

The Difficult Sayings of Jesus #14

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Date: 16 October 2011

Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] At that time, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised up on the third day.

Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, God forbid it, Lord, this shall never happen to you.

But he turned and said to Peter, Get behind me, Satan. You are a stumbling block to me.

For you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's. Then Jesus said to his disciples, If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

[1 : 32] For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?

Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? As we are working our way through Matthew chapter 16, we are discussing a number of things that we have called difficult sayings of our Lord Jesus.

And there are several here in Matthew 16. And we've already explained to you that a number of these can be understood only when you have an appreciation for the dispensational distinctives that exist between the dispensation or the time of Israel and the dispensation of the church, which is the present day age of grace in which we live.

And the failure to make those distinctions will result in a confusion of subjects that you just simply cannot make any sense of. And I might add that it is an inability to recognize these distinctions and the radical difference between the church age dispensation and the kingdom age dispensation that causes people to see what they believe are contradictions in the Bible.

There are none.

[3 : 28] The first one having to do with identifying the church or the assembly that Christ would build his church upon causes us to distinguish between the Jewish assembly and the kingdom and the body of Christ, which now exists.

Second difficulty has to do with the gates of Hades, another expression of our Lord that is difficult to understand. We pointed out to you that what this actually refers to is that even Christ's own death will not deter the eventual establishment of the kingdom of heaven come to earth because of the resurrection.

And the gates of Hades, which is the gates of death itself, will not prevail against it. In other words, even the death of the one who is going to establish the kingdom will not keep it from being established because he will be victorious over death via his resurrection.

And then the third difficulty has to do with the keys of the kingdom of heaven and how that differs from the keys to the church. There are no keys to the church. There are keys to the kingdom of heaven.

They were given to Peter and Peter used them. He used them in Acts chapter 10 in connection with Cornelius, who was a God fearer, a Gentile, a Roman army officer.

[4 : 53] He used the keys then. He used the keys in Acts chapter 2 and in Acts chapter 3. And in both instances unlocked, if you will, the kingdom for the nation of Israel and all they had to do was embrace it.

And we know that they did not. They rejected it. And that was what ultimately resulted in the raising up of the apostle Paul for the establishment of the church, the body of Christ.

And another thorny problem that is a difficult saying of Jesus is right here in this same passage has to do with the binding and loosing. Our Roman Catholic friends believe that this power is delegated to the Pope and to the priests and that they have the power to forgive sins or to retain one's sins.

Roman Catholics, of course, find this very critical to their theology and Protestants deny it entirely. So we've got a cleavage there between both of these groups, both of whom claim to be Christian.

And our contention is that they are both wrong because we see a dispensational distinctive here. And we tied in Matthew 16 with that monumental statement that Christ uttered just a couple of chapters later, trying to let Scripture be the interpretation of Scripture, wherein Jesus said, you who have followed me in the regeneration when the Son of Man comes into his kingdom, you also shall sit upon the twelve thrones of Israel, judging the twelve tribes.

[6 : 24] That's what this is all about here in chapter 16. That's what Jesus is talking about. They will be binding people in their sin or loosing people from their sin as they sit in positions of judgment and authority on the twelve tribes of Israel during the millennial reign of Christ.

They will have delegated authority given to them. They will carry out the administrative affairs of all of the nations in the earth centered there in Jerusalem.

They will occupy those positions of delegated authority. And that is what our Lord made very clear in Matthew chapter 19. And then we noted there is another difficulty.

And we dealt with this in just our last session together. And that is in verse 20. After Peter made this monumental declaration, when Jesus said, whom do you say that I am?

Peter said, thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus said, you're right. But don't tell anybody. What?

[7 : 37] What was that all about? Weren't they supposed to tell everybody? And not only here, but in numerous other places we noted the same restriction.

In connection with some of the healings he performed. And then the text says, and he sternly warned them not to tell anyone. What is that all about?

We thought the whole point was that they were to go and tell everyone. And he's telling them, hush, keep this quiet. And without recapping too much of our previous session, which is available on the table back there on a compact disc for anyone who wants it.

And we made the point that Jesus came for the primary purpose of offering himself a sacrifice for the sins of humanity.

