V. programs, bills started coming in. When you win, you never hear about the extra advertisement. It is just paid for somehow. But these unauthorized ads came in. \$10,000, \$20,000, \$30,000, \$35,000, \$50,000, \$75,000 - and it was all cash. And it was payable now. And suddenly, he didn't have a dime.

By his own statement, he was sitting in the sandy front yard of his home, day after day. With a simple rake, trying as best he could to draw a straight line. Again he tried to draw it straight. He never quite succeeded. He was sitting there aware that he was on the edge of losing his mind. His wife who was a Christian, invited her pastor to come by and talk to him. He came, and he observed the Doctor

sitting there with a rake in his hand. Trying to draw a straight line in the sand. The Preacher said to him, (one thing) "You are torn between two worlds." The man looked up, and he said "two worlds" and the preacher said "yes, and let me tell you about the other world." And he told him about God - that knew him, and had known him from eternity and had loved him. And had endured Hell, and had paid the outstanding debt, and that the debt had been paid for his own sin.

And for the first time, that Doctor learning that there was a second world, he realized - indeed, he was torn between the two. He had to chose Christ. And so he did and made the choice. And his health returned again. And his vigor returned to him. But before, he had to recognize, he said it was money. And when I came down to money - he said, I almost lost my mind. Until I learned about another world in which money would not do the trick.

The United Nations meet and says we want peace. And always by that, they mean military peace. They never mean peace with God, or peace with one another. They never mean the kind of peace that a man needs to know. But they are always thinking about in this natural world - in which they live. The profit of the world.

Sometimes when I meet some other people, you will say, what is your budget. Now what does a budget tell you. Well, what is your program. Well, I moved into a church six times larger than the one I had. And so on. But what we want to know is, about the profit of the world.

I read about a man up in Colorado who was in the real estate business. The ski

resort. He bought a house for \$250,000. It was a fairly decent place with a couple of rooms, a couple of bedrooms and a small lot, and etc. But a couple from Boliva rented the house and they liked it. At the end of the week, they said, we want to buy this house. And instead of asking the price of it - they made an offer of \$750,000 dollars. You say, why, the boastful pride of life - I'll make a \$750,000 offer. If they needed more - give me more. That is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes. All of these things come to play and the profit made in the world. And the Lord says don't you love the world like that.

Profit in the world can lead a man to destruction and the spoiling of his soul. Abstain from fleshly love which war against the soul. I Peter 2:11.

We sell out too cheap for the world's possessions. We are like the rich young ruler. Mark 10:17. For popularity. And in the face of Herrod - power. Like Pilate, he set out for pleasure. Luke 23, 24. And like Felix in Acts 24 - in which way he was selling his own soul. For the love of money and for fame. He bartered his whole soul on this.

Have you counted the cost, if your soul, should be lost
Though you gain, the whole world for your own
Even now, it may be that the line you have crossed
Have you counted the cost.

Profit in the world starves the soul - it starves it from neglect. And refusal to let it have God's saving grace. How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation. Heb. 2:3.

Darwin, the close of his life, confessed that he had starved his soul.

Satan gets people to think this world is what they need. Fats Waller used to sing - don't give nobody your right name. Now Satan never gives his right name. He always disappoints. He can never make a promise that he will deliver.

Like Rick Karino, who was a Hell's Angel. I guess they use that name to make it sound like they are bad boys. Well, he says, we are called that because we are worshippers of Satan. And when Satan gets you - he says, Satan can get you, get you a woman, get you a bike and some money. And then he said, when I was down so weak from an over-dose, I didn't have strength to get out. A little old lady came by and pulled me out of the garbage container and told me about Jesus Christ. He says, I know what Satan can get me. But what can Jesus get me. He discovered that Jesus had another world--not this world.

III. PRESERVATION OF THE SOUL

We have thought about the preciousness of the soul. We have thought about the profit of the world. You gain it all. Now lets think a moment about the preservation of the soul.

