

“A Poor Trade”
Mark 8:34-38
(Preached at Trinity, April 25, 2012)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. After Jesus taught of His work as our Redeemer Peter was stirred with indignation and pulled Jesus to the side to rebuke Him.
Jesus, however, knew the actual source of Peter's words and declared, "Get behind Me, Satan" – It was Satan, once again, seeking to overthrow the work of our Savior, and he was using one of our Lord's own disciples to do it!
 2. After His words to Peter Jesus turned His attention to the crowd declaring the demands of true discipleship. He speaks to them all equally
Mark 8:34 NAU - "And He summoned the crowd with His disciples"
 3. The Gospel is offered to all men, but the demands of the Gospel are unchanging.
Mark 8:34 NAU - "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me."
 4. Sadly, most people think the demand is too great. They are not willing to give themselves up to Christ. The result of such a decision is dreadful
Mark 8:35 NAU - "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it."
 5. Tonight I want us to look again at this passage. I title this message, "A Poor Trade." People think the sacrifice is too great. They think the world is too precious to lose and so they end up losing their soul. Jesus speaks some of His most stirring words:
Mark 8:36-37 NAU - "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? ³⁷ "For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"
- I. **Verse 35** – “For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it”
- A. In **Verse 34** our Lord described His demand for self-denial
"If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself" 1.
 1. The lost man will seek his own interests first
Paul describes them as **2 Timothy 3:4 NAS** - "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God"
 2. They are in a constant state of hostility with God
Romans 8:7 NAS - "the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God"
James 4:4 NAS - "You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."
 - B. Now we are given the ultimate paradox
 1. The lost man believes that maintaining full control over his own life will result in the greatest gain. God's Law makes too many demands. To follow God will mean giving up what he loves. His life is filled with many idols and they are precious to him.

2. The lost man clings hard to all that he has.
The Rich Young Ruler held tightly to his wealth
Listen to some of the other excuses:
Matthew 8:19-22 NAU - "Then a scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go." ²⁰ Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." ²¹ Another of the disciples said to Him, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." ²² But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and allow the dead to bury their own dead."
The indication is neither were willing to forsake all and follow Jesus
 3. Following Christ demands a willingness to forsake everything
Luke 14:33 KJV - "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."
 4. Here is the paradox. In reality, by seeking to keep his own life he will actually lose all
- C. On the other hand, the one who loses his life for the sake of Christ actually finds true life—Both now and in the life to come.
1. It is told that there is a tribe that captures monkeys by placing food inside of hollowed out tree trunks with a hole just large enough for the monkey to reach in. But after closing its hand around the food it cannot get free.
 - a. The Christian must come with hands open, grasping onto nothing.
 - b. The Christian life is one characterized by saying no to self and yes to God.
But saying no to self is not loss but gain
 2. Jesus describes it as abundant life
John 10:10 NAS - "The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have *it* abundantly."
 3. Have you lost your life? Who has control of your life?
Do you spend more time satisfying the desires of the flesh or do you spend more time nourishing your soul?
 4. Do you spend more time advancing His kingdom or your own life?
 - a. Is your home more important than the church building?
 - b. Are your own comforts and needs more important than the needs of the brethren?
 - c. Are you moved by the peril of the lost?
- D. Scripture is replete with examples of such people who were only concerned with their own desires – and God judged them
1. Achan became intoxicated with the thought of taking the riches of Jericho.
Joshua 7:20-21 NAS - "So Achan answered Joshua and said, "Truly, I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel, and this is what I did: ²¹ when I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then I coveted them and took them; and behold, they are concealed in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath it."

2. Ahab and Jezebel who lusted after Naboth's vineyard - had him killed
1 Kings 21:19 NAS - "And you shall speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD, 'Have you murdered, and also taken possession?'" And you shall speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD, "In the place where the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth the dogs shall lick up your blood, even yours."'"
 3. Haughty Haman who desired the praise of men sought to destroy Mordicai and the Jews
Esther 5:11-14 NAS - "Then Haman recounted to them the glory of his riches, and the number of his sons, and every *instance* where the king had magnified him, and how he had promoted him above the princes and servants of the king. ¹² Haman also said, "Even Esther the queen let no one but me come with the king to the banquet which she had prepared; and tomorrow also I am invited by her with the king. ¹³ "Yet all of this does not satisfy me every time I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate." ¹⁴ Then Zeresh his wife and all his friends said to him, "Have a gallows fifty cubits high made and in the morning ask the king to have Mordecai hanged on it, then go joyfully with the king to the banquet." And the advice pleased Haman, so he had the gallows made."
Esther 7:10-1 NAS - "So they hanged Haman on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai, and the king's anger subsided."
 4. Judas Iscariot who loved money more than he loved Christ
Matthew 26:14-16 NAS - "Then one of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests, ¹⁵ and said, "What are you willing to give me to deliver Him up to you?" And they weighed out to him thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶ And from then on he *began* looking for a good opportunity to betray Him."
Matthew 27:5 NAS - "And he threw the pieces of silver into the sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself."
 5. What is the primary difference between the sheep and goats in Matt. 25?
- D. Scripture also gives us many glorious examples of those who through the grace of God denied themselves for the sake of others to the glory of our Lord
1. Epaphroditus
Philippians 2:25 NAS - "But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need;"
Philippians 2:30 NAS - "because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me."
 2. Onesiphorus
2 Timothy 1:16 NAS - "The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chains;"
- E. Are you willing to lose your life for the cause of Christ?

- II. **Verse 36** – Jesus describes the foolishness of forsaking Christ in order to satisfy self
- A. It would be foolish to deny Christ even if you could gain the whole world
1. Ponder gaining the whole world – owning everything. All of the earth’s gold piled up for you to place in storehouses. All of the jewels, all of the money, all placed into your account. Jesus said you are a fool to trade your soul for this.
 2. Sadly, millions are settling for far less. They labor to acquire this world’s goods and pleasures and then they die only to leave them to others. All of this world’s wealth simply passes from one fool to another.
People who are willing to sell their soul for the wealth they cannot keep.
Jim Elliot - "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."
 3. We need to remember that our Lord was tempted by Satan to commit this very sin.
Matthew 4:8-10 NAS - "Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; ⁹ and he said to Him, "All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me." ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Begone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'"
 4. The deception is that all of this worlds goods will be lost -- everything will be destroyed
2 Peter 3:10-11 NAS - " But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. ¹¹ Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness"
- B. A man’s soul is everlasting – what on earth can equal that
Rather than spending a lifetime hopelessly running after decaying riches we should be seeking those things which are eternal.
2 Peter 3:11 – “Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness”
Matthew 6:31-33 NAS - "Do not be anxious then, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we clothe ourselves?' ³² "For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you."
- C. The day of judgment will overtake many like a thief and they will be wholly unprepared
Matthew 16:27 NAS - "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will then recompense every man according to his deeds."
 1. No man shall escape the judgment seat of Christ
 2. It should be noted that we are not saved by our works, but our works identify us
 3. The only thing that will justify us on that day will be that we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ

Conclusion:

1. In other words, Jesus was telling them, it's time to decide which kingdom you are committed to. Entering the Kingdom of God demands dying to every idol of this world.
2. We live in an age of a perverted Gospel. A day of easy-believism. Come as you are, live as you please. Add Jesus as the cherry on top of your already perfect life.
3. Jesus says coming is hard. It demands denying yourself and being willing to die. But the reward is infinite.