That was his main objective. And he would not allow anything to be done that could possibly short circuit that process. You will note two or three different places in the Gospels where people sought to take him.

[8 : 43] They sought to capture him. They sought to lay hands on him. And when he went to his hometown in Nazareth, in Luke chapter 4, they hustled him out of town after he made those terribly unpopular statements about Gentiles.

They ushered him, jostled him, pushed him, shoved him out of town to the brow of a hill and were going to throw him down. So much for local boy makes good.

Because they were convinced that he was guilty of blasphemy. He read that passage from Isaiah and then he said to them, this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

What? What is he saying? He was therewith claiming to be the fulfillment of that Isaiah passage.

And they said, well, this can't be. This is Joseph's son. He's a carpenter's son. We know who this guy is.

[9 : 48] That can't be. And why didn't they fling him down off that precipice and kill him? The text simply says, and he passed through their midst.

How did he do that? Why did he do it? Well, he did that because his hour was not yet come. And on numerous occasions he made that point.

His hour had not yet come. His hour had not yet come. His hour had not. What did he mean by that? It means the purpose for which he came into the world had not yet arrived.

And all of these things could possibly short circuit that purpose. Because if word got out and the populace as a whole believed that he was the Messiah, there would have been an absolute riot.

It would have been a bloodbath. Because they would have had to contend with the authority of Rome. And Rome would not have appreciated that. And it would have been a huge melee.

[10 : 48] And Jesus knew that. On another occasion, John tells us in his gospel that his own people, some of his own people were looking for him because they were going to take him and make him their king by force.

And that's being drafted. They were so convinced that he was the Messiah, they were going to by force take him and put him on the throne.

Well, how do you think Rome would react to that? Not very kindly. What would have been the result? Again, a huge riot. Bloodbath. Christ was determined that that would not happen.

He did not want that word out to the general public. You know when he really wanted them to believe he was the Messiah? After his resurrection.

After that mission was accomplished. Because that was why he came. To die on that cross. And when he was in agony in Gethsemane. He prayed and he said, Oh, my father, if it be possible.

[12 : 02] Let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done. And he went a little further and he said, And what shall I say?

Father, save me from this hour? But for this hour came I into the world.

This hour is what Bethlehem was all about. And he would not allow any popular movement claiming of him to be the Messiah detract him from his singular mission.

And that was to be made sin for us on that cross. That's why he came. And that's why this difficult saying was uttered by our Lord.

Then he warned the disciples that they should tell no one that he was the Christ. And then there is another really difficult saying. And this chapter is just loaded with them. And this is a difficult saying.

[13 : 10] Not for us, because we've got hindsight. And hindsight is a great thing to have. You've got all the answers with hindsight. But this was a terribly, terribly perplexing, upsetting, difficult statement that Jesus made for his apostles.

And that's in verse 21. Again, from that time, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem. This is job one.

This is his objective. This is his sole objective. Nothing else matters but this. He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and be raised up on the third day.

What? After we just got through telling you that we believe you are the Messiah, the one sent from God, and now you're telling us you're going to be crucified?

That's crazy. What are you talking about? And they were completely perplexed by that, because that was not part of the game plan. They didn't see that as being part and parcel of the program of God at all.

[14 : 23] All they could think of was that this Messiah deliverer was going to be the political solution for Israel's problems.

What's the political problem of Israel? Rome! Rome occupied Israel and Jerusalem, and everywhere you looked, there were pagan Roman soldiers carrying around their pagan banners.

Idoltrous people. And the Jews hated them with a passion. And their dream was, when the Messiah comes, he's going to rout the Romans, chase them out, run them into the sea.

And he's going to go up there and sit on the throne in the temple and show himself to be the Messiah, the sent one of God. And Israel is going to rise to its prominence and its glory and bring in this wonderful kingdom.

And Rome will be sent packing. Well, how are you going to do that if you get crucified? That does not compute.

[15 : 33] Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him. I tell you, there is nobody in all of the New Testament who has as much brass and gall as Peter.

Nobody else would have had the nerve to do this. But Peter suffered from foot and mouth disease. And he exercised it often.

