

Savoring The Things of God Over The Things of
Men
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Bible Text: Mark 8:33
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If you will this morning, turn with me in your Bibles to our text which is found in Mark 8:33.

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.

Let us pray.

Dear heavenly Father, I thank thee, Lord, that thou hast brought us here to this place. I thank thee, Lord, for thy faithfulness. I thank thee, Lord, for thy grace and thy mercy that attends thy children each day of their lives. I pray now, Lord, in this hour that you would call us away from the world, call us away from our carnal thoughts and bring us to thy feet to be instructed of thee. Lord, if it pleases thee, may you come with power, may you come and anoint this message and give me the words to say that would glorify thy holy name and, Lord, may you be honored and praised and thy name lifted up above all other names for truly, O Lord, thou art worthy. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Our text this morning, Mark 8:33, Jesus says something here that has great division in it. He says something that, I don't know, maybe you've read this many times and maybe you've read over it, but the Lord brings a distinction and at the end when he rebuked Peter for what Peter had said to him, he said these words, "Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou," Satan, "savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men." Savourest means to delight in; to take pleasure in.

So the Lord tells us something in this passage, that there are things of God and there are things of men. The wicked one today would have you to follow him in the things of men. What are the things of men? Well, you name it: man's religion; man's fame; man's intellect; man's ways; man's traditions. Whatever they are, the Lord tells us that Satan delights in them. Have you ever stopped to think about the magnitude of this statement, that these things that we hurry about every day in our life to live upon, to get around in this life, to achieve in this life the things of men, how man has taught us how in this society we must live this way, we must have this amount of fame or this amount of

fortune to get to this place, and the Lord calls it, he doesn't mix anything here and that's what I hope the Holy Spirit leads us this morning to the word of God where it is always plain and clear. There is no mixture in the Gospel between the things of man and the things of God. The Lord has no tolerance for them. In fact, the things of men here are associated with one of the greatest enemies of Christ, Satan.

So I leave it to the Holy Spirit this morning who's far more searching and certainly knows how to search the depths of our soul, to define to us today what things of men that we rely on every day or that we got up this morning thinking about, or the things that as we come to this place, we can't get our mind off of: the things that are going to fill our day; the jobs that we have; the livelihood we seek; the things, the fun things that we think we have to do. In all of these things, the Lord puts two categories: the things that be of God and the things that be of men, and he tells Peter something and we're going to look at this passage today to see there is great instruction in this passage. There always has been. The Lord has used this passage to humble me many times in my life to show me the depth of dependency upon his grace, dependency upon the Lord to do what he says he will do. The faithful one who has called us to a holy life, he will do it. The one who said, "I perform all things for you," he will do it. When we get askew, when we get lost, our eyes drift off the Savior, the one who has done all things, the one who performs all things, and they come back to self.

In the word of God, we are defined for us three enemies. The Lord mentions Satan here and he says that Satan savors not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. Paul in Romans 8:6 and 7 spoke about the flesh and the carnal mind when he said, "For to be carnally minded is death. If all we have is a mind upon this life and the things that be of men, we are dead. "To be carnally minded is death but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Two things defined in the things of God: life and peace. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." The carnal mind will always be the carnal mind. It will never be changed into a mind to love the Lord. That is the mind of Christ that he gives each one of his children.

So all throughout the word, we have these dividing lines. The Lord was always specific in dividing. There is a right way and there is a wrong way. There is my way and then everything outside of Christ's way is man's way and maybe that offends you this morning, that man is put in such a negative light, but you'll see that throughout the Scriptures, "There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that seeketh after me." When Adam fell, we all fell and it plunged the entire human race into death and we will never seek the Lord. We will never seek him, we will never seek anything good that is in the Lord and now we see why this enemy is such a danger to us, because we do have a carnal mind, we do have a fallen nature in us that Satan loves to speak to, loves to get that flesh going.

