

None Are Losers For Following Christ

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[0 : 00] Let's hear the word of the Lord once again. Mark 10, verse 17. Honor your father and mother.

Teacher, he declared, all these I have kept since I was a boy. Jesus looked at him and loved him. One thing you lack, he said. Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven.

Then come, follow me. At this the man's face fell. He went away sad because he had great wealth. Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, how hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God.

The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

The disciples were even more amazed and said to each other, who then can be saved? Jesus looked at them and said, with man, this is impossible, but not with God.

[1 : 26] All things are possible with God. Peter said to him, we have left everything to follow you. I tell you the truth, Jesus replied. No one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age, homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields, and with them persecutions.

And in the age to come, eternal life. But many who are first will be last and the last first. Dear family of God, aren't you glad that Peter and the apostles asked lots of questions of the Savior and that Mark includes them in his gospel because we are not all that different from them and have similar questions ourselves and it's good for us that we have the answers of Jesus to contemplate, to take on board, both for our reassurance and also for our challenge and recommitment to Christ and his gospel cause.

So as our Lord is teaching, over and over we find him saying that there is a cost to following him. He mentions sacrifices to be made, persecutions to be suffered, all to remain true to him as Lord and Savior.

And there may be times when you and I are wondering, is it worth it? And our Lord comes to assure us that whatever the cost, none are losers for having followed him.

Amen. So we'll consider this morning Peter's question and then Jesus' answer. But first a bit of background. It has been three weeks since we visited this text and thankfully we just had it read for us.

[3 : 30] But you remember, Peter's question here is going to come on the heels of Jesus' conversation with this rich young ruler. And this man was so earnest about gaining eternal life that he ran up to Jesus, fell on his face and pleaded with him, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

Well, Jesus reveals his heart. This man thinks he's good. He thinks he's kept the Ten Commandments. He thinks he can do whatever is needful to gain eternal life.

And Jesus sees this self-righteous attitude, sees the idol of wealth in his heart and out of love he exposes that to the man, saying, okay, as it were, you think you're good, you think you have the power to do whatever is necessary for eternal life, well, then I'll tell you what you should do.

One thing you lack, go, sell everything you have and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven, then come, follow me. And the man went away sad, sad to learn that he cannot have eternal life and his own idol too.

Eternal life is found only in Jesus Christ. This is the record, 1 John 5, 12, that God has given us eternal life and this life is in his Son.

[4 : 59] He that has the Son has life, but he that has not the Son of God has not life. So eternal life is found only in the Son of God.

Jesus is the Son of God. He is God and he suffers no rival gods along with himself. You cannot serve God and money.

You must choose which it will be. Well, he walked away sad. The cost was too great. He walked away from Jesus Christ and the gift of eternal life that is in Christ.

He valued his great wealth as more precious than Jesus. The cost was too high for him. And it's then that Jesus turns to his disciples and he says to them how hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven.

And they're amazed. And then to their greater amazement, he says, no, it is impossible for anyone to be saved. But not with God.

[6 : 07] Because with God, all things, even your salvation, is possible. Because God can give a new heart that values Christ above anything else in this world.

God can give a new heart that will rest on what Christ has done and not on your own goodness. And therefore salvation is not impossible with God.

Well, it's then that Peter asked his burning question. And so we come to the first point, Peter's question, verse 8. Peter said, we have left everything to follow you.

Now, the emphasis is upon the we. We, in contrast with that rich young ruler who just did not leave everything to follow you.

We have left everything to follow you. And of course, he was right. You remember how Jesus, earlier in this gospel, Jesus was walking along the Sea of Galilee and there was Peter and Andrew.

[7 : 10] And they were casting a net. And Jesus says, follow me and I will make you to become fishers of men. And they left their nets and followed him. A little further down the shore, he sees John and James mending their nets, ready for the next visit to the sea.

And says, follow me. And they left everything, their boats, their hired men, their nets, their business, and they followed Jesus. We read about Matthew, Levi, who was at his tax collector booth.

And Jesus comes and says, follow me. And he left his tax collecting booth and followed the Savior. Peter had it right. Master, we have left everything to follow you.

But now you say to me, John, you need an English lesson. That's a statement of fact and not a question. Why did you say this was Peter's question? Well, because it was a question.

Mark sees it implied in his statement. But Matthew, in his account of the gospel, states it outright. This is what Matthew records, Peter is saying. Matthew 19, 27.

