

What would you sale your soul for? (Heb. 12:15-17) Pleasant Plains 8-28-2-016AM NICK ANGEL

- ***Read Hebrews 12:15-17*** A couple of weeks back, we studied about the idea of running this race of life well and finishing it in faith from **Hebrews 12:1-3**. We noted that this teaching of the Hebrews writer fits perfectly into the grand scheme of the Letter to the Hebrews because it seems as if the letter was written to help encourage these Hebrews Christians to recognize the superiority of Jesus, the Gospel, and their faith as Christians. All of this was written in an effort to help them finish this race of life with their faith intact.
- Obviously, the reason for this writing was that it was possible for a disciple to fall out or become disqualified from the Christian race. It was possible for them to quit, never cross the finish line, and never receive the eternal crown of glory. Just a couple of paragraphs after the Hebrew writer pens his words about finishing the race, he makes mention of a particular person who lost something that was extremely valuable to him. The Hebrew writer mentions Esau and how he squandered away his birthright and inheritance. Back in **Genesis 25:27-34**, we read the account of where there was a transaction that took place between Esau and his younger brother Jacob. Esau comes in from the field and is famished, he is starving and he begs his brother Jacob for some of this stew that he had prepared. Jacob offers up a ridiculous trade. He would give Esau stew if Esau would give him his birthright as the firstborn. No one would do this right?? But Esau did.....he traded away his birthright for a bowl of soup. Jacob basically wrote out a check for Esau like you see on the screen....and Esau stupidly took it to the bank & cashed it. He valued his inheritance at only a bowl of lentil soup.
- We might shake our head and scoff at Esau for being so foolish, but are we so different at times? We must recognize that Satan is constantly presenting us different offers to give him our souls or inheritance as children of God and in exchange he will give us something of this world. In essence, Satan writes out this check with our name on it, and he says "ok, Nick...what is it that you want? What is it that I can give you in exchange for your soul and your promise of heaven?" If Satan is willing to do this with Jesus, then how much more would he do this with us? (**Matthew 4:1-11**) In fact, I'd like to give you 5 different examples of individuals in the New Testament who cashed foolish checks written by Satan. These are offers that Satan would love to wave in front of our faces and try to entice us to accept. Let's consider people who made these mistakes so that we might learn from them.

5 Things That Biblical Characters Sold Their Soul For

I. Judas Iscariot sold his soul for money. (Matthew 26:14-16)

- A. Perhaps, the greatest villain of the Bible...Judas was willing to betray the Son of God for a measly 30 pieces of silver. Judas was willing to sell his soul and sin directly against when he was offered money.
- B. But this wasn't the first time that Judas was willing to sin when money was involved. In fact, Judas had long struggled with the temptation to sin for money because it is recorded for us that he had a habit of smuggling money out of the money bag that was kept among Jesus and the Apostles. He even argued for the perfume that was used to wash Jesus should have been kept and sold to "feed the poor." But it is revealed that his true motivation was for the money to be kept for himself. (**John 12:6**)
- C. Surely, we must recognized that Satan loves to tempt us with money in exchange for our souls. Now, lets first recognize that money is neither good nor bad. It is a neutral thing that is used in this world, but as with many things, money can be used wrongly or it can become an idol in our lives.
- D. It is not money that is evil itself, but the love of money can quickly lead us to sin and the forfeiting of our souls. Paul says specifically mentions that the love of money has led many to wander away from the faith. (**I Timothy 6:10**) The temptation of selling our souls to Satan must be overcome. **Our souls are worth more than all the money in the world.**

II. The Rich Young Ruler sold his soul for comfort. (Mark 10:17-22)

- A. We are all familiar with the story of Jesus and the rich young ruler. This man comes to Jesus and asks what he must do in order to have eternal life. Jesus tells him what he must do, and the man shares that he has not murdered, not committed adultery, not stolen, not born false witness, he has not defrauded his neighbor, and he hasn't disrespected his parents. Yet, Jesus tells him that he ought to now go and sell all that he has and give it to the poor. This was just too much for the young man. He couldn't give up his possessions. They offered too much comfort for his life.
- B. Satan had presented this man with the offer of keeping this life of comfort in exchange for him not following the teachings of Jesus, and the rich man took that deal in order to not give up his way of life.

- C. Comfort just isn't something that is enjoyed by all people in this life. Many in this world don't have the comforts that we have in this country and because of that they aren't tempted by Satan with many of the things that he can offer us. We know what comfort feels like, and often we can't imagine not having the easy life that we often have. This is prime temptation territory for Satan to tempt us to continue in this comfort even though we might have to give up some of the easy life for Jesus.
- D. All throughout the New Testament, we see disciples of Jesus who had difficult lives because they had chosen to follow the Lord. How often did Satan tempt them with the easy way out? How often did he offer them the easy life of no persecution or tribulation because of their faith? All they had to do was not be willing to sacrifice for or confess Jesus. If they were willing to not sacrifice for or confess Jesus then they would have that easy life. **(Matthew 10:32,33)** Satan will tempt us in just the same way. He will offer us the easy life in exchange for not costing ourselves something in order to follow Jesus. **We must remember that our souls are worth more than the comforts of this life.**