But there's another enemy and that's the world, which James said in James 4:4, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses," strong words again. What does that word mean? You have left the one you love to cleave to another. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" In these passages that we've heard, there are three enemies, all of them working in perfect consortium, trying to take the soul

of the child of God. "Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." Now we're going to try to justify that, the things we do, and we're going to try to justify in our minds because our carnal mind is at enmity with the Lord and then we've got Satan coming in and telling us, "This is a better way," and we're going to see that in Peter here in a minute. How did we get to this where the Lord uses the strongest language that he will ever use in the word of God to a child of God, and that should tell you something. It should tell you the power of the enemies that are attending and trying to get to the child of God each day and the Lord's hatred for them. The power that he spoke to Peter and to rebuke the devil to get away from Peter. To get away. You don't savor the things that be of God, you savor the things that be of men.

It's interesting as we look at this a minute, and I think all of us by now know the events leading up to this but we'll look at them here in a minute. Peter is coming off a great high where the Lord had spoken to him and revealed to him who he was and then immediately this temptation comes. Does that remind you of someone? When the Lord Jesus Christ was baptized and the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him and the Father said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased," immediately, immediately after that the Holy Spirit drove Christ into the wilderness to be tempted. It's a warning. It's a sober calling to the child of God that even in times of prosperity, the wicked one is lurking. The world is lurking. The flesh is lurking. And even at that time when the Lord was endued with that power of the Holy Spirit and then he went into the wilderness now fully equipped to last 40 days and to be in prayer with his Father, and then when the temptation came, to be so empowered because the Lord was tempted but he was without sin. You're going to see what happens to Peter who was tempted who has a sin nature; who has a fallen nature; who has a carnal mind; who has a love for self.

So we won't hesitate anymore, we'll back up and we'll start in verse 27 this morning in Mark 8, and this is right after the Lord had fed the 4,000, he had healed a blind man, and in 27, "And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples." Jesus used questions many times, you'll see that more in this passage a little bit later, but they were searching questions, questions that when the Holy Spirit takes hold of them in our soul, they cause our minds to start to think and to take inventory otherwise we don't. We never are stopped in our tracks to say, "Does this please the Lord? Is this pleasing to the Lord?" Until the Holy Spirit comes and asks us questions, "Is this pleasing to the Lord?"

So he asked them, "he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men," do you see the emphasis there? "Whom do men say that I am?" He wanted to know what was the religious world saying about him. He just performed miracles, he did healings, he did all of these things, what is it that man, and that question is just as relevant today as it was then. We have many religions, we have many churches open today who are preaching a different Christ. Christ would ask that same question, "Whom do men today say that I am?" And some today will say that he's a co-pilot; and some today will say he's just a friend; and some today will say he can be your buddy if you let him; and some today will tell you that you stand in the middle and you have a choice to whether this God will save you or not. But is that the Lord of the Scriptures? The Lord wanted to know. It's not that

he didn't know, but he wanted to try the disciples. "Whom do men say that I am?" He wanted to show them the difference between who man says that he is and who he says that he is. There's a big difference. I hope you don't think everything you hear from man about God is true because it's not. Man has many, as you'll see right here, they have many ideas of who Christ is.

"Whom do men say that I am? And they answered, John the Baptist." Well, they think you're John the Baptist. Many of the men out there think that you're John the Baptist. Wow, the one that was beheaded? The one that preached repentance? You're the same person as he is. Odd. But man makes Christ out to be whatever he wants him to be. That's what our carnal nature does. We want the Lord to be, we want him to save us but on our terms. There is no surrender unless the Holy Spirit comes and strips you of self. You're going to see that.

"And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias," the prophet, "and others, One of the prophets." You're just one of the prophets. None of them accurately depicting who Christ is. As I said, I hope you understand that when you go to man, you're going to get a lot of different ideas about who Jesus is. If you're going to men to form your idea of who Christ is, you're in trouble. This is what you're going to get: he's a prophet; he was a baptizer; he was a preacher. Really, is that all that he is? Is that all that he is to you today? Is he just a historical figure that we're reading about this morning, that he lived one time here upon earth?