[8 : 18] We have left everything to follow you. What will there be for us? What will there be for us? You promised the rich young ruler if he left everything, he would have riches in heaven.

We have left everything for you. What will there be for us? It's hard to know all that Peter had in mind in his question, but there might have been some pride that we left everything and that rich young ruler didn't.

But it seems like more than that, there's something here of a faint-heartedness over the cost of following Jesus.

Will our sacrifices prove to be worthwhile? What will there be for us, having left everything to follow you? And such thoughts can bother the Christian, especially when following Christ results in great losses, sacrifices, and even persecution.

And so Jesus takes this opportunity to assure the 12 and to assure you and me that our gains will far exceed our losses. So let's come secondly to Jesus' answer, verses 29 to 31.

[9 : 37] And we'll start with the losses experienced because that's where Jesus starts. He acknowledges that the losses in following him are real things.

They're not imagined and he doesn't hide them in fine print. He says in verse 29, I tell you the truth, no one who has left home, brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and for the gospel.

Now before we look at those specific losses, I want you to notice the cause of the losses. It's for me and for the gospel. Sacrifices made because of faithfulness to me, because of just remaining true to me and to my word, to my gospel.

And that will include persecution, which we'll mention later. But it also includes sacrifices made for the gospel's spread, for the advance of the gospel.

There are sacrifices and losses to be endured to get the gospel to the ends of the earth. So what are some of these sacrificial losses?

[10:49] Well, in verse 29, Jesus lists some. And notice the first and the last have to do with possessions, houses, homes, and fields.

And all those in between have to do with people that are very important to us. Close relatives, brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, children.

So the 12 disciples were required literally to leave everything behind to follow Jesus. But in principle, everyone who would be a follower of Jesus is required to make the same sacrifice. We've heard it over and over from Jesus already in the gospel of Mark. Mark 8 and verse 34. If anyone would be my disciple, he must what?

He must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me across the instrument of death. Death to self. And possibly life itself.

[11:49] Now not every disciple of Jesus is called to actually sell everything and give it away. Not every disciple is called to die for Jesus on a cross. But all disciples are called to be ready to suffer the loss of anyone or anything to remain true to Jesus and his gospel.

Mark 8, 38. If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, there's the cause, in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with his holy angels.

Matthew 10, 37. He that loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. And he that loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

You see, Christ's demand of lordship stands for all those who would follow him. There is a cost and the losses may be great.

He does not hide them. He speaks of them. Now, he's not encouraging us to abandon family relationships or responsibilities.

[13:05] But he is saying there are times when the sword of the gospel will divide families, mothers and daughters and fathers and sons and so on.

And faithfulness to Christ may cost you the loss of those dear relationships. And that's true in any age and it's true in any place but in some places more than others at other times.

Not long ago, I met a joyful young lady from Burundi. I'm around 20 years old, I would guess. And I heard her testimony. Children, listen.

Her mother died when she was four years old. Some of you four think of your mother dying. And her father then raised her. He was a strict Roman Catholic.

At 18, she went with a friend to a Protestant church where she heard the gospel and was saved. And when her father learned of that, he was angry and he didn't talk to her for a whole week.

[14:11] And when he finally talked to her, it was to give her an ultimatum. You have one week to choose between me and your Protestant Christianity. What would you choose?

You don't have a mother and now your father has given you the ultimatum. Well, by grace, she chose Jesus Christ and his gospel, the only gospel that saves.

And she was willing to count the cost of being motherless and fatherless at age 18. Now, the Lord doesn't promise what happened, but it did happen in her case that God actually gave her favor then later with her father.

But that's not always how it happens. All over the world, such losses are happening where conversions, people being saved must choose between family and Christ.

A young man told me when his Muslim mother was converted to Christ, her own brother threatened to kill her for leaving Islam. Sometimes converts from Orthodox Judaism are cast out of their society and out of their families.

[15:25] Fathers will say, from now on, you're dead to me. The same was true of Christianity in the first and second and third centuries, those killing times.

To follow Christ meant losing possessions, friends, family, important people in your life, and maybe even your own life itself. Yes, persecution in many different forms costs for following Jesus.

Hebrews 12, 34 speaks of those who were imprisoned because of Christ. Those who joyfully accepted the confiscation of their property, their houses, their lands for the sake of Christ.

But sometimes the losses are not because of persecution, but because of voluntary sacrifices to advance the gospel. there's Barnabas and he's selling a plot of land and donating the monies to the church to expand the cause of the gospel.