V. 35 - Jesus said, whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, for the Gospel, the same shall save it. In other words, Jesus taught that to preserve the soul eternally, man must lose his soul in Christ. Now not in the world. To lose my soul in Christ, we think about - completely.

V. 34 - How may I preserve my soul in Christ. He is very clear in his teachings - whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself. Take up his cross and follow me. He layed down the terms for us to follow.

I will summarize these terms for you in just a moment. But here is a farm boy in North Dakota, 15 years of age, he is certainly tied up with the world. But one night he went to a meeting and the Lord led him and grabbed him. "He went home and told his Daddy, I want to be a medical missionary." Well, the boy was not a good student. And he went on to finish High School and he went to the University of Minn. That was not easy. He ended up #1 in his medical class. His best friend, ended up #2, in the same class.

The #1 medical school graduate in the University of Minn. that year went to Africa as a medical missionary. And he made \$9,000 - total package. The #2 man established his own clinic, and made \$500,000.

The world of Jesus, the pricing is different. The values are up-side-down. In the world that is natural to all of us, everyone is guilty. In the world of Jesus, everyone is forgiven.

If you love the things of this world, the love of the Father is not in you. The Bible spells out what these things are. Lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, and pride of life.

Today we are taken up with so many things. We have our schedules, we have our

filing systems, we move by alarm bells. We journey by red and green lights. We need something. We look in the dictionary, the almanac, and there are facts about everything at our finger tips that we can get if we search. All of our lives, we have looked to the world, for possessions, for the Government to take care of our needs. We all vote for a big purse. We have all searched for security. And endowment. This, or that, or the other. We look for prestige, recognition, position.

But all about us, we see destruction on every hand. We, as Americans, live in an unreal world. In our modern living, is real living. Why does it not produce joy, peace, and understanding.

The kind of living we are doing today is increasing the rate of broken homes. The delinquency of both youth and adults. Hatred of those unlike ourselves. Half of the hospital beds in America, filled with those suffering from mental illness. How can we decide which is the real world and the world which we need. We have been looking for a shelter. Yet every man and every woman is going to have to give an account.

We need to be concerned about the preservation of our soul and the things that will preserve. As we look back at V. 34, we see first, denying for Christ. This means, as we lead the world and focus on him, that it is nothing less than declaring that anything that would hinder, we would put aside. I think the story of Bartimaues in the 10th chapter of Mark, tells about this. He heard about Jesus and his power to make the blind see. One day he had his opportunity. Jesus was passing by. He cried, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy upon me. We read in the story that many people, charged him to hold his peace. But he cried, the more, a great deal. Thou

son of David, have mercy upon me. Then Jesus stood still and commanded him to be still. And he called him. And here are words that really impress you about the situation. The blind man casting away his garment rose and came to Jesus. There is nothing wrong with a coat to keep one warm on a cool day. But he sat there begging. But less these robes or rags hinder his movement to Jesus, he cast them away. That is denying. I wonder if you prepare to renounce your pride, and deny your pride, your lust, your fears, in order to come to Christ. If your answer is "yes" - then I want to say to you. Be of good comfort. Rise, he calleth Thee.

The second thing was deciding for Christ. Let him take up his cross - in terms of the Gospel, the cross represents God's salvation in Jesus Christ. You must make a personal effort if your soul is to be preserved. Now, having decided to do this --

A third thing is to dare for Christ. Let him follow me. Dare to follow Christ. This is the only response that will preserve your soul. We have said that your soul is precious, we have said that the profit of the world is useless, but the preservation of the soul is important.

Alexander the Great, it is said, gained the whole world and lost his life.

What profit is it for a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life. What will a man give in exchange for his life. It is possible for a man to make a huge success in some way, in a life that is not even worth living. Where do you put your values in life. Are they in the wrong place. A man may sacrifice his

honor for profit. The world is full of temptations toward profitable dishonesty.
What will be your verdict today.