

Coach House Church BEACONS

C O R R E C T P R I C E S

25TH MAY 2020

"How many of us would agree that you do what you do because you either want to avoid a loss or gain a benefit?"

Some of the very spiritual people are probably saying, "No, not me. My motivation is obedience to God. I do what I do because I obey God." But why do you obey God? You either do it out of fear, guilt, hope of reward or some other reason. In other words, you obey maybe to appease God, to appease your guilt, to gain a promised reward or even to achieve a sense of accomplishment in fulfilling your duty to God. You are still doing what you do to avoid a loss or gain a benefit.

Such motivation is not condemned in the Bible. In fact, we are encouraged many times by Jesus not only to avoid a loss but to gain the very best benefit. Jesus in Mark 8:36 asks, "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?" Jesus is challenging us to look out for what is most important, and work to gain that.

In Matthew 6:19-20, Jesus said,

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal."

Here again, Jesus is calling us not to settle for things that won't last forever. He appeals to our desire for the best!

Someone tells the story about a thief who broke into a department store at night. Instead of stealing the items off the shelves, this thief decided to switch the price tags on every item. He took the price tags off of big screen TVs and put them on

ceramic mugs. He replaced the price tags of leather jackets with those from the face towels, and so on. When morning came, mass confusion began within an hour of the store's opening. People were paying £2 for leather jackets and £2,000 for ceramic mugs.

We all think petrol price per gallon is expensive but let's consider the following"

Fuel = £4.52 gallon

Diet Coke = £5.48 gallon

My Favourite Red Wine = £96 gallon

Cough Medicine = £34.26 gallon

And this is the REAL KICKER ... Bottled Water = £4.62

So next time you're at the pump, be glad your car doesn't run on Wine, Cough Medicine or Water.

We are often not aware of the value of things; our judgment is greatly influenced by marketing efforts.

We live in a world where the value tags have been switched and determined by supply and demand. The problem is the world and Satan hide the supply and we search for them in the wrong places, and the world and Satan increase the demand with marketing schemes that feed our selfishness. Only God has the correct price list on everything, including life and what matters.

So if we are to gain what is best, we would do well to check out God's correct price list before we buy. Paul gives us a look into that price list, and he shows us some ways not to pay too much for too little. Let's look together at Philippians 3:7-11.

The FIRST way not to settle for less than the best is not to allow the good to be a liability to the best. We read this in verses 7 and 8. Paul is saying that what he considered gains are actually liabilities when compared with the greatness of knowing Christ.

We can look back at verses 5 and 6. Paul's participation as a Pharisee gave him the most respected religious position in his culture of his time. Paul's fire against the church gave him the reputation of defender of the Jewish faith. And Paul's obedience to the law made him perfect in the eyes of the Jewish people and in his own eyes.

Yet, when he came across the resurrected Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus, he was temporarily blinded, blinded so that he could regain true sight to realise that all the good things he possessed or achieved were obstacles to the best thing, a personal relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. (Take a read of Acts Chapter 9 if you want to hear that tale.)

What are the good things in our lives that keep us from the best thing, a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ? Is it our family? Some people never follow Jesus, and never get to know Him, because following Christ brings division in their family. I remember one girl who asked, "Are you saying that if I receive Christ into my life for a right relationship with God, I would go to Heaven, but if my family does not, they would not go to Heaven?"

I told her that's what the Bible says.

Then she replied, "I can't accept that." She allowed the good, her love of her family, to be a liability to the best, knowing Christ as the Son of God who died for her sins, and for the sins of the world, including her family's. You see If she had come a Christian. Instead of allowing her love for her parents to be a liability, she would have received Christ and would now be planning to bring her family to church to introduce them to Christ. She did not allow the good, her love of her family, to be a liability to the best, receiving Christ's love for her, and eventually her family.

Before any commercial airplane takes off, they always go through some safety announcements. One instruction the flight attendants always point out is that when the oxygen masks drop down in front of us, we need to put on our own oxygen mask before we try to help another person. If we neglect to put on our own oxygen mask first, we save a few seconds of time, but we lose consciousness and are no help to others. The good is helping another person, but the best is to put on one's own oxygen mask first.

What other good things in our lives keep us from trusting in and knowing Jesus Christ? Is it our career? Is it money? Is it our reputation? Listen to the words of Jesus again, "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet lose his soul?" The principle of "not allowing the good to be a liability to the best" works in our spiritual life as well as in every area of life.

The other way not to settle for less than the best is to follow the One Who has first-hand experience. We read this in verses 10 and 11.

Paul wanted to know Christ and the power of Christ's resurrection for his life. Paul didn't want to know what others had to say about life after death, because no other person had ever died, come back to life, received a new body and ascended to Heaven. Only Christ qualified. Records of people who were raised from the dead eventually died again.

Jesus Christ, on the other hand was not a dreamer in that His claim of victory over death was not an escape from reality. Christ dealt with the reality of fallen humanity. He ministered to the outcasts of society, to the sick and to the suffering. His response to His own suffering was intentional endurance for God's redemptive process. He submitted Himself to death on a cross to pay for our sins.

The Bible teaches that if we trust in Christ, we too will attain the resurrection, whether by death or by Christ's return. 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17 reads,

"For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died. We tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have died. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the believers who have died will rise from their graves. Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever"

A story is told of a retired general who got into trouble with the law. Before he stood trial, he went to the palace to implore the King to defend him. The King agreed to send his best lawyer to defend the general.

The general refused to settle for the lawyer. He declared to the King, "Your Majesty, when you were at war, I did not send one of my best soldiers into the battle. I went myself. These marks on my body are battle scars on Your Majesty's behalf." Seeing his scars, the King went in person to defend the general in the court of law.

In Mark 8:38, Jesus affirmed,

"If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

Putting this in the positive, Jesus is saying, "If you stand with Me now, I will stand with you later at the resurrection." To do otherwise would be settling for less.

So let's gain what's best, to know the true value of our relationship with God, to work at it, spend time with Him and learn from the one whom has first hand experience.

Our relationship with God is the most valuable thing in our lives. Let's treat it that way



JAMIE BAKER



Coach House Church

leadership@coachhousechurch.org // 0161 432 5604

the coach house church, 222 wellington road north, stockport sk4 2qn