

Title: All or Nothing
Text: Mark 8: 35-37
Date: March 29, 2012
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Everyone here will do ourselves a favor to listen very intently to the scripture we are about to read. The one speaking is God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a very simple word but a very serious word. It applies to everyone here from the youngest to the oldest. Listen and follow along with me in your bibles. We will read Mark 8 verses 35-37.

Mark 8: 35: 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. 36: For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? 37: Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

There are many scriptures that teach us that living for this world, for money, for position, power, prestige and so on is detrimental to a man's spiritual well-being.

1 Timothy 6: 10: For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Luke 18: 25: For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

Some use scriptures such as this to excuse their laziness from the hard work required to obtain the credentials needed to get a good job and work. The love of laziness, the love of depending upon someone else to provide is as much evil as the love of money. The evil is setting your eyes and heart upon that which is not salvation—that is evil.

Proverbs 23: 5: Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for *riches* certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.

Proposition: Christ Jesus is salvation. Setting your heart on Christ and being committed to his gospel means suffering as our Savior did. But this is joy to the believer by his grace.

Let's backup a few verses and get the context in which the Lord gave this serious warning. Our Lord was travelling along with his disciples.

Mark 8: 31: And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things,

He called himself "the Son of man" because the Son of God joined his divine nature with a fleshly nature and became the Son of man—the Son of God never ceased being the God the Son but he also became the Son of man, the son of Judah, the Son of Jesse, the Son of David—a real man—in order to suffer and die in the place of his people who were flesh and blood.

The Son of Man MUST SUFFER many things. If each of his elect children would be justified and made the righteousness of God in him, then he MUST SUFFER in their place, as substitute, in order to make—propitiation, satisfaction, atonement—to God for them.

When a man saves his own life rather than lose it, it means he is not willing to suffer for Christ and his gospel. We who believe must suffer many things in this world like as our Master. If we would be saved by him alone, if we would declare and promote the gospel of Christ waiting on the Holy Spirit of God to call out

those Christ has redeemed and made satisfaction for, then we must be made willing by God to suffer many things—for we will.

Mark 8: 31: And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed,...

The Lord Jesus said the highest, holiest, most respected leaders—not in heathen religion, but those who claimed to worship the true and living God, claimed to await the coming of Christ—they would reject him and kill him. This is God speaking—God who is love. God who puts his Spirit into the heart he makes new. It was those in the chief seats in religion who rejected the Prince of Life. Do you hear what Christ is saying?

Believers will be rejected by folks who claim to worship the true and living God, Christ Jesus? Many get mad when the preacher declares the gospel to them. They go somewhere else until they get mad there then they leave that place for somewhere else. That is not suffering for the gospel's sake. Having a new heart is being united in heart with Christ and his people under the Lordship of Christ so that you hear and believe Christ and give yourself to promote his gospel.

Mark 8: 31:...and after three days rise again.

By his life—his faithfulness, trusting God the Father, fearing him with holy reverence, obeying in all suffering unto death—this one who is the holy righteous faithful one is the holiness and righteousness of his people.

By his death—he justified his people—the law has no more to say to any for whom Christ died, they shall be called to believe on Christ their Righteousness.

2 Corinthians 5: 21: For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Isaiah 53: 5: But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

By his resurrection—all who were in him when he died by divine election were raised in him. Each sinner for whom he died shall be called by his grace, by his gospel to rest in the good news that we are seated at the right hand of God in Christ Jesus

1 Peter 3: 18: For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

Colossians 3: 3: For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

The Lord was teaching his disciples what he sends his pastors to teach his disciples week in and week out—his gospel which he would send them to preach. But notice what happened.

Mark 8: 32: And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

Peter took the Master aside and told him not to talk about: Christ suffering—or about his children having to suffer—that won't be a message sinners will like, he said don't talk about being rejected by popular religion—no man will want to follow Christ if you talk about being rejected by religion; Peter rebuked him not to talk about Christ being made sin; don't talk about suffering the justice of God—men don't like to hear

that they are sinners, that they cannot make themselves acceptable to God. Don't to talk about death and burial and resurrection—these are things too heavy for sinners.

