

Questions Jesus Asked: "What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?"

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Matthew 16:26

What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?"

Matthew 16:13-27 (NIV)

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴ They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." ²⁰ Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah. ²¹ From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. ²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" ²³ Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns." ²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. ²⁶ What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done."

Wouldn't it have been great if the Bible just had the first half of this passage? Instead, Jesus talks about suffering and death.

You can tell from Peter's response that he's not really focusing on the resurrection part of what Jesus just said. Peter is offended, and probably for two reasons:

- 1) If Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, surely, He can't suffer and die. How can He? He's God! He has all power and authority. Nobody can lay a hand on Him; His Father will protect Him. He might have been tempted to take Jesus through a Bible study on Psalm 91 about God's protection over His life.**

Psalm 91:7-8

"A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked."

- 2) Peter is probably offended because if Jesus is to suffer and die, forgetting the resurrection part, then surely Peter and the other disciples will too.**

Jesus rebukes Peter harshly:

Matthew 16:23

Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

Luke 4:3-13

The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.”⁴ Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone.’”⁵ The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world.⁶ And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to.”⁷ If you worship me, it will all be yours.”⁸ Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’”⁹ The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here.”¹⁰ For it is written: “He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; ¹¹ they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”¹² Jesus answered, “It is said: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”¹³ When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

Peter tries to tell Jesus that He doesn't have to suffer. Jesus recognizes in Peter's rebuke the voice of the accuser; Satan is trying to get at him through the mouth of Peter. Jesus recognizes the undertones; He recognizes the argument of the enemy and rebukes him sharply.

Matthew 16:24-27

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.”²⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.²⁶ What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.”

Jesus completes the teaching that started in the first half of the passage. There is power available for those who follow Him, that is true. But the path of following Jesus is not one of self-exaltation, it's a call to deny ourselves, and take up our cross, and follow Him.

“When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.” - Dietrich Bonhoeffer

It's a call to put our own desires, our own ambitions, our own egos, to the side, and follow Him. Jesus puts it this way, “What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world yet forfeit their soul?”

The question is: What are we living for?

Are we living for the things of this world; money, fame, excitement, adventure, reputation or are we living for Him?

The reason that the Christian life is often hard, is that the kingdom we are living for is not fully here. This world is not yet the way that it should be. But there's a day when Jesus is going to split the sky. He's coming in the clouds with the glory of the Father and accompanied by the **angels of heaven**

and He's going to make things right on the earth and reward each of us according to what we've done.

Revelation 1:7

"Look, he is coming with the clouds," and "every eye will see him, even those who pierced him"; and all peoples on earth "will mourn because of him." So shall it be! Amen.

The people are mourning because they were not ready for that day, but we need to live our lives considering this day. This day must be the anchor for our souls because this world is not the end and our reward is not here, but it's surely coming.

Jesus gives us the choice; we can live for the things of the world here and now and lose our souls for eternity or we can deny ourselves and follow Jesus now and reap the rewards for all of eternity.

What are you going to choose?

- **If you've been living for the world — you need to decide — is it worth it to gain the world and yet forfeit my soul?**
- **If you've been sitting on the fence — you need to decide — "Which side, am I on?"**
- **If you've been trying to follow Jesus but it's been hard — we need to remember — there's more going on than meets the eye. There's a day coming when Jesus returns and every wrong will be made right. And we will be rewarded for every bit of pain we've walked through.**