"And he saith unto them," in 29, "But whom say ye that I am?" Remember he addressed this to the disciples. Peter is one that usually spoke up. Peter was usually the one who spoke for the disciples and it would be no different now, but in Peter's defense of speaking up, the Lord will tell us that it wasn't Peter who was speaking or who revealed it to him. But anyway,

"And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ." Thou art the anointed one. Thou art the Messiah. In Matthew's parallel passage, Matthew said that Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." It was revealed to him that he wasn't a prophet, he wasn't a baptizer, he wasn't a religious figure, he was the Christ, the Son of the living God. There was life in him, Peter said, "There's life in you. You're the Son of the living God. You are the anointed one."

And also in that passage in Matthew, Jesus told him, "Blessed are you, Simon, for my Father has revealed that to you." Peter didn't get there on his own, he didn't learn that from Jesus performing miracles. He didn't learn that from Jesus healing people or feeding 4,000 people or 5,000 earlier. He didn't learn it. Everyone else there saw the same things but they thought he was someone else. How can Peter get to the real truth of the matter that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and we're not left to sit there and say, "Well, maybe Peter had better training. Maybe Peter sat in the right school. Maybe Peter listened better." We're told by the Lord in Matthew 16 that the Father revealed it to him, and I put to you today, there's no other way than to be revealed by the Father the Son and the Holy Ghost the truth of the matter, that Jesus Christ is the anointed one, the Christ,

the Son of the living God. That's where we have a personal relationship. That's where union is found when the Lord reveals himself. It's not by man, it's not by any man that could tell it to you, you must be taught of him and Peter was no different.

That's what I said, this right here if we stopped right here, we could talk all day about how the Lord speaks to his children, how he reveals himself and how that communion is there, how that sweetness of communion, "You have this great revelation, Peter, the Lord has revealed himself to you." What a high that must have been. What a great magnificence of grace to be poured out on Peter to see different than the rest of the world. Do you know how easy it is to see with the rest of the world? Just turn on the news. Turn on anybody you listen to, turn on whatever you do, turn on music, turn on anything, they're going to persuade you. You have a fallen nature. Your fallen nature will always be persuaded to go with the masses, to go with what the masses' voice says. We have to hear the voice of the Shepherd. That's the distinguishing saving voice and Peter heard it and said, "Lord, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Then we have a verse that bothers some of the door-to-door people. Verse 30, "And he charged them that they should tell no man of him." Isn't that odd? I mean, we've heard that the Gospel is supposed to be given out to everybody and we're supposed to go door-to-door and make sure everybody knows Christ. The Lord didn't say that, did he? He didn't say that back up there in 26 either when he said, "he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town."

Well, why is Christ so secretive? Because relationship with him is between him and his own. He knew where his sheep were. He's sufficient to reveal himself to his sheep. I know there have been times in my life that, let's just put it this way, I've been led to speak to others and it didn't go well and I can tell you now as I stand before you, I wasn't led of the Holy Spirit to speak to them, I was led of my desire of them to know what I deemed to be the truth. They all must be taught of the Lord. We're all sitting and we're brought to the feet of the Lord and that's the thing, there's enough room there for all of his children to be taught and we're all taught the same truth but revealed in different measures. The same grace. The same faith. The same everything that resides in Christ, that he is everything, and that we are dependent upon him.

If you don't believe that, let's go on, verse 31, "And he began to teach them," his disciples. Remember, it's just him and his disciples. "And he began to teach them that the Son of man," which is what he referred to as himself, "must suffer many things." It's true, right? Isn't this the Gospel that Christ came to die; that he came to suffer at the hands of man and to lay down his life for his friends and lay down his life for his sheep, and all that the Father gave him, he would lose none of them; and he would perform a perfect salvation, that there would be no lack in that salvation the rest of their lives or anytime else? He was everything to them.

"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, and after three days rise again." So don't miss that. This isn't all doom and gloom. It isn't all that he said

that he had to die and he had to suffer because surely that would pull on the old heart-strings. Surely if we heard those words, it would cause us to desire Christ not to go through that because we love him. Or do we? Because truly it's Christ's love in the heart of the child of God that desires salvation with his Lord.