Missionaries wanting to spread the kingdom of Christ and his gospel abroad will leave houses, lands, mothers, fathers, children, not living by them, but living over the seas for the sake of the gospel to tell people who have never had the privilege of hearing of Jesus Christ how to be saved.

[16:56] And you don't have to go far from your home to make real sacrifices for Christ. Any service done for Christ in his gospel will cost you something, time or money that you could have spent on other things and you sacrifice it for the cause of Christ and for his gospel.

So there are some of the there are some of the costs then for following Christ and advancing his gospel. Those losses are real and Jesus knows it and acknowledges it.

Yes, I know I know Peter. I know you all have left everything and I'm very pleased about that. And I assure you you will never be the loser for having followed me.

He wants us to know this as well you and me. You may be wondering at times if it's worth it all in light of all the losses as you see people around you.

Well, I assure you it is for God will be no man's debtor and Jesus assures you that it will be the case that your gains will be far greater than your losses.

[18:10] So we've seen the losses experience. What are the gains promised to those who follow Christ? And notice how he begins in verse 29 I tell you the truth.

There's that statement. Jesus always told the truth. He is the truth. And yet this is a formula that he introduces something that's quite staggering and might be hard to believe.

And it carries the force of an oath. Jesus is putting his name on the line. He's putting his truthfulness on the line.

If I am the truth this is what's going to happen. Wow. That should be encouraging to us. And what is it that he says is the truth?

No one who has left all these things he's just mentioned for me in the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age.

[19:07] Homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, in fields and with them persecutions and in the age to come eternal life. Here he is assuring us with this negation.

No one. There are no exceptions. Peter, you or any of us here who have followed Christ. There's not one of you who will not find this to be the case.

No one will ever be a loser for having made sacrifices for me in the gospel. Now, notice these gains are for both this present age and the age to come.

Now, that's the way the Bible divides all of time from creation to the return of Christ is the present age. And from the return of Christ to the unending ages of eternity is the age to come.

That's all there is. Those two ages. And Jesus is saying that whatever losses you have had, you will find gain in both ages.

[20:20] This age and the age to come. Well, Paul told Timothy the same thing. Physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things holding promise both for this life and the life to come.

So let's look at the gains in the present age first. What are the gains that he promises for this present age? Well, they're often overlooked. And understandably, why?

Because the gains in the coming age are even, well, so much better. But Jesus does spell some of the gains in this present age. Verse 30, homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and fields, and with them persecutions.

You notice these gains echo the things that were lost. You lost some of those things, homes and fields and so on, and mothers and fathers. God will make up for the very things lost.

All thou spendest, Jesus, will repay. All you sacrificed and invested for him and his gospel and not just barely breaking even, but receive a hundred times as much in this present age.

[21:36] That's an amazing return on an investment, isn't it? You lose one and you get a hundred back. It's the words of Jesus. He's got his name on the line.

What could he possibly mean? well, so you lost homes and lands to persecutions or to take the gospel to other nations perhaps.

Well, when missionaries who have left homes and lands come to my house, what do I tell them? I say, while you're here, my home is your home and my fields are your fields and the fruit of my field is yours.

it's yours. And you'll make me feel at home if you treat it as yours. And I know it's not just me. You do the same thing for missionaries and pastors that come through and your home is open to them.

And it's not just Grace Fellowship Church. It's all the other churches that they're visiting. The homes are open to them. The Apostle John commends his friend Gaius for this very thing of opening his home to brothers that were sent out on gospel missions.

[22 : 51] You welcomed them as servants of God in contrast to Diotrephes who refused to show them hospitality and stopped others from doing so. Well, that's just one example of the hundredfold return on the loss of house and lands.

And then there's brothers, sisters, mothers, children that have been left for the cause of Christ and his gospel. These losses of family members will also be made up a hundredfold. Remember earlier in Mark chapter three, Jesus was ministering inside a house and a messenger was sent to him and said, your mother and brothers are outside and want to see you.

You remember Jesus' response? He looked at those gathered around him and he said, who are my mother and brothers? These here who are hearing and putting into practice my words.

They are my mother and brothers and sisters. In other words, when you become a Christian, you join the biggest and best family in the world, the family of God, the household of faith, as it's variously called.

You've got far more brothers and sisters than you ever lost. lost. There's at least a hundred of them here each week, you see. And that's what Jesus promises.

[24 : 20] For those who have lost, you know, you might feel closer to some of your brothers and sisters here than you do to your blood brothers and sisters. You have far more in common with these than with them.

