Cost of Loss is Gain for the Cross

Mark 8:34-38

Sermon Outline

A. The Cost (vs. 34-35b, 38):

1. After challenge Peter for having wrong motives Christ once and for all beckons the crowd to come closer and listen to Him. It’s as if Christ is reaching out to a wider audience because the disciples, with Christ being extremely popular, are becoming more focused on self-made interest (Mark 10:28-31).

2. Notice it says ‘His disciples’ – Christ still respects their willingness to listen to His teachings, surrendering their daily lives (Mark 10:28-31) to go with Him wherever He went, and humble themselves when corrected.

3. Anyone who continually, to the point that it becomes a habitual action, presses into action because they find pleasure in purposefully submitting to the will of Christ demonstrates a sincere desire to follow Christ.

4. To come to Christ is to have a sincere desire, for the sake of working out one’s salvation, to experience an intimate relationship with Him as a result of a daily walk of faith.

   a) Whosoever will come after Christ must walk the path which He walked, the path of denial and cross-bearing. The cross is the symbol of suffering and self-denial speaks of readiness to suffer for someone else.

5. Anyone who finds pleasure in having a purposeful walk with Christ must make a once and for all decision to not be controlled by their personal desires. This is a once and for all decision to totally surrender one’s life to Christ.

6. To take up his cross is to willfully decide to personally do whatever it takes to submit to the will of God even if it seems like a burden sometimes (Matthew 11:28-30), and leads to suffering (Romans 8:18).

   a) The cross symbolized hated Roman oppression and was reserved for the lowest social classes. It was the most visible and omnipresent aspect of Rome’s terror apparatus, designed especially to punish criminals and quash slave rebellions. In 71 B.C. the Roman general Crassus defeated the slave-rebel Spartacus and crucified him and six thousand of his followers on the Appian Way between Rome and Capua. A century later in Mark’s day, Nero would crucify and burn Christians who were falsely accused of setting fire to Rome.
7. To have an intimate relationship with Christ is a continual process to the point that it becomes a habit. Anyone who takes pleasure in experiencing Christ must not just become a scholar of the word (1 Corinthians 8:1-3) but must also completely trust Him so that obedience to Christ is continual (1 John 2:2-5). This involves a commitment to suffer for Him both inwardly and outwardly (Philippians 4:1-11).

8. Anyone who continually, to the point that it becomes a habitual action, presses into action because they find pleasure in following Christ is a person who 'works out their salvation' for God's glory and their blessing.
9. Anyone who purposefully, once and for all, finds pleasure in disobeying Christ in order to remain in their comfort zones.
10. The person who seeks to find their own pleasures, through their present circumstances, cannot control the future result (John 15:1-5).

   a) Peter being tired of Roman oppression, looking forward to the salvation of Israel and the reestablishment of the Davidic throne (Mark 8:31-33; 10:35-45), wanted a powerful life on earth. Peter, however, cannot control the will of God which includes Christ death, soldiers arresting Christ, the actions of the high priest and Jewish leaders. So if he seeks to preserve the life and popularity they have now he would lose the salvation Christ came to provide which is life and life abundantly leading to an eternal salvation with God.

Verse 38:

1. 8:38. Structurally this verse parallels and complements verse 35 by carrying the thought to its ultimate consequence.
2. Anyone who feels shamed and disgraced because of all the things being said about Christ by the Jewish leaders and because of Calvary's humiliating process will suffer lost.
3. To be embarrassed about the teachings of Christ in an environment that has forsaken God for other religions and is purposeful about violating the law causes us to suffer lose.
4. Christ will restrain Himself from bringing up the life we lived when we stand in God’s presence.
5. This is Christ in the full excellent presentation of the complete nature of God.

B. The Gain (vs. 35c-37):

1. On the account of a person’s surrender of their life being directed by Christ, they like the disciples did, may suffer lost (Mark 10:28-31) of income, intense inner pain (Romans 8:18; Philippians 3:10), life the way it once was and even friends and family (Luke 14:26-27).
a) The lose of life can take place for those who share the Good News of Jesus Christ (Mt. 4:23; 9:35; 24:14; 26:13; Mk. 1:1,14; 8:35; 10:29; 13:10; 14:9; 16:15; Acts 15:7; 20:24; 1 Pet. 4:17). Those who after Christ death and resurrection chose to deliver the message of a victorious new life to others can suffer much lost (Philippians 3:1-11).

2. In the future, those who suffered for the sake of the gospel, will experience complete deliverance from all that inhibits their full experience of Christ. In heaven these individuals are rewarded for their faithful service (1 Corinthians 3:10-15). As a result there is no earthly lost worth noting and the heavenly benefits are incredibly more valuable (Romans 8:18; Revelation 3:21-22).

a) The paradox of these verses is resolved by understanding that the Lord used the term life in two different senses. The first expression, save his life, has reference to the preservation of physical life from death. The person who is completely devoted to the protection of this life will miss the life that is eternal. On the contrary, the person who is so devoted to Christ that he is willing to lose his life is the person who gains true life. He finds that to die is gain (Phil 1:21). This is not a description of the way of salvation for the lost, but rather of the philosophy of life for the disciple.[4]

3. Now Christ compares the lost to present gains.
4. What eternal advantages does a person continually receive from their earthly successes?
5. As a result of investments a person can gain a profitable life.
6. The profits the person gains is based on the way the world leads the person to think of what makes life profitable (Luke 12:13-34).
7. The person who follows the world system in an effort to experience a wonderful life cost themselves spiritual and eternal loss.
8. Christ went from discussing the day to day life of a person and now discusses their inner spiritual life and their eternal existence.
9. In the end a person’s soul lives forever. The benefits of earth only add to their physical well-being.
10. A person who functions from a worldly stand point does not experience spiritual growth or heavenly rewards (Matthew 6:19-24; 1 John 2:15-17).
11. This question is concerning what would a person, on an ongoing basis, permanently put in place for their eternal benefits once they come to realize, after gaining earthly blessings that it cannot buy them eternal benefits.
12. Once a person realizes that earthly possessions does not provide inner spiritual and eternal rewards there is no end to the earthly achievements they would give up to gain it.
13. A person, once and for all would permanently put in place all the earthly achievements if they realize all they would gain spiritually and eternally.
14. When a person sees all that heaven has to offer what could they exchange for it?
15. Saving one’s life by experiencing spiritual maturity is priceless.
16. It is better forsake, when necessary, earth’s benefits for a complete experience on earth and heaven.