That last part there, "and after three days rise again," he once again told his disciples of resurrection life; the necessity of it. Death will not have its victory. "I may have to suffer, I may die, but I will conquer that enemy too," and that was an enemy in all of them. They're sitting there, they don't like death. None of us in here are raising our hands going, "Death is a friend of mine." We all fear it. All our lives we're subject to that, that's what Hebrews 2 tells us, and we're dependent upon the Lord to come and take that sting of death away and how does he do that? By the power of his resurrection. "I am the resurrection. I am life." And if we be in him, we too will taste of that resurrection. We have that spiritual resurrection now. He's the life. He's the life that lives in us. Christ, as we heard earlier in how he was tempted, he went first. He went first in all things for the children of God. He must suffer and he must die and he must lay down his life and yet in three days he'll have victory.

I'll just say this as a side note. This is one of those times he told them everything he was going to do and, remember, they still didn't know it when it happened. We're dependent, dependent upon the Lord every day to supply us with our daily supply of grace to believe, to live, to live upon Christ. We're dependent every day for the Lord to reveal himself and to carry us in this life to him, not to this world or to self, which that's where we're headed.

"And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him." Can you imagine that? Can you imagine that Peter walked over to Christ and he rebuked him and Matthew's account tells us that he said, "Be it far from thee, Lord." That's not a good plan. I don't like that plan that you're going to go and die. Not a good plan. But, Peter, don't you understand if he doesn't, you'll never live? You'll never have eternal life? You'll never have your sins forgiven? You'll never have? Without Christ coming to do what he said he would do and accomplishing what he said on the cross, "It is finished," that he has finished all that the Father gave him to do, are you telling the Lord you do not want him to do that for you? Well, no, Peter's not thinking that. All he's thinking is the Lord is his friend.

But else what is really at the depth of this love that Peter has? We don't like to face this so we think, "Well, Peter really loved him," and he did, but this love is a love for self. He desired his will over the Lord's will and that's what self does. I told you, that's the carnal mind. It's at enmity with the Lord and our carnal mind when we hear the word tell us that we're going to suffer as he suffered, we say, "No, absolutely not." And we're going to be persecuted as he was persecuted, "No, absolutely not." And we're going to be afflicted as he was afflicted, "No. No, Lord, be it far from here. I don't want this."

Yes, Peter would rebuke him openly right there in front of the others and that desire and love for self, self-preservation and the life that he had, don't miss that, he wanted the life that he had and he did not want that life to change. He did not want that life. He did not

believe life could get any better but, boy, did it. When the Lord died and rose again and sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in Peter, what a life Peter would have speaking the truth and the nearness of this union in Christ that he would get to take part in all the days of his life.

Then we come to our text. Now we've got the leading up verses that tell us what was going on and why Jesus said what he did. "But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter." He rebuked those words. I know some of us in here might be entertaining that thought, "Well, rebuke is a tough word. I mean, why was the Lord so hard? Because Peter, really, I mean, yes, a misguided love, it was a love for self but isn't Peter dependent upon the Lord?" Yeah, but as I said earlier, the power of these enemies that we underestimate all the time, we like to go to the end of the book where it says that the Lord reigns and the Lord has put all the enemies under his feet and we say, "Okay, they're all defeated. I don't have to worry about any of them. I don't have to worry about sin. I don't have to worry about the devil. They're all defeated." Well, do you know what? Ultimately that's a true statement but you're not in heaven. You're on earth where all of those enemies are fully active in your life today and sin is fully rampant in your being and that old nature is fully armed inside of you.

"Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men." Powerful words. When the Holy Spirit applies those words to Peter and later in his writings, go read them. If you want to hear what Peter had to say in 1 and 2 Peter, it's an exaltation of Christ, the Lord and Bishop of his soul. The Lord is life to him. The Lord is everything to him. That's the work of Christ in the soul. You see, Satan's got it backwards, as we would expect. He says, "Man, if you increase, then God will decrease," and he's right, when man increases in your mind and in your will, the Lord decreases. But John had it right in the Gospel under the power of the Holy Ghost when he wrote, "He must increase, that I must decrease."

He must increase. When he increases in our life, when he reveals himself. That's what happened up there in 29 when it was revealed to Peter, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." The Lord revealed himself to Peter and then just as quickly, Peter's at the other end suffering under sin and what sin does and what Satan's temptation is. Don't miss that. Don't miss that the Lord rebuked Satan. He said, "Get thee out of here. Get behind me. Get away from my disciples."