They may not want to have much to do with you because you love Jesus and obey his word. Oh, here's the gains, hundredfold.

So what are the losses compared to such hundredfold gains? I would encourage you in the new year to get to know your brothers and sisters even better. Small groups is one way you can do it. Open your home to them and share the fruit of your fields together and fellowship in Christ. But notice the ingredient with all these gains in this age.

It says, and with them persecutions. We'll see in the weeks to follow that these disciples really didn't understand the mission of Christ.

[25 : 28] They knew he was the Messiah, so they're all about the coming messianic age. And what place of honor will we have in your kingdom? And Jesus is calling them back to the reality there's persecution in this age for the followers of Christ along with all these other gains.

And perhaps we should really view it as a gain rather than a loss since Jesus said, blessed are you when people persecute you, for yours is the kingdom of heaven. Rejoice and be glad.

So the gains in this present age from following Christ are a hundredfold higher than your losses. But when Jesus comes to speak of the gains in the age to come, he drops all numbers completely. Why? Because how can you calculate eternity, infinity? So we come to the gains in the age to come.

Verse 30, the end of it. And in the age to come, eternal life. Just two words. He said a lot about the gains in this life.

[26 : 39] And in the age to come, eternal life. Just two words, but it will take eternity to unpack those two words and to experience the glory and wonder of the gains that will be ours forever and ever.

Now, according to Jesus, eternal life is not just endless duration of life. It is that, but it can't just be that. The damned in hell will have endless duration of existence.

But it is such a ruinous existence that it can't even be called life, is rather called the second death. No, eternal life is not only the duration, but it's the quality of the life that will be enjoyed forever.

I heard recently that the most quoted verse of the Bible in all the publications of the Puritans was John 17 and verse 3.

Jesus' prayer to the Father when he says, this is eternal life, that they might know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

[27 : 53] That is so important, eternal life. It's knowing the Father, knowing the Son, knowing the Spirit, far greater than all the other blessings of heaven will be to know him, to be in a right relationship with him, intimate relationship, fellowship with him, in which I can say, I am his, and he is mine forever forever, forever.

It begins now, in this life, and it continues while the endless ages roll. It's only in the age to come that we will come to fully know the immensity and glory of the gains that are ours from following Christ, and then will the worst and longest afflictions that we endure in this life, pale into light and momentary things because of the eternal weight of glory that we will experience.

Romans 8.18 says, For I consider that the sufferings of this present age are not worth comparing with the glories that shall be revealed in us.

Oh, it will be worth it all when we see Jesus. Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ. One glimpse of his dear face. All trials will erase.

So bravely run the race till we see Christ. Now there's a reason why we as Christians might fear that we're losing out for following Jesus.

[29 : 33] Number one, because it may look that way from a worldly estimation. Most of our gains are spiritual and unseen. And secondly, because the world and the devil are ever telling us that we are the losers for following Jesus.

And so our Lord counters all of that pressure and reassures us that our greater gains will be found for our losses in this age and in the age to come.

An account is given of an old missionary couple returning from Africa, a life serving Christ in Africa. And they happened to be on the same ship as President Teddy Roosevelt, Roosevelt as he was returning from a large game hunting expedition.

And as they neared the shoreline, this old missionary couple went up to the deck to watch.

And there on the shore, the bands were playing and people were cheering and the banners were welcoming President Roosevelt home. And the husband grew silent and the wife, being a good wife, could tell something was wrong.

[30 : 50] And so she asked, what's wrong? He said, well, it just doesn't seem right. The President goes away for a few weeks on a hunting trip and has the multitudes shouting his praises at his return.

You and I, dear, have spent our whole lives in Africa taking the gospel to people who needed to know our Savior. And we don't get anything of that.

There's not even someone from our home church to welcome us home. And being the good wife she was, she looked up and said, but dear, we're not home yet.

And neither are you and I. And we should not expect all the returns on investment. all the gains that Jesus promises to come to us until we are home in the age to come.

We've left everything to follow you. What will there be for us? You know, days were coming when Peter and most of the twelve would find that the cost of following Jesus for them and being true to his gospel would be their very lives taken in martyrdom.

[32 : 13] And they would need to know then that none are the losers for having followed Jesus. That not only in this life are there gains, but they go off the roof in the age to come.

To know that as they breathe their last on earth, this is not the end, but it's rather the beginning of an eternal day that will never end, where eternal life with Christ will infinitely repay any temporal losses with eternal gains.

