

Bristol Conference 1964 (Apostasy) - Part 8

by William MacDonald

The sermon emphasizes the importance of the soul, its value, and the danger of losing it, but also the provision for salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Duration: 44:38

Scripture: Mark 8:34-38, Hebrews 10:31, Revelation 22:17

Topics: "Apostasy"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of caring for the soul rather than just focusing on the needs of the body. He highlights how people often prioritize physical needs like food, clothing, and entertainment, but neglect the spiritual aspect of their lives. The preacher quotes from Mark chapter 8, where Jesus teaches about the need to deny oneself, take up the cross, and follow Him. He warns that gaining the whole world but losing one's soul is a great loss, and encourages listeners not to be ashamed of Jesus and His words.

Transcript

When he shall give his victory, The whole land of Calvary Shall know the glory and glory Of the living King. A glorious morning all will be free, Glory to his name through ages of old. Amen.

We are so proud for Jesus. We are so proud to be His. We are so proud for Jesus.

...say goodbye for the time being. I know I was of your prayers for the work of the school. The problem is that we have more than twenty.

When we send out prayer requests, it really isn't for finances. We don't have the possibility of doing anything with it. So it's just a pure request for prayer.

Our greatest needs are for persons. We need a cook or a director for the overseas. So we'd appreciate your prayers for the school.

Well, the magnitude of the correspondence course ministry is that so far we've sent out 2,500,000 courses. In the goodness of God, I think that he may have had the largest study course program in the world today. And it's been done without benefit of human advertising.

It's been done really by word of mouth advertising. And many of you have had firsthand acquaintance with it. How many of you have ever taken one? ...continues to bless.

We have up to 50 courses. ...which means that you can... ...through New Testament Greek. And when you've taken them all... Let's return this morning to Mark chapter 8, please, beginning with verse 34.

The 8th chapter of Mark's gospel, beginning with the 34th verse. Mark 8, 34. And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it. But whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

I'd like to think with you this morning about the question of the Lord Jesus in verses 36 and 37. For what shall it profit if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? If you were to ask me what is the greatest question that was ever asked, I'd have to refer you to these two verses. It's the question of all questions that pierces to the very heart of life and introduces us to the central meaning of existence.

Some years ago an atheist wrote a tract, and in that tract he said, if I really believed that the knowledge and practice of religion in this life influenced destiny in another, then religion would be to me everything. It would be the first waking thought when I arose in the morning and the last thought before sleep which sank me into unconsciousness at night. I would labor in its cause alone.

I would cast away earthly cares as follies and earthly pleasures as dross. I would go out to the world and preach to it in season and out of season, and my text would be, what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? I don't usually say complimentary things about atheists, but I have to compliment that man on the choice of his text. What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? The Lord Jesus never asked a question because he didn't know the answer.

He asked a question so that we would find the answers. And if we look closely in this verse this morning, these verses, we'll find some very, very important instruction from his lips. And the first major thing that I see as I look into this passage of the Word of God is that you and I have an undying soul.

There is that about us, define it as you will, that will never cease to exist. Just think of that. And mind you, we don't go through life with that consciousness.

We go through life as if the body were everything and care-scant, pay-scant attention to the soul. But this passage in the scripture tells me the body is not all. It's the soul that counts.

And what shall it profit you if you gain everything and lose that soul? Man lives to cater to the body. If you'll just think of the round of existence and of activity and of what man does from Monday through Sunday, you'll find that most human activity is directed toward the care of the body. Go down to Bristol after the meeting and just make a little study of the stores.

You'll find most of the stores sell either food or clothing. Food for the body or clothing for the body. Look around you, you'll see the hospitals, the doctors, the dentists, Blue Cross and Silver Cross and Red Cross and all the other crosses, drugstores, places of pleasure and amusement.

And most of it all, most of the activity of life is devoted toward the satisfaction of bodily appetite. And you know, the amazing thing, the amazing thing is that body of ours is going to die. Death is going to come to that body of ours.

But the soul goes on forever. And it's amazing, isn't it, how we can devote our time to seeing that this body gets three square meals a day and yet men and women in Virginia and Tennessee and this state of this union today are careful about three meals for the body and not careful about food for the soul. And yet it's the soul that really counts.

It's amazing how fastidious people are to take, to take a bath, for instance. And the fact that their soul is stained with sin that will drag them down to an ever-burning hell. It's amazing how careful people can be to brush their teeth with fluoride toothpaste three times a day.

Those teeth will just return to the dust from which they were made. Those same people can pass through life and never be deeply anxious about the salvation of their soul. Isn't that amazing? We have an undying soul.

Death affects the body, but it doesn't affect the soul. And what happens to the body is not as important as what happens to the soul. You know, it's an interesting thing to me that even in heathen religions there seems to be the consciousness of life beyond the grave.