But, you know, he was a lovable kind of guy. Impetuous. Big heart. Often speaking before he thought. Often jumping into situations that he made more difficult.

And Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him and said, God forbid, Lord, this shall never happen to you. We'll see to it. And here he is talking with all of this braggadocio.

We'd never allow anything like that to happen. He's going to be the first and the only one to deny him. So Peter talked a good fight, didn't he?

[16 : 38] Like all of us sometimes. We'll never let this happen. Perish the thought. Why, if they tried to take you prisoner, why, we would fight.

We would. And he was ready to back that up. Remember when they came in the garden? Two or three o'clock in the morning with their lanterns and torches? Whole troop of them traipsing up the Garden of Gethsemane.

When they arrived there, Peter pulls out his fisherman's. He had a, Peter was a fisherman, you know. He always carried a knife. You needed that for gutting fish and mending nets and cutting things.

And I bet he had a really sharp fisherman's knife, too. And this guy by the name of Malchus or his servant came up there and tried to lay hands on Peter, on Jesus, to take him prisoner.

And Peter pulled out that fisherman's knife and gave a big roundhouse swing with it and sliced that guy's ear off. And Jesus said, Peter, Peter, put it up.

[17 : 38] We picked the ear up off the ground and stuck it back on the guy. How's that for major micro-surgery? Pretty neat. But that was Peter.

And you know what Peter said? Never let that happen. No way. And Jesus turned to Peter and said, Get behind me, Satan.

Well, I thought he was talking to Peter. He was talking to Peter. But what he meant was this. Peter, you have succumbed to mere human, satanic thinking.

And that is, you don't go to the cross. You avoid the cross at all costs. You don't allow them to take you. But this is that which has been designed by my father.

Peter, your short-sightedness and your lack of understanding and your zeal that is commendable but misplaced, you would short-circuit this whole thing if you could.

[18 : 51] But that's okay. I understand because that's exactly what Satan would do. He would short-circuit the whole thing too. You are thinking just like he wants you to think.

And you know there are multitudes of people today who think the thoughts of Satan after him, and they don't even have a clue. There is a thing called a mindset and a worldview.

There is a biblical worldview that allows you to see issues and life from God's perspective. That's developing a biblical worldview.

And when you have one, you see that God is sovereign, man is responsible, humanity is fallen, Christ is the Redeemer. You factor all of those things into the mix, and it gives you a peculiar perspective of the world.

That's a biblical worldview. But when you take the position that how did we get here? Who knows? Maybe we were spores planted by aliens from outer space.

[20 : 00] Maybe we evolved. Maybe something that did not exist evolved into nothing. Figure that if you can. Something that did not exist evolved into nothing so that you start with nothing and with nobody, and you get what we've got now.

Isn't evolution wonderful? So life has no meaning and no purpose because we're all a biological accident anyway. We aren't going anywhere. We die like a dog, and that's it. You're planted in the ground.

That's the end of you. No heaven, no hell, no nothing. That's a different worldview. And people tend to live and act out of what they believe in their worldviews.

And what Jesus is saying to Peter is that Satan has gotten to you, Peter, and he's causing you to think just like he thinks, and that is human expediency.

Go the way that seems right. Proverbs 16, 25 says, There is a way that seems right unto a man. But the end thereof is the way of death.

[21 : 00] And all our Lord is trying to do here is get Peter into a biblical worldview. You are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.

Well, don't we all? Don't we all? Most natural thing in the world is to look out for our own interests.

This is the very crux of the human problem. It is what God wants versus what man wants.

And to be very honest about it, most people worldwide could not care less about what God wants because we all naturally tend to be consumed with what we want.

And as far as God is concerned, we view God as a bigger person than us, and he should be able to look out for his own interests.

[22 : 08] Me? I've got to take care and look out for myself because no one else will. It's all about me. I'm all I've got. And that's the refrain that is played by the world all over the globe.

And that's part of our fallenness. We really don't care a whit about what the creator wants. We only care about what we want.

It is all about us, isn't it? No, it isn't. But thinking that way and functioning that way causes the problems that we've got in the world today.

And all of this is just what creates this tension, this perpetual struggle that has become all pervasive of humanity.