And so the Lord's encouraging them and us to know that it will be worth it all, whatever the cost.

And he finishes his answer to Peter's question with a familiar quote, something he often says, and you read it everywhere, many places in the gospel, but many who are first will be last and the last first.

He wants us to know that the Lord Jesus does not measure faithfulness as this world does. He does that the kingdom of Christ turns this world's value system upside down.

The world says this guy's in first and Jesus says, no, he's last. This person is first. So don't expect to find things there as they are here, Jesus is saying rather expect surprises.

[33 : 37] The first being last and the last being first. I mean, they thought the rich young ruler, surely he will be first. He's not even saved.

He's last. And we learn throughout other places where Jesus uses this when he says the first will be last. It doesn't always mean last in the kingdom. They're outside the kingdom.

they're not even saved. They're that last. For eternal life is not a reward to be earned by our good deeds, as that rich young ruler thought, but the free gift of God to his trusting disciples who count him worth more than anything else.

the rich young ruler had everything here, but in the age to come, he will have nothing, and you, dear disciples, will have all.

Rewards of grace forever. John Newton said, when I get to heaven, I'll be surprised, and I will wonder at three things. First of all, I wonder that some I thought would be here aren't here.

[34 : 48] And secondly, I'll wonder that some I never thought would be here are here. And the greatest wonder of all will be that I'm there.

He meant it when he wrote, amazing grace that saved a wretch like me. A wonder that I'll be there. Surprises in heaven. Some of the greatest in the kingdom of Christ, Christ will be those Christians who are utterly unknown to the world, but known to Jesus who died for them and who saw every sacrifice made for him, every investment in his kingdom, every prayer ever uttered for his kingdom to come and his will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Well, a couple closing lessons. First of all, according to Jesus, life for Christians in this present age will always be a mix of losses and gains, of blessings with persecutions, of sweet but mixed with bitter.

You see that? So any view of life, any teaching of life in this age that fails to take this mix into account, to make you think that you can have all sweet and no bitter or all bitter and no sweet, it's erroneous.

[36 : 22] It's false teaching. You see, the whole natural creation is groaning under the curse of frustration and decay. It's out of joint. This world is still under the control of the evil one.

First John 5, 19. And so in this age, there will always be evil men to disturb the peace, to destroy the peace, to persecute the righteous.

Satan and his demons still harass and oppose the righteous in this present age. Stir up persecution, temptation, sin, and trouble.

Indwelling sin in this present age. And death itself is still at work in our bodies. So there will always be this mix of good and bad in this present age.

The real wonder is that there is so much good in this present age that is under the curse of God. Common grace, amazing kindness of God, even to his enemies, even in this present age.

[37 : 25] So let's keep our expectations. What do we expect from this age? Let's keep it in line with Jesus' words here to us. Yes, there are gains to be had in this life, but with them, persecution, genuine loss.

Afflicted saints, remember, a life of all sweet and no bitter has been reserved for the next age. So let your bitter things now make you long for the age to come when Jesus returns.

The second lesson we learn, not only is there always in this present age going to be the mix of the sweet and the bitter, but that points us to the second lesson that the great hope of the Christian, the confident expectation of the Christian is not to be found in anything in this age, but in the age to come.

Are you setting your hope fully on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed? That's the hope, the blessed hope, the appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

For then at his return, the whole creation will be restored, regenerated, purified, made new, a new heavens and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

[38 : 52] With all of his and our enemies in hell, there will be none to trouble the saints, none to persecute. Only the redeemed, the chosen, called and faithful will enter this new world in reunion with all those who have gone before us in Christ.

But we will be found then in perfected bodies and perfected souls. You may not know me for a while because you're going to see a different version of John. With all the remains of sin gone, all the effects of the curse gone, in a world of perfect love, where everyone will love God with all their heart and love each other as themselves.

With our joy and peace uninterrupted by any trouble. And where there is no more mixture of gain and loss, bitter mixed with the sweet, no more curse, but everything will be as it should be.

Where we will live with the one who bore the curse for us and will shower us with his love that is better than life. And the cherry on top is that this life in the age to come is indeed eternal life.

It never ends. Never do its pleasures perish, spoil, or fade. Kids, I'll bet some of your presence have already faded in your estimation of, oh, it was so exciting to get that thing and now, oh, well, I like it, but it's fading.

[40 : 31] And so is everything in this age. But not our inheritance and doesn't fade a bit. And just when you think it can't get any better than this, you'll find it going to a higher elevation on and on through the endless ages.