You go and you dig up the tombs of Egypt and you find in the tombs of Egypt the things that they put in with the body which indicate that they believed that this wasn't the end, that there was something beyond. And you go up and you dig the mounds of the Indians in our own country and you find the same landscape in the human mind, in the human consciousness. In fact, this life is just a grain of sand on the seashore of eternity.

That's about what it is. Because if you stop to figure out the years that you will probably spend on the earth, what will they be? 60, 70, 80 years. And then a long eternity.

What is eternity? Somebody said eternity is an ocean without shores. Think of that for a moment. Eternity, my mind just bulges.

The brain hits the sides of the skull and you just can't think any further. An ocean without shores, I can't conceive of it. Well, I can't conceive of eternity either.

And so there's my little life, whatever it might be, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, 100 years, supposing it were. And yet, unending eternity, forever and ever and ever. Just think of it, the long after the present civilization has molded away, everybody in the meeting this morning will continue to exist.

We shall never cease to be. It's wonderful to me that when the Lord Jesus spoke, He dealt with fundamental issues. He never wasted His time talking about trivial things, but always had a way of coming to the heart of the matter.

And my, as we sit quietly this morning and just think of this, we realize He certainly came to the heart of the matter here when He said, What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? For what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? We have an undying soul. But that isn't the only thing I find in this passage of Scripture. I learned something else.

And I learned this, that the soul of man is of priceless value. Your soul and my soul are of priceless value. And what the Lord Jesus was saying here in so many words was this.

Take all the money that's in the world today and pile it into a great mountain. And mind you, it would be a great mountain. Take all the gold and silver and platinum and uranium that are in the world today and pile that in a big mountain.

Take all the deeds for real estate that are in the world today and heap them all together. And all the stocks and bonds and negotiable securities on the New York Exchange and the Chicago Exchange and the San Francisco Exchange. And then take all the jewelry that you could find in the world and anything of value that there is a gigantic heap and you try to add up the value of it.

But supposing you could do it. Supposing you could get a bank of IBM computers and somehow or other reach your soul. We have long ago reached the conclusion that we're not going to get all that money.

But the Lord Jesus said if you could get it and in the process of getting it you lost your soul, it would be a bad bargain. And what that means is that your soul is worth more than all that wealth. More than all... You know, my mind goes down to Skid Row in Chicago where you can see some very, very degraded forms of humanity.

Men and women that have stooped so low that in some ways they're hardly recognizable as human beings anymore. They've sold themselves over to sin and corruption and degradation. And yet the word of God tells me that the soul of any one of those persons tremendous is.

But you know, when I want to learn the value of the human soul I don't go to the New York Stock Exchange. And I don't go to the First National Bank of Chicago. And I don't go to the IBM computers.

But I go to the cross. Because on the cross of Calvary God set a value on my soul. He sent the Son of His love the Lord Jesus Christ into this world to suffer, bleed, and die.

How much is my soul worth? The blood of God's only Son. The blood of God's only Son. That was the price tag He set on you and on me.

A couple of years ago I was speaking to a man after a meeting in Lombard, Illinois. This man was a drunkard. And he was all broke up.

He was ashamed of himself and he was a physical wreck. And he was a moral wreck and a spiritual wreck. And I said to him as I was speaking to him, Look, if you had an only son would you give him to die for a drunkard? And he said to me, I wouldn't do it.

And I reminded him God had done it for him. Our soul is of priceless value. That's what Peter reminds us in his first epistle.

For as much as you know you were not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold from your vain conversation received by tradition from the fathers but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb

without spot and without limits. Dear friends, just think of the least lovely person in all the world whom you've ever seen or known or met. Remember, that soul, that soul is estimated by God to be of priceless value.

And God sees in every human being a potential worshipper of the Lamb of God throughout all eternity. God's purpose for every human soul is to conform that person to the image of his own beloved Son. We have a never-dying soul.

That soul is of priceless value. Dear friends, as I look at my passage of Scripture this morning I learn something else and that's very, very solemn. Now that is this, that the soul of man may be lost.

That soul that's worth more than all the wealth of the world, that soul for which the Son of God died on Calvary's cross, that soul may be lost. Isn't that pathetic? You think of that little baby born into the world, you think of that child growing up, a lovely child, so affectionate and so devoted and in such a nice way, and yet you see him growing on up into manhood and he starts, the effects of sin, of indwelling sin, start to take their course. And that fellow drifts on and on down the by-paths of sin till finally his body is placed in a Christless grave.

There was that baby, so innocent, so loved by his mother, and the end of the trail is a lost eternity. The soul of man can be lost. But you know, there are several ways in which man can lose his soul.

Man can lose his soul by a life of outright sin. I want to tell you there are men and women in the world today who in a cold, cool, calculating way have just decided to abandon themselves to sin and immorality. They came face-to-face with a choice, and they chose sin.

And some of those people, their brain has become so seared and so perverted and so defiled that from all human appearances they seem to be beyond the gospel. You can abandon yourself to a life of profligacy and lasciviousness and immorality and sin. And this is the way some people hurtle down to hell.