It is the fall of Genesis 3 and the acquisition of a foreign nature that God did not give us, coupled with the bestowment of human volition upon man that gives him the options that he has.

[23 : 23] And let me elaborate on this a little bit because it's key. It's key to understanding the whole problem of the world and our problems personally. And the thing that creates the tension between what God wants and what man wants, and the reason we are automatically concerned more about what we want than we are about what God wants, is first of all, God has given us, he has bestowed upon us as part of our humanity, this thing called volition.

And it means that within a huge parameter, you can do pretty much whatever you want. You can do your own thing.

You have the power to make choices. You have the ability to do A or B or C or whatever. That is part of what makes us human beings.

We are free moral agents. And because of our fallenness in Genesis 3, we are free moral agents with a very self-centered agenda.

And if you think you don't have one, then yours is bigger than everybody else's. You are self-deceived.

[24 : 53] We all have one. Does that include even preachers? Especially preachers.

Our sinful, fallen ego is as bad as everybody else's. We're all cut from the same bolt of cloth.

We are all infected with this terminal disease called sin. We all contribute to making this world in the mess that it's in.

And folks, you need to understand, this is why Jesus came. He came, John tells us, not to condemn the world, because it was already condemned, but that the world through him might be saved.

And what this passage getting at here and what our Lord goes on to say is just wonderful. And by the way, this is cross-dispensational truth.

[25 : 54] What we're talking about now applies to any dispensation, whether you're talking about Israel, the church age, or whatever. And there are a number of things that are that way. And this is one of the things that kind of irritates me about some people and the grace positions they hold.

They won't allow any legitimacy or application from the Gospels at all. Oh, no, that's all Israel. You've got to stay in the church epistles exclusively. That's nonsense.

There are all kinds of principles in the Old Testament and in the Gospels that are every bit applicable to believers of all ages, no matter what dispensation it is.

And here is one. Then Jesus said to his disciples, If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. That's another difficult thing.

What does that mean? He's talking about death to self. And the enthronement of Christ in one's life.

[26 : 55] If you take up your cross, you do so for only one reason. What does that mean, to take up your cross? It means be prepared to die on it.

What else is a cross good for? That's the purpose of a cross. That's the only objective a cross had. That's the only reason they made them, was to hang somebody on it.

And what Jesus is saying here is, If you want to really follow me, And he's using this as a metaphor.

You don't have to go out and manufacture a cross in order to make the point. This is a spiritual thing. It's a mental thing. But it's a real thing.

And all this business of cross-bearing is all about is self-denial. This is what he's talking about here. And why should you deny yourself? You deny yourself so you can enthrone Christ.

[27 : 57] Because if Christ isn't on the throne, Guess who is? You're the only one left. When you deny yourself, It does not mean, By the way, And this would be an easy way out.

It does not mean that you deny things to yourself. So that when the Lenten season comes up, For 40 days, I am not going to eat broccoli.

Or liver. Or whatever. You know. So you are denying yourself during Lent.

It is almost like a form of self-punishment. That isn't what this is talking about at all. When you deny yourself, You are not denying things to yourself.

You are denying the person of self. And how do you do that? You do that by voluntarily, deliberately, intentionally, Placing others and their needs before yours.

[29 : 28] That's a tough thing to do. After all, Who is more deserving than you? This is what cross-bearing is really all about.

It is dying to self. Deny himself, Take up his cross, And follow me. And Jesus is saying, And we'll go hang on a cross together.

This is serious business. This separates namby-pamby Christianity From the real thing. And you know something?

You can have all kinds Of the world's riches. You can live in a fine home And enjoy all of the amenities And drive the latest model car And still practice Real serious self-denial.

And you can also live in a hovel And your transportation consists only of a bicycle When it's working.

[30 : 47] And you don't know where your next meal is coming from. And you live way below the poverty level. And that does not mean you're bearing a cross.

You could be deprived in all of those ways And still be one of the most selfish, self-centered people That ever came down the pike. Because self-denial Does not have to do With denying things to yourself.

It is denying yourself. And you deny yourself By preferring others Better than yourself. That's tough to do.