Friends, don't you want to be there? Don't you want to see it? Don't you want to experience it? The hourglass of this present age is going down.

And the age to come is nearer now than when you first believed. So lift up your heads. Your redemption is drawing near. Which age are you living for?

This present age that is seen or the age to come that is unseen? How pitifully sad it is that most men are living like the rich young ruler, only for this age, only for what they can see, only for what their senses, their five senses can enjoy and indulge in, the present pleasures of sin that are for a season.

The immediate gratification and then to wake up one second after dying and to realize I was living for the wrong age.

[41 : 54] my whole life. I lived for that age. And now I am entering this age that never ends. And all I have is a hell to pay for neglecting the one and only Savior, Jesus.

Oh, how sad it is. Dear lost friend, awake now to your danger. Flee to Christ. Just confess to Him, Lord, I have lived for the wrong thing.

I have lived for myself. I have rebelled against You, gone my own way. Oh, please forgive me. And for the sake of Jesus Christ and what He has done for sinners, receive me in Your grace and mercy.

And He will. That is the good news. He will receive you right now if you are ready to receive Him as Lord and Savior alone. Which age are you living for?

Be sure your gains are greater than your losses. Jesus said it. What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world but loses his eternal soul?

[43 : 04] What can a man give in exchange for his soul? Or like Jim Elias said, he is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.

Believers, is your life, your joy, your money, your time, your interest, your pursuits, your priorities so aligned with the age to come that all that know you, your unconverted neighbors, your unconverted family members, the work associates, they can see it.

He's living for a different age. She's not caught up in the rat race to get more and more of things here. She looks like she's expecting an age to come.

She's laying up treasures in heaven where moth and rust do not break, where thieves do not break in and moth and rust do not wear out our treasures.

Can they see you're a pilgrim here just passing through, looking and longing for a better country where Jesus is and where he will make all things new?

[44 : 08] the best of Christians must often confess with John Baird of old that I treat the little things of time as great and the great things of eternity as little.

May God forgive us and may God reorient our priorities and our heart and our pursuits with this passage that Jesus gave us here in Mark chapter 10.

So seek those things that are above. No one is the loser for following Jesus. Jesus stakes his truthfulness upon that assurance.

Let us stake our lives upon that sure word. And when you start to think it's counting you too much to follow Jesus, get back to Golgotha's middle cross and see him who was rich yet for your sakes became so poor taking all your sin debt upon him and there was curse by God for you.

Christ died for sin. once for all time the righteous for the unrighteous to bring us to God. Oh, we don't know what suffering is compared to what we sang about this morning.

[45 : 40] Stricken, smitten, and afflicted for us bearing our sins. a woman was out to set a world record swimming.

I think it was some 25 miles out into the Pacific Ocean and she was swimming toward the shoreline of California and she was going right along and then her arms started to feel like they had weights on them and a heavy fog set in and she could hardly see just a few feet in front of her and she's just paddling along and finally she quits and gets into the boat beside her who was traveling with her and to her surprise she found she was within a half a mile of the shore and she said later on if I had seen the shore I would have gained enough strength to go on and that's a perfect illustration of what our Savior is trying to reassure we don't live right without the age to come in view we just see

our losses and yes there's gains here but there's spiritual and unseen sometimes but all the gains when he returns and we need to keep that shore in our hearts and minds there is a land that is fairer than bright sunshine and by faith we can see it afar and it's by faith in this book that it's revealed and we can see it here are you are you pouring over the text about that coming age are you memorizing them are you meditating on them are you talking with each other about them are you praising

God for them are you longing for that day that is to come oh we underestimate the importance of keeping our eyes on the age to come and what will be ours there let the losses and pains of the present life then be sweetened by what awaits you in the coming age let's pray Lord there's not a one of us here that if we got what we deserved we would be in hell right now and so you have been gracious to every single one here whether in Christ or not for none of us are in hell getting what we deserved we are staggered to think that rather than consigning the whole human race to hell you sent your son into the world because of love that whoever would believe in him would not perish but have this everlasting life of fellowship with you father son and holy spirit thank you

Lord Jesus for giving us the scriptures that even reveal that disciples can grow weary under the losses and wonder if it's worth it thank you for Jesus answers and pointing us to what he has gained for us by his tremendous loss at Calvary and we we love you Lord Jesus that we should gain from your loss that we should gain eternal life and so we pray you would help us to fix our eyes upon it and live as those who are passing through here and heading to see you face to face help us in Jesus name amen amen