III. Demas sold his soul for this world. (II Timothy 4:9,10)

- A. As Paul is finishing up his second letter to Timothy, he makes mention of a disciple who has abandoned him. Demas seems to have been a companion of Paul at some point, but he had been offered what must have been an irresistible offer by Satan because he deserted Paul in order to chase after the goods of this present world.
- B. This life offers us two different paths that we can take. **(Matthew 7:13-15)** One road is full of the goods of this world, while the other is full of blessings in Christ Jesus. Much like we just discussed, one requires sacrifice while the other is the easy road. Obviously, common sense tells us that the road of sacrifice isn't doable. However, we sometimes forget that we are not walking his road alone. Paul was leaning on Demas to walk on this road and I'm sure Demas was leaning on Paul, as well. Yet, Demas decided that this world was more for him and the supporting of his brother.
- C. Satan had provided Demas with an offer of ditching Paul in order to go after what this world had to offer. No longer did he have to struggle with Paul against temptation and tribulations. No longer did he have to suffer along with Paul. All he had to do was abandon the Apostle and then he could enjoy this world and its enjoyments.
- D. Which road are we going to walk? Are we going to walk the road that gives us everything this world has to offer, or are we going to fight through this life hand in hand with our fellow disciples? Satan offers us the chance to have this world and all we have to do is leave the lines of the faithful. However, we recognize that Jesus desires that we support one another in this life. **(I Thess. 5:11; Heb. 10:24;25)** **Our souls are worth more than all that this world has to offer.**

IV. Ananias and Sapphira sold their souls for men's praise. (Acts 5:1-11)

- A. Another well known story from the early days of the church centers around a couple who made a bad decision that was completely unnecessary. While the early saints were busy giving what they had in order to help our fellow needy brethren, Ananias and Sapphira decided to sell some of their land and give it to the Apostles. Unfortunately, they decided to sell it for a price and keep some of it back before they gave it to the Apostles. There was absolutely nothing wrong with that on the surface, but the unfortunate part was that they lied concerning the fact that what they gave the Apostles was not the full amount. There was nothing wrong with this! However, lying and saying that they had given it all was wrong.
- B. Why would they do such a thing? Why unnecessarily lie when they had the choice not to? All I can think of is that they desired to look better in the eyes of men. They had to want that praise that would come from them saying that their gift was greater than what they had actually sold the land for. Satan had presented them with the offer of lying about the land and in return they would look great in the eyes of their fellow man. Sadly, we know what they actually reaped because of their actions.
- C. How often does Satan present us with the offer of praises from man if we simply do good things to or for others to make ourselves look good in their eyes. I mean, who doesn't like to be praised by others when we do something good. However, the focus of the disciple of Jesus Christ is not on praise for ourselves, but we ought to do all things with the focus of God receiving all the glory. **(I Peter 4:10,11)** **We must remember that our souls are worth more than all the praise that we might receive from men.**

V. Diotrephes sold his soul for control. (III John 9,10)

- A. In John's short third letter, he addresses this man named Diotrephes who seems to have taken over control of the church receiving John's letters. This man gave great efforts to seriously undermine the writings of John and the other Apostles. John writes that this man loves to be first among the group. Basically that seems to me as if he wanted to be in control.
- B. In order for Diotrephes to be in control that would require that he deny what was written by the Apostles. He would have to discredit them as being from God and having the wisdom that is required to lead the early church. And wouldn't you know it....that is exactly what John says this man was busy doing.
- C. This was Satan's offer to Diotrephes. All he had to do in order to have control would be to discredit and disregard what was written by the inspired Apostles of God. With them out of the way, he would then have the ability to control every thing and have things done his way. Sadly, we recognize that this type of deal is offered up by Satan day by day.
- D. The temptation of having control over things around us is ever present because, again, who doesn't like to be in control? Because Satan recognizes that this is a great desire by many people, he is more than willing to offer this up in exchange for our souls. So what do we need to do in order to have control? We just need to reject those in authority. We might disrespect our parents. We might ignore our bosses. We might disregard the church leadership. We might even go so far as to bypass the teachings of Scripture so that we might have control over our lives and be able to do just as we would like to do.
- E. This temptation is often quite enticing, but it is imperative that we remember that we are not in true control. We are always under some sort of authority. We are always under the control of God and then within the church we ought to follow and obey the teachings of Jesus. He is the one that we do all things in the name of. **(Col. 3:17; Matthew 28:18)** Satan will often tempt us with the enticement of control over all things, but we must remember that in order to do so we must reject those who are in rightful authority. **We are worth far more than the control that we might seek to have over our lives.**

As we see, there are many offers that Satan will present us with that we can take in exchange for our souls. All we have to do is value what he can give us and be willing to do whatever he asks of us. However, the truth behind this whole set up is that we get to decide just exactly what our soul is worth. When we make that trade then we are saying that our soul is worth this or that. So our **ONE BIG THING for this morning is to remember that we set the true value for our souls.** We determine what we will give our souls for. We must remember that our souls are worth so much more than the fleeting things of this life. **In fact, our souls are worth the precious blood of Jesus Christ.** Jesus valued our souls to the extent that He came and died for us so that He might purchase our souls from death and give us eternal glory and life in eternity. May God help us to reject the offers of Satan to buy our souls to hell. May we remember the value of our souls and only be willing to give them to Jesus. When we remember this all important truth then it won't be said of us that we are foolish like Esau, but that we are wise and recognize that we possess a soul that is far more valuable than everything that this life and Satan have to offer.