Men have told me, 'you are just being contentious lighten up.' Peter rebuked the Master for teaching these things. But listen to what the Lord said to Peter.

Mark 8: 33: But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

Satan was in his thoughts so Peter was thinking not the will of God, but the will of man; interested in the word that pleases the flesh rather than the word of Christ the Prophet; he was not savoring the things that be of God—eternal redemption, righteousness, holiness, divine satisfaction, eternal glory—but he was savoring the things that be of man—fleshly wisdom, fleshly comfort, fleshly ease, fleshly success. The Lord rebuked Peter, saying, "Get behind me, Satan."

Satan loves for you to be religious. He loves for you to have an interest in hearing about how you can maintain an appearance of religion so you can justify yourself for living the life you really prefer with the least amount of commitment to Christ and his gospel as possible.

One of our members attended a service elsewhere with a friend last week. He said the preacher's message was one advertisement after another—marketing their church. That is what most religion is about—competing with the church down the street—to get your business.

Most pulpits speak more of how to build churches through compromising the truth of the substitutionary successful work of Christ—how to govern sinners—rather than preaching the glory of God in the blood of Christ Jesus and waiting on Christ the Head to add to the church as it pleases him and to trust him on whose shoulder the government rests. They savor the things that be of men, not the things that be of God.

I had someone call me up to tell me that they did not think it fit to have their loved ones attend here because I spoke so much about blood. Without Christ's blood you have no gospel!

- In the garden—God slew an animal—because God's elect pair were depraved and unable to be accepted of God without blood—there is the offense of blood!
- God accepted Abel—because by faith he came with blood—rejected Cain, no blood, only self—there is the offense of blood!
- God passed over the firstborn in Egypt—when he saw the blood—slew Egyptians—there is the offense of blood.
- Every high priest and the people he represented were accepted when the mercy seat was sprinkled with the blood of a Lamb slain in their place and only those represented by the blood—there is the offense of blood.

Hebrews 9: 12: Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood [Christ Jesus the Son of God] entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*...22: And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission....13: 12: Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

The elect of God love the message of Christ's shed blood—Christ and him crucified—because the glory goes...

Revelation 1: 5:...Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,...

Take blood out of the message and you have no gospel, no life, no truth, no hope, no Spirit present, no salvation! All you are left with is a money-making, self-serving, business which takes the Lord's name in vain. Be very afraid of any place under the thumb of associations with million dollar budgets—it is rare to find one who speaks clearly about the successful finished work of Christ.

But it is the way of the natural heart to settle for a place that speaks generically of God's electing grace, unclearly about Christ's dying in the place of the elect and saving his people, ambiguously of the necessity of the Holy Spirit's work—the natural heart will gladly take that dirty water just so long the preacher is a good social worker, and the church offers plenty of religious activity. Those who crucified Christ were just what most men today are seeking in a preacher and in a church.

False prophets are more than willing for men to go the way of Simon Magus so long as they pay the purchase price—men will gladly give you titles and gifts which only the Holy Spirit gives his true children. Satan is glad to give you a teaching position, a title of deacon, and you can work church around your life and play a part whenever you have nothing else better just pay the price and the bribe.

How about stop giving another cent, stop doing another thing for the church just come hear the gospel consistently! And see what happens! Can you? The natural heart will gladly pretend to lay down his life so long as he can save his life—he will take religion any day of the week, just don't tell me to lose my life for Christ and for the gospel.

Brethren, you who believe, know that our flesh is subdued, our love increased, our faith increased—by continually hearing how Christ put away the sin of each and every individual sinner for whom he died, as he purposed, covenanted, and accomplished. When we hear of God's righteous servant who has not failed, he makes us righteous servants who shall not fail by his sustaining grace. When we are given a new heart by God we can no longer bear to hear men make Christ's blood as common, as universal, as useless, as worthless, as a bucket of house paint sitting on a shelf in a paint store.

Mark 8: 33...he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

But mark this, brethren, Peter had a new heart and was teachable. He did not pout and run off to join in with the Pharisees. No, he heard and submitted to the word of the Lord.

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,...

The Lord's word is to everyone who would believe on Christ, take his name and follow him. Here is the heart of the matter.

Mark 8: 34: Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself,...