You say, "Well, what is it that Satan's going to come and tempt me with?" The love for yourself. The self-preservation where you see life every day from yourself. "This is how I view things and if I view them this way, then everybody else needs to see them the way I do." That's our fallenness. It's strong. It's so strong and it gets in between our relationships and it gets in between and we have lots of discord because of that. Self. Self-exaltation.

That's what I was hoping the Holy Spirit would show each and every one of us today, that Peter, I mean, what beautiful words to say and yet fall so far, but was he lost? Was he not God's child because he sinned so terribly? Because he rebuked Christ? Jesus said in Luke

22:31 and 32, "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee." If we are in that union in John 17 where the Lord has prayed for us, we are eternally and everlasting kept and we as far as we fall, cannot sin away the salvation that has been wrought in the perfection of Christ. We cannot.

"But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." That's it. We just saw it fail. Why? Because he's dependent upon the Lord for faith. We saw it when he couldn't walk on the water. The Lord must reach down and provide the power, provide the belief, provide the faith to believe. We don't have it. We're dependent.

"When thou art converted," he said, when you're turned, "strengthen thy brethren." Do you notice that? When you're turned. Do you know what that means? When you're turned away from self. We can never strengthen one another when all we can see is ourselves but when the Lord is the Lord of life and the Lord of the conversation and the Lord of all things in our life, then we can have strength in the unity of the brethren. The Lord must provide that. The Lord must provide that too and faithful is he that calleth to that union who will do it.

Now the rest of the passage because Jesus is not done instructing because this is a very needful point about the power of self. "And when he had called the people," notice that. We no longer have that tight-knit Jesus and the disciples. "When he called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them," corporate teaching, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." I think that's clear, none of us are signing up for crosses. Paul learned later in his life as the Lord revealed himself to him to glory in the cross of Christ, the finished work of Christ. The cross that we're told here that will be in our life every day is the cross that our Lord took up: the sufferings; the ridicule; the temptations; the trials.

"Whosoever will come after me." Isn't that the whole crux of the matter? Who will come? If it's left up to any one of us in here, nobody's coming. Nobody. What we've learned in the garden and what we've learned throughout history and what we've learned from this book is that man will never choose it when left to himself.

"Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." You see, the path, the way that is in Christ involves a cross, involves hardship. As I said, our old nature is rising up right now saying, "Oh, I've had some rough times, I don't want anymore. I really don't." I'm with you, I say the same thing. The Lord has designed each and every cross for every child of God and we're promised in the word that he'll never give us more than we can bear in him.

"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life," your desire is for self-preservation, "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." What is that telling us? That there's only life in Christ; that Christ is the giver of life. He is the way, the truth, and the life. For all of his who will come after him, there's only one way and that way is

not in our carnal understanding, it's not in our wherewithal and how to get from one place to the other or how we can follow the Lord, it's all of him and it must be all of him.

I started today with a question and I told you the Lord liked to ask questions, well, these are two doozies right here. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" I don't know about you, but that tells me that my soul is worth more than the whole world. This soul of mine will spend an eternity somewhere. It'll spend an eternity praising this Lord of these Scriptures and in eternal fellowship with him, or it will spend an eternal darkness, an eternal wrath, an eternal horrificness. I can't even describe it but I will say there will be no communion with the Lord. There will be no light. I pray to God it's that first one. I feel his presence to believe it, to know it, that he has made it true in my life and I trust him that he will perform it.

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Those are tough questions and may the Holy Spirit answer them in your soul now in this hour. What is it that's so important to you in this life that could cost you your soul?

"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation." It hasn't changed, has it? It's still an 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." You cannot serve two masters. When the Lord comes to your soul, you will only serve one. When the Lord appears to each and every one of his children, they will serve him. There are no ifs, no ands, no buts, no maybes, no, "Lord, I don't know if I can do it." Don't worry about it, you don't have to. He has done and will perform all things for the glory of himself. May he be pleased to bless these words to the souls of his people.

Dear heavenly Father, add thy power.