

# GAINING THE WORLD AND LOSING YOUR SOUL

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MARK 8:34-36 • TV055B

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By  
**HENRY T. MAHAN**

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Zebulon Baptist Church  
6088 Zebulon Highway  
Pikeville, KY 41501  
PH: 606-631-9053

### **Mark 8:34-36**

*“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’s, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”*

I’m going to try to get down where you live today and speak to you very plainly on the subject: **“GAINING THE WORLD AND LOSING YOUR SOUL.”**

Now I hope you will take a few moments and listen to me. I don’t mean to be offensive and don’t want to be offensive. But you know, the apostle Paul said this about the message of salvation; he said, “It is offensive; it’s the offense of the cross.”

And then Paul said on another occasion, *“If I seek to please men I’m not the servant of Jesus Christ.”*

Now on the subject: **“GAINING THE WORLD AND LOSING YOUR SOUL”** we’re going to turn to **Mark 8** and begin reading with **verse 34, Mark 8:34** and our Lord is speaking.

When He had called the people to Him; the Master had gathered the people about Him with His disciples, He said unto them, *“Whosoever will come after me; let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.”*

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Then in **verse 35**, “*For whosoever will save his life;*” what does that mean? Well it means his earthly peace, his earthly prosperity, his earthly honor, his earthly relationship, this life here on this earth. Whosoever will say that and deliver that and protect that, whosoever is not willing to part with it or give it up, whosoever will save his life, will finally lose it.

“*But whosoever will lose his life,*” that is be willing to part with the things of the natural, material world for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, will save his life ultimately, eternally.

In **Mark 8:36**, “*For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*” What would you take for your soul? What would you take? What are you taking ought to be my question, what are you now taking in exchange for your soul?

Now we’re living in a world where men have been totally absorbed in the physical, the material, and the things that pertain to this flesh. That’s right! You know it’s true and I know it’s true.

Everything about us and most of the things in us are geared to the comfort and care of this body. Our Lord said, “We’re taken up with three questions, what shall I drink, what shall I eat, and wherewithal shall I be clothed?” That’s what concerns us, “*The lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life.*” That’s called, “*The world.*”

That’s right; turn to **1 John 2:15-16**; listen to Christ, the Lord says; “*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, (if the world is his object of affections, if the world is his ultimate, primary, concern, if he loves the world, if that’s his first love) the love of God’s not in him for all that is in the world; (this is the thing that makes up the world) the lust of this flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.*”

“*And it’s not of the Father but it’s of the world and the world passeth away and the lust thereof. But he that doeth the will of God, (he whose concern with the will of God; he who is primarily dedicated to the will of God) abideth forever.*”

Now when I say the world is taken up with the material (and I want you to listen to me now carefully) when I say that the world is taken up with the physical, the flesh and the material and the comforts of this body; I’m saying the church also today and this is what’s tragic; the people who profess to be the people of God are caught up with this same materialism. That’s right!

It’s a far cry today from Abraham who was a pilgrim, who sojourned here, who never drove his stakes very deep, who never stayed anywhere very long. It’s a far cry from Abraham who dwelt in tents and who looked for a city, who didn’t own one; he looked for one, “*Which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God.*”

Now look around you. I’ve been in what we call, “Religion” a long time. I’ve been preaching a long time. And I’m looking; I’m taking a good, hard, look at today’s religion. And millions and millions and millions of dollars are spent on spacious, magnificent, gaudy buildings, with

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gymnasiums, bowling alleys, swimming pools, social centers, and elaborate entertainment and no message.

We're more concerned about the comfort of the cathedral than we are in the message from the minister. We are more concerned about finances than we are faith. We are more concerned about our program than we are power. *"We're ever learning and never coming to a knowledge of the truth."*

And ministers are caught up in this same materialism. Ministers live in mansions. They draw exorbitant salaries. They wear diamond rings and ask for more. They have bank accounts, stocks and bonds.

Someone said to me one day; he said; "You know the only stocks and bonds that Paul ever owned were those that were around his arms and around his legs." They were stocks and bonds of the prison house. But the Word of God wasn't there.

And the message from the pulpit today is just no message at all. And when you do hear a message; listen to me, I'm saying we are caught up in materialism. We're caught up in the physical. We're caught up in the flesh. We're more concerned about this body than we are in our relationship with God.

And the average sermon you hear today has something to do; now listen to me, has something to do with either the healing of the body or the healing of the pocketbook. That's what preachers are emphasizing, God wants you to be perfectly well and God wants you to prosper and God wants your business to prosper.

And God wants this and God wants that and God wants the other. "If you'll tithe God will bless you. If you will give your heart to Jesus He will heal you. If you'll come forward God will give you a happy, happy, life. It's fun to be saved."