But that isn't all. A person can abandon himself to hell through turning himself over to false cults and false religions. There are people in the world like that today.

There are people in the world today who have heard the sweet gospel of the grace of God. Jesus, the only Savior. And they knew the issues involved, but they wouldn't accept Him.

And instead, some cultists came along and they lent an ear and they deliberately apostatized from Jesus Christ and turned themselves over to false religions. But I want to tell you that by far the greater part of lost souls in the world today are lost, they're lost through neglect and sheer indecision. That's why men are lost.

They're lost because they go through life taking what comes to them, but they never make a deliberate choice of the Son of God. They never make a positive commitment of their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ. And I would say that when the annals of eternity are written, that most people in hell will be there because they just drifted.

Because they just drifted. They came to the crossroads time and time again. They heard the gospel call.

The Spirit of God knocked at their hearts. They just put them up. And you can do that.

You can do that. You don't have to make a decision. You can just drift and take what comes to you in life and perish forever.

And I want to tell you this, that the loss of the soul is the greatest of all losses. Because when the soul is lost, it's lost forever. I tell you, it's hard for me to even conceive of such a thing.

A person living in this world, hearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, knowing that He's the only Savior, and yet failing to embrace Him as Lord and Savior, and going out into eternity, lost forever and forever. And I'd like to remind you that every unsaved person today is in danger of losing his soul. Jesus said, What shall it profit a man that he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? We have a never-dying soul.

That soul is of priceless value. That soul can be lost. But I'm glad that we don't have to stop there, because if this passage of Scripture teaches us all that, it teaches us something else.

And that is that the soul of man can be saved. The soul of man can be saved. God has made wonderful provision for taking sinners from the dung heap, washing them from their sins, saving them by His matchless grace, and taking them home to Heaven.

You'd never think He could do it with such raw material. But He did it because He sent His Son to die as a substitute for sinners. And because on the cross of Calvary the Lord Jesus pays the penalty that our sins deserve.

And when I come to Him and acknowledge my sins and receive Him as my Savior, God credits to my account all the value of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. And He saves me, and He saves me righteously. Not because of what I am in myself, but because of who the Savior is, and because of what He has done.

And so what a wonderful thing it is that we can tell you today, anybody can be saved, because Jesus died and was buried and rose again and ascended back to God where He is today, at the right hand of God. And we don't have to stop there either. In our meditation, in this passage of Scripture, we can say anybody can be saved, and we can go further and say anybody can be saved right now.

Anybody can be saved right now. God never promises to save anybody tomorrow. God's word is right now.

Now is the accepted time. Behold, now is the day of salvation. And here we stand, July 5th, 1964.

God calling yet. The lovely expression in the last part of the 10th chapter of Romans. He says, All day long have I stretched forth my hands to a gainsaying and disobedient generation.

A gainsaying and disobedient people. What a picture of God. You know, your hands can get mighty weary stretching them forth all day.

So wonder to me that God's hands haven't wearied long before. They're so different. They're all, they're stretched out today.

They're stretched out to you. All day long have I stretched forth my hands to a gainsaying and disobedient people. I wonder as the Son of God stands before you this morning.

As the Holy Spirit speaks to you this morning. As God the Father speaks to, woo and win you to himself this morning. I wonder if today you'll say yes.

I'll come today. Just as I am without one seed. But that thy blood was shed for me and that thou didst me come to.

I'd like to close my message this morning. First of all, with a word of affectionate warning to everyone in this meeting who does not have the assurance. That word of affectionate warning is this.

Do not neglect your soul. A never dying soul. A soul of priceless value.

A soul that can be lost. Lost forever. And then I'd like to close my message this morning with a word of affectionate invitation to those who are unsaved, and that is come to Christ and come today.

Whether you're poor or rich. Whether you're young or old. Whether you're well or ill.

Whatever your circumstances in life. The Savior waits before you right now. On bended knee.

He whose hands and feet are scarred with the nails of Calvary. Whose side is the scar of the spear wound. And whose brow has the scars of the crown of thorns.

He's before you this morning. I tell you on bended knee. Seeking to save you.

But you have to make the choice. He will not save you against your will. And then I'd like to close my message with a word of loving entreaty to Christians.

And that is that we should cleave to the Lord with all purpose of heart and speak to precious souls about it. Those relatives. Those friends.

Those who are near and dear to us and our neighbors. That we might speak to them a word in season that they may be snatched as brands from the burning. Now shall we sing in closing that lovely invitation hymn.

And how my heart yearns to see someone this morning say this for the first time from the depths of his or her heart. Number 149. And a brother Jim will come and lead us in this.

Just as I am. Without one plea. Notice verse 3. Just as I am, though tossed about with many a conflict, many a doubt, fighting and fears within without.

All you've got to say is O Lamb of God I come. You say that and he'll do the rest. Just as I am, without one plea.

My prayer and my love are here before thee. And when the wind be tossed through the air and the land of the empty sea and the land of the empty sea beyond my eyes I hear

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