Self and Christ cannot both reign as master.

No man can serve two masters.

What is self? It is being more concerned with—the business world, the material world, the social world, the political world OR the self-saving religious world—than with Christ and his gospel. A man cannot follow those first and follow Christ second—it cannot be done. The Lord said,

No man can serve two masters.

A man's doctrine may be straight as can be but where the love of his heart is—that is where his treasure is—that is the one he will give himself to. It is absolutely impossible to be a self-made man and follow Christ—can't be done.

Mark 8: 34: Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

The cross is a symbol of death. When the Lord called the apostle Paul to life and faith in Christ—he shows us what true repentance is—he willingly suffered the loss of: friends, family, his religious refuge, his prestige, his power, his most prized possessions—he left it all. And he said,

Philippians 3: 7: But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8: Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ,...

When Lot was brought out of Sodom this is the word from the messenger to him but his wife shows us what repentance is not.

Genesis 19: 17:...Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed....26: But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

She came out in body only—but not in heart. It is impossible to try to serve God with the body and not the heart.

Sinner's must be given a new heart by the Spirit of God through this gospel. He creates total, joyful, willing, commitment to Christ

Matthew 13: 44: Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. 45: Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

Christ is able to make a man leave all for him and his gospel. And Christ shall save you, you will have peace of heart. Christ is a refuge for the oppressed in all times of trouble. There is an inheritance reserved in heaven for us he has called.

Mark 8: 35: For whosoever will save his life shall lose it;--

Whosoever says, "My way has brought me prosperity in this life, I like it, I am not willing to part with it. I am not willing for Christ's terms. I am not willing to deny myself the things that I prefer, I am not willing to be crucified with Christ, to suffer loss for his sake, and his gospel." Then you lose all for nothing. You sold yourself for nought. 60-70-80 years of this world is a poor return on your investment in light of the eternity of hell and separation from God that you shall pay.

Mark 8: 35:...but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

One may be a pastor in a place that prohibits you from preaching the true Gospel or a pastor whom the Spirit has just now converted and you believe the Lord Jesus for the first time

It may be someone who has professed to know the Lord for many years and finally realize that this is the first day you have believed Christ—you will gladly give up all your filthy rags.

You may have to let go of worldly ambition for honors and prestige and take a lesser position—but all will but dung to you that you may have Christ.

Nothing brings more peace than being able to come clean with God: to be able to come out from that burden and bondage of trying to save your worthless, good for nothing life with all its fleshly pursuits and rest, safe and secure in Christ and to be happy to give up all for Christ and his gospel.

Mark 8: 36: For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? 37: Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? 38: 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.

The real cause a person will not submit to Christ and forsake all for him and his gospel is: **v38:...ASHAMED OF ME and OF MY WORDS.** If I know in my head particular redemption is the truth but I can stomach to hear universal atonement just so I don't have to take a stand for the truth, I am ashamed of Christ and his gospel? If I know divine election is true but I am content to hear man and his will exalted as long as I don't have to stand for the truth—I am ashamed of Christ and his gospel. It is an indication that my knowledge is only in the head but not in the heart.

Believers are not ashamed of Christ. His words are eternal life. His gospel *is*

“perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple.” (Ps 19:7)

“I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.” (Isa 45:19)

You won't have to suffer the sufferings Christ suffered if you conform to this adulterous and sinful generation. But Paul said, I want to be...

Philippians 3: 9: And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 10: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11: If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

But if you are ashamed of Christ and his gospel, listen to the sure word of your Judge and Jury.

Mark 8: 38:...of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

CONCLUSION: These are the two ways set before us by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mark 8: 35: 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.

Salvation and the way of faith is lifelong commitment to Christ, it is giving Christ and his gospel preeminence over all else—a heart that can do nothing less. IT IS BEING ALIVE by his Spirit. Rejected of adulterers and adulteresses—but accepted of Christ; rejected by religious harlots and prostitutes of this generation—but accepted of Christ; counted as sheep for the slaughter before this adulterous and sinful generation—but more than conquerors through Christ Jesus that loved us and gave himself for us. And our suffering is light in comparison of glory.

2 Corinthians 4: 17: For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

Matthew 25:34: Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world...

Amen!