Some say, *"We're rich and increased with goods and we have need of nothing."* And God comes back and says, *"You do not know that you're poor, miserable, blind, and naked, and have need of all things."*

One of these days, one of these days we're going to wake up to the fact that this body, this flesh, this world is nothing, and that the only thing which matters is my relationship with the living God. It's not how fair is my body but how fair is my soul.

It's not how much I'm worth; it's who is worth the most to me, Christ the Lord, or my physical, material blessings? Suppose I gain the whole world with its glory and its fame and its honor and its comforts and lose my soul and never know the living God?

When the doctor makes his last trip to my room and tells my wife he's going and he's going fast and then the undertaker comes and he puts me on that rolling table and puts a sheet over my face and my wife leaves the room weeping.

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And my children, they take me down to the hearse and drive me over to the funeral parlor and there they take the blood out of my body and replace it with embalming fluid and put me in a fancy satin encased coffin.

And then the preacher stands up and says a few words and my friends pay their last respects and then they let my body down in a hole and the family all leaves. And the men down at the cemetery start shoveling in the dirt and they put a headstone there and it's all over, and then, and then, "*What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?*"

Let me tell you; our Lord said this, "*No man can serve two masters. No man can serve God and mammon. He will either love the one and hate the other.*" And you cannot love God and love this world. You cannot serve the living God who is Spirit: "*They that worship God worship Him in spirit and in truth.*"

What shall it profit a man if he gains all? All that you're living for and all that you're trying to get and all that you are panting after; if he gains every bit of that and gets it in his hand, in his control, all of the comforts that this world can give, all of the glory this world can give, all of the pleasure this world can give, all of the fame this world can give; if he gains it all and loses his soul? I cannot think of anything more horrible.

Solomon said he tried it all and he found out, "*Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.*"

**First of all:** A man can lose his soul.

There are several ways that a man can lose his soul. There's only one way that a man can be saved and that's through the blood of Christ. There's only one way that a man can be redeemed and that's by Christ.

But there are several ways a man can lose his soul. First of all, a man can lose his soul by living in open sin and in open rebellion against God almighty. You can lose your soul that way.

**Ephesians 5:5** says this, "*We know that no whoremonger or unclean person or covetous man who is an isolator has any inheritance in the kingdom of God; because of these things cometh the wrath of God on the children of disobedience.*"

That's right! A man can lose his soul by living in open rebellion against God almighty, living in open sin. "*The wages of sin is death. The soul that sinneth, it shall surely die.*" If you want to lose your soul just go on living in open rebellion against God almighty.

But, a man can lose his soul also by simply ignoring the Gospel of Christ. He can live what the world calls, (now notice) what the world calls, "A moral life." God doesn't call it a moral life. The only moral life that's ever been lived in this world was lived by God in the flesh.

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He said, *“There’s none good, no not one. There are none that understandeth. There are none that seeketh after God. God looked down from heaven to see if any did do good and He found they’re all become unprofitable, they’re all gone out of the way.”*

*“All we like sheep have gone astray. We’ve turned everyone to his own way. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” If anyone says he hasn’t sinned he is a liar and the truth is not in him and he doesn’t know God. He’s made God a liar.”*

But suppose a man lives what we call a moral life, a good life compared with other men and ignores the Gospel of Christ; he’ll lose his soul that way. How often do they come back and they say; “I can worship God in the fields; I don’t need to go to church. I don’t need to hear you preach. I can worship God in the field. I can walk in the woods and worship God. I don’t need a preacher, I don’t need a Bible.”

Now listen to me, listen carefully; listen real good; *“It is true the heavens declare the glory of God (no question about it) and the firmament showeth His handiwork.” “And God is seen in the things that are made;”* that’s what the book of **Romans** says.

But, you’ll never know anything about God’s righteousness and God’s justice and God’s grace and God’s mercy and God’s salvation and the Gospel and true forgiveness through Jesus Christ unless you hear the Word of God, *“Because God hath chosen by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”* Paul said, *“The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation.”*

And in **Romans 10:17** He wrote; *“Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”* And John said; *“These things are written that you might believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.”*

And before our Lord went back to glory He said to His disciples; *“You go preach the Gospel to every creature.”* The stars won’t preach the Gospel to you. Oh they will twinkle and shine and tell you that there’s a powerful God and a “Supreme Being.”

But they’ll never tell you you’re a sinner. They’ll never tell you they’re lost. They’ll never tell you need a Saviour. They’ll never tell you Christ died for sinners. They’ll never tell you that He welcomes all who are wounded and are heavy laden and weary and who come to Him.

And that He satisfied the law and He satisfied justice. And He died that you may live. The stars will never tell you that. You can walk through the woods till you are an old gray-haired man with a long beard and walking on a cane and the woods will never tell you that Christ died for sinners.

