

Week 4 - Loss is Gain

Ludwig von Beethoven, the great German composer, had one great fear in life - deafness. He believed that a loss of hearing was a loss of music for the composer. As he matured into an older celebrated composer, his nightmare came true: he lost his hearing. Amazingly, he found that his biggest fear became his greatest ally; the deafness shut out all distracting noise, and he went on to write some of his greatest works.

What is your great fear right now? Many are fearing losing their health, or losing their wealth, or losing relationships. Did Jesus fear leaving the Father, taking on humanity, sacrificing his very life for our redemption, and serving His own creation? He was God, so perhaps not, although we see a very vulnerable picture of Jesus in Gethsemane. The biggest loss for Jesus was the greatest gain for Him and all of mankind. Paul goes on to write in Philippians 2:9-10,

"Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow...."

Are you paralyzed by the fear of losing something today? Remember the words of Jesus to His disciples and to us:

"Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life." (Luke 18:29-30)

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT:

- 1) What are your fears right now?
- 2) Pray giving your fears to God & trusting God-ordained losses will be gain.

WHEN I SURVEY

Isaac Watts

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God.
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See from his dead, his hands,
His feet, Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Where the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small,
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.



Isaac Watts wrote many of his popular hymns before the age of 22. He began preaching at the age of 24 and became a pastor in 1702 at the age of 27. Because of the busyness of life and ministry, he did not publish his hymns when he had written them over ten years earlier, but after the church recruited an assistant for Watts and the church grew to overflowing, he published his hymns in 1707. They were an immediate success and blessing to the Christian world. Charles Wesley said of this hymn that he would rather have written it than all of the hymns that he himself had written (6,000+).

-Robert Morgan, *Then Sings My Soul* book 2

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April Memory Verse Song & Devotions

Philippians 2:5-6

**"Let this mind be in you which
was also in Christ Jesus:**

Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men...."



Week 1 - Minds Renewed

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus....”

As we begin to follow Christ, we have the distinct, yet difficult, duty of dispensing with our old way of living and walking in a new way - Christ's way. Like breaking an old bad habit, we have to constantly restrain ourselves from the old ways, and like learning a new habit, we have to constantly set our minds to follow the way of Christ. Paul writes in Romans 12:1-2:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

John Piper comments on Romans 12:2, “We are perfectly useless as Christians if all we do is conform to the world around us.”

The story is told of Martin Luther answering his door one day and being asked, “Does Dr. Martin Luther live here?” to which Luther replied, “No, he died. Christ lives here now.” Could this be said of me? That when people meet me, they can know the mind of Christ by knowing me?

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT:

- 1) In what ways do I act like the world?
- 2) How would Jesus respond in these (#1)?
- 3) What would Jesus think about our worrying?

Week 2 - Humble Yourself

...made himself of no reputation...

In the context of these verses, Paul is encouraging the Philippians to be humble and caring toward one another. This is the mind of Jesus that he is pointing out. It is clear that Christ loved us better than He loved Himself, laid down His own life for us, and became a servant to mankind in an act of amazing grace. The Apostle Peter writes in 1 Peter 5:5-7:

...all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

Robert Morrison, the great missionary to China wrote, “The great fault, I think, in our mission is that **no one likes to be second.**” This directly contradicts the mind of Christ which “esteems others better than themselves (Phi. 2:3).

Oswald Sanders wrote of Morrison's synopsis:

The world has yet to see what could happen if everyone lost the desire to get the glory. Wouldn't it be a marvelous place if nobody cared that they got the credit?

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT:

- 1) Do you have the mind of Christ to consistently think of others before yourself? Think about how you do your grocery shopping during this pandemic.
- 2) Identify and write some ways you can consider others now in our days of crisis.

“The only hope of a decreasing self is an increasing Christ.”

F.B. Meyer, John the Baptist

Week 3 - God Made Man

The incarnation of Christ is not only an amazingly wonderful topic for thought at Christmas, but also at Easter, for He became a man as this passage points out to die for our redemption.

*In the pure soul, although it sing or pray,
The Christ is born anew from day to day'
The life that knoweth Him shall bide apart
And keep eternal Christmas in the heart.*

-Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Masterpieces of Religious Verse

That Christ should become a man should cause us to ask some really amazingly thought-probing questions:

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT:

- 1) How did this happen - that God became man? I don't know that we'll ever have an answer for that completely, but think about it using the Scriptures (Luke 1:34-35, Isa. 7:14).
- 2) What did Christ give up in order to become a man? (i.e. immediate relationship w/ the Father)
- 3) Why did he become a man, if He had to give up so much?
- 4) How should the sacrificial mind of Christ encourage me and challenge me in these days when others are so needy?

Think about this:

Jesus did what He had to do, to accomplish that which I could not do. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus toward others.