

"What Will a Man Give in Exchange For His Soul?"

Matthew 16:21-28

The 5 Questions of Christmas

It is now just a little over six months before the cross. Although Peter's confession in the previous paragraph stands in sharp contrast to what is about to be said, if the disciples are to be ready for the events yet future, they must know now what is about to happen.

In contrast to who He is, what He has done, and who I now am in Him, what can I do that would compare to all He accomplished by His death and resurrection? What value do we place on Christ and His work in our behalf? What does this mean to us?

I. The necessity of our Lord's death (v. 21)

The word translated by "must" speaks of necessity, of inevitability. If mankind would be saved, then Jesus Christ would have to die. It is not a fatalistic statement, but one of willful resignation. This same idea is carried out in Luke 24:6, 7.

- A. The place of His suffering (He must go to Jerusalem)
- B. The people involved (Elders, chief priests and scribes)
- C. The point of His suffering (He must be killed)
- D. The promise in His suffering (He will be raised)

When we consider the earlier revelation in 16:16, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," and then this contrasting image, there can be little wonder as to why Peter and the audience were stunned.

II. The enigma of our Lord death to His disciples (vv. 22-23)

A. Peter's perplexity (v. 22)

Peter forcefully grabs our Lord and pulls Him to himself. He then begins to vigorously censure our Lord's initial statements concerning His impending death.

If God carried out the wishes of misguided thinking, you and I would never stand a chance of making it to heaven.

B. Our Lord's perspective (v. 23)

Jesus does not lash out at Peter's thoughts. Jesus recognizes in Peter the voice of His relentless foe. The devil speaks through our best friends, our children, and our spouses. Whatever means he can employ to accomplish his devilish purposes he will use, if God so permits.

1. It is devilish
2. It is a stumbling block
3. It is man-centered

For Jesus to acquiesce would be to disobey the will of the Father.

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III. The implications of our Lord's death for His disciples (vv. 24-27).

In verses 24-27 Jesus basically says to Peter and His immediate audience, "For you to be saved not only must I die, but you must die as well. My death forms the basis for your acceptance before God, but your participation in this provision is only possible if you embrace it fully."

What does this look like? What is belief or faith in the finished work of Christ? This is what a faith in God's cross-work looks like. His appeal is to man's volition. You must choose to come after me. The grammatical construction of this verse carries certain weight.

A. The appropriation/application of His death (v. 24).

1. Believing Jesus looks like personal denial
2. Believing Jesus looks like personal death
3. Believing Jesus looks like personal discipleship

B. The explanation of His death (v. 25-27).

Here is a word of encouragement, of consolation. Those who willingly offer up this temporal life will gain an eternal reward. God is no one's debtor. His reward far exceeds the temporal sacrifice placed on those who would follow Him.

1. Gain through lose (vv. 25, 26)

To follow Christ implies necessary risk. You cannot be a Christian and play it safe.

2. Reward through sacrifice (v. 27).

This verse expresses the idea that no sacrifice on our part can compare to what is received in exchange (Mark 10:29, 30, Luke 18:29, 30, Rom. 8:18, 32). Nothing we are called upon to endure can compare with what awaits us in glory.

The world would consider you a fool to sacrifice the visible temporal for the invisible eternal. To become a Christian means you have given who you are to Him. You give Him your life and He gives you His. The exchange is completely unfair, but we are the beneficiary of a lopsided exchange.