You’ve got to hear that from the Word of God: *“How shall they call on Him in whom they’ve not believed and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”*

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David said, *“I was glad when they said to me let’s go to the house of the Lord.”* I know that a lot of you go to the house of God and all you hear is a bunch of foot-stomping music. There’s not much there is there?

I know a lot of you go to the house of God and all you hear is a lot of announcements or begging for money. I know a lot of you go to the house of God and all you hear is quarreling and bickering, back-biting, gossiping, and fault-finding, I know that.

Somewhere find you somebody preaching the Gospel and be able to say with David: *“How glad I was when they said: Let’s go to the house of the Lord.”* For there I heard my God speak. And there His Word was a convicting sword and there His Word was a comforting balm and there His Word was a blessed Gospel that revealed Christ to my heart.

You can lose your soul by ignoring the Gospel. Now keep on, keep on walking your way in your so-called morality and your so-called righteousness, *“Going about to establish your own righteousness.”*

And some day while you gain the approval of the world and gain the reputation of being a fine man and gain the recognition of your friends and gain the acclaim of your comrade; but you’ve lost your soul.

Then a man can lose his soul by adopting a false religion; that’s right, and following a false prophet. Our Lord warned us; He said, *“Beware of false prophets. They’ll come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”*

Our Lord told us; He said, *“If the blind lead the blind they’ll both fall into the ditch.”* Our Lord warned us; He said, *“These people compass sea and land to make proselytes for their religion. And after they’ve made them they are two-fold more the child of hell than those who made them.”*

Multitudes of people are drugging their souls with custom and tradition. They are drugging their souls for ceremonies. They go on Sunday morning and go through a little ceremony and it drugs their soul. It gives them some comfort and some ease till next Sunday when they run down there and go through that little ceremony again.

They are drugging their souls with religious practices and religious beliefs that do not come from the Word of God. It’s no more than the man taking some kind of drug to escape the problems of this world.

It’s no more than a young person taking drugs to get out of the reality of it all. You people are trying to do the same thing. You’re going down there while some preacher cries; *“Peace, peace, peace, and there is no peace.”*

And you go through that little ceremony and that little tradition and that little custom and call it, *“Knowing God”* and call it, *“Worshipping God.”* You can lose your soul that way.

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And then a man can lose his soul by making a false profession of faith while not being brought into a living union with Christ. Now listen, the name of Christ on your lips will mean nothing if He doesn't live in your heart.

You can stand and sing the empty words, "Oh How I Love Jesus," but if you do not love Christ in your heart, He said, "*Let him be accursed.*" He said, "*You call me Lord with your lips.*" That's what He said to the religious people of His day.

I'm not preaching any new message; I'm preaching what Christ preached when He was here, talking to this religious crowd. He said, "*You call me Lord with your lips but your hearts are far from me.*" "You come and sit as my people and you sing as my people but your hearts; they are somewhere else. You love this world."

And my friend; I'll tell you this, being baptized in water will profit you nothing unless you're baptized into Christ. And I'm telling you this, being a member of the church body will mean nothing to you if you're not a member of the body of Christ.

He said, "I am the Head and you are the body. I am the Vine and you are the branches. The life comes from Me and if you're severed from Me you are fit for nothing but those withered, seared, dried branches that are cast into the fire."

Having a body that is healthy and a pocketbook that is wealthy is not an evidence that you have riches toward God. "I know I'm saved; God healed me." It might not have been God who healed you. "*Try the spirits whether they be of God.*"

Paul wrote to that early church and he said, "*I travail till Christ be formed in you, Christ in you; that's the hope of glory.*"

When Christ is formed in the heart by the Holy Spirit and an individual is vitally united to Christ by faith, when we behold His glory, when we behold His inheritance, when we behold His presence, the things of this world, they lose their importance, they lose their attraction, and they lose their significance.

I'm not saying that the people of God ought not to love comfort and ought not love good food and ought not love the nice things of this world; I'm not saying that at all.

I'm simply saying my friend, that which is first in your life is your Lord, that which is most important in your life is your God, that which means the most to you, that which takes your time and your effort and your strength and your motivation, that for which you live; that's your God. And it better be Christ; "*For you can gain this whole world and lose your soul.*"

And the terrible thing is as we keep on in this rut, as we keep on in this rut of materialism and flesh; we grow dull. And we grow hardened and we grow blinded and we come to the place where we cannot even recognize the truth when we hear it.

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We've justified ourselves so long and we've appeased ourselves so long and we've hardened our hearts so long against God's warning that we don't hear anymore.

It's like a man living by a railroad track and the first night when that old 2:30 am special comes through and wakes him up; he lies there awake for a while and the second night it wakes him up and the third night.

But on the 30<sup>th</sup> night he sleeps like a baby; the trains still there, the noise is still there, the warnings still there, but he's use to it. And he's justified himself so long.

My friend; the values of these material things are going to change greatly someday. I picked up something the other day that hit me with such an impact that I want you to listen to it. The hour is coming when money, banknotes, and bonds, will be worth no more than wastepaper blowing down the street.

The day cometh when diamonds and gold will be worth nothing but dust in the street. The day cometh when houses and lands will be as worthless as a child's worn out, discarded toy. The day cometh when the fame and honor and glory of this world will be faded and withered as last month's flowers.

The day cometh when the strength and the wisdom of this body will be as obsolete as a witchdoctor's medicine. The day cometh when men will trade all they have ever had, all they ever earned, all they ever knew, all they ever accomplished, for just one sermon, for just one hour of prayer, for just one grain of faith.

Then, then, we'll find out the value of our souls as opposed to all that this world can give. *"What shall it profit if I gain the whole world,"* your friendship, your fame, your glory, your recognition, your praise, my comfort, and then be damned by God almighty.

It's a terrible thing isn't it? I can picture in my own mind what it's going to be like in that day when people hear Him say and I trust I shall not; *"Depart from me I never knew you, I never knew you, depart from me, I never knew you."*

Now listen; I want to close. I've got 4 ½ minutes and I want to deal with this subject right here: A man's soul can be saved, it can be saved. I can't do it. I can't save anybody. And you can't do it. You can't save anybody. The disciple said, *"Well Lord, who then can be saved?"* He said, *"With men it is impossible but with God all things are possible."*

The church can't save your soul. The law can't do it but God can. *"Who then can be saved? With men it's impossible. But with God all things are possible."*

I can lose my soul but only God can save it. I can bring down upon myself the wrath of God but only Christ can bring to me the love of God. I can bring down upon myself the judgment of God



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but only through Christ and His grace and His power can I hear God say, *“Enter thou blessed into the kingdom prepared for thee before the world was.”*

God’s mercy to sinners is in Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ paid the price for our redemption and the Holy Spirit of God performs that work of regeneration that makes us new creatures. Only God can do it.

Listen to the book of **Ezekiel 36:25**; God says, *“Then will I sprinkle clean water on you and you shall be clean from all your filthiness and all your idols. I will cleanse you. A new heart I’ll give you.”* That’s what needs to take place.

Now my friend, no one can perform this work but God. No one can perform this. This is called the *“new birth.”* This is called *“regeneration.”* And anything, anything, can be given up if we have something better in its place. Now think about that!

Do you know why people join the church and they stay in church a little while and profess to be saved and then they’re gone in a little while? Well, they give up the world and they give up their pleasures, they give up their habits, they give up their sins, they give up their friends, and they don’t have anything to take its place.

They don’t have anything to take their place; they’re empty. They’re like the man that Christ talked about when the unclean spirit went out and he came back and he found the house empty. He found it empty.

So, he went out and got seven other demons more wicked than himself and they all moved in and the last day of the man was seven times worse than the first day. This is what happens.

Preachers stand up and preach a sermon about heaven, hell, damnation, salvation, Christ and the blood, and say, *“Do you want to go to heaven? Come down the aisle, shake my hand, and join the church.”*

People will do that. And they try for a while and they make an effort for a while but after while it gets to be a burden. After a while it gets to be tiresome. After a while they miss their friends and they miss the habits and they miss their pleasures and they miss their comfort and they miss the things that they lived for so many years and then they quit and go back to those things.

What happened? They didn’t have anything to take its place. Now Christ said, (here’s real conversion) *“If a strong man’s arm keeps his palace, (that is Satan), but when a stronger than he (that is Christ) comes upon him and drives him out, he divides his spoils and drives him out.”* That is when Christ takes up His abode and Christ lives within us.

And then when these things come back and look us in the face, we say, *“We don’t need you we have Christ. We don’t need you; we’ve got something better. We don’t need you; we’ve got Him, Him. We’ve seen His beauty. Who needs the world’s beauty? We’ve seen His glory. Who needs the world’s glory? We have His inheritance. Who needs these paltry, pitiful, heir*

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castles and sandcastles that the pride of life will soon take away? We don't need it. We've got somebody in its place." Do you see what I am saying?

And that's what He says here, *"I'll take away all your idols and your filthiness and give you a new heart. And I'll put my Spirit within you and I'll take that old stony heart out and give you a heart of flesh and you'll walk in my statutes and in my judgments."*

That's what happens when God dwells in us and when Christ dwells in a man. When these things are laid aside He has someone else. He has the peace and joy and happiness of Christ and he doesn't need to look anywhere else for it.

*"What should it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?"*