Because we naturally want to look out for number one. I want to show you In Philippians Let's come over to Philippians chapter 2 Because the two greatest examples In all of scripture About self-denial Are found right here in Philippians And the first one is in chapter 2 And it's pretty much self-explanatory Paul said in verse 5 Have this attitude Mindset Worldview In yourselves Which was also in Christ Jesus Paul is saying I want you to think along these lines Because this is the way Christ thought.

Okay? How did he think? Even though He existed in the form of God Had this high elevated Ultimate position He did not regard equality with God A thing to be grasped.

[32 : 21] Here is one Who was equal in stature and nature To his heavenly father Yet he did not consider That exalted position Something to be clung to And hung on to At all costs.

Something that he would not relinquish. What did he do? He relinquished it. He was entitled to it. He deserved it. He owned it.

But he let it go. And he emptied himself Taking the form of a bondservant Being made in the likeness of men And being found in appearance As a man He humbled himself By becoming obedient To the point of death Even death on a cross Starts out up here Exalted Equal with the father And each step Is a downward step To self-humiliation And self-deprecation Down, down, down, down, down He came Until he ended up Well, look at verse 8 Death on a cross And because of this Therefore Also God Highly Exalted him

I've often said that No one has ever been Exalted above Jesus Because no one Has ever been brought so low As Jesus God bestowed on him The name Which is above every name That at the name of Jesus Every knee should bow Of those who are in heaven And on earth And under the earth And that every tongue Should confess That Jesus Christ Is Lord To the glory Of God The Father Incredible price Our Lord paid This is what Self-denial Is all about Jesus Was not There On that cross Serving his own Best interests He was serving Yours And mine Wow And then If you just glance

Across the page To Philippians 3 We see another Sterling example Of self-denial Paul said In verse 4 Of Philippians Chapter 3 Although I myself Might have confidence Even in the flesh That is something To boast about Speaking after The manner of men If anyone else Has a mind To put confidence In the flesh I far more He's saying I've got a I've got a resume That will Knock your eyes out I've got a I've got a A track history That is Head and shoulders Above anything That any of you People can put forth When you want To talk about Somebody who Really had it All together Who was On his way up Who was Well recognized Who was Well situated Who was Well credentialed Who was well Thought of He was He was The cat's meow

[35 : 48] Paul says Boy I I was that I had far more You want to talk About bragging points I've got Let me list them Let me list my Bragging points First of all I was circumcised The eighth day That's where Every good Jew Starts out Eighth day Circumcised I was Of the Nation Of Israel Of the tribe Of Benjamin Listen I wasn't Just one of those Run of the mill Tribes I was of the Tribe of Benjamin You know who The Benjamites were In the nation Of Israel They were the Elite core It was the Benjamites Who had How many Hundreds of men Or thousands Of men Were they They had In their army That could They were left Hand A bunch of Southpaws The Benjamites Were a bunch Just Southpaw Surely it was A genetic Thing And the text Says that they

Could hurl A stone From a sling Within a Hair's breadth These guys Were sharpshooters Whole tribe Of Well I was From the Tribe of Benjamin The equivalent Of the Army Rangers The Green Beret And the Navy Seals All wrapped Up into One That was My tribe I was a Benjamite And as To the Law I could Quote you Moses That wouldn't Quit Pharisee As to Zeal A persecutor Of the Church I took It upon Myself As my Own Personal Responsibility To Eliminate These Jewish Rabble Rousers Who Actually Believed That Jesus Was The Messiah And I Saw Them As Nothing But A Cancer Growing On Judaism And I Took It Upon Myself To Eliminate These People Wipe Them Out Kill Them I Even Got Special Permission From

The Priests In Jerusalem To Go All The Way Up To Damascus A Hundred Miles To The North And Round Up The Renegades That Had Fled Up There And Bring Them Back In Chains And Persecute Them That's How Zealous I Was As To The Righteousness Which Is In The A Biblical Worldview Now I See Life And Issues Like God Sees Them Not As I Saw Them Before And

I Now Look At All Of Those Things That I Considered Assets Now They Don't Even Qualify As Liabilities He Says Now I Count Them But Dung Animal Refuse That's What They're Worth Whatever Things Were Gained To Me Those Things I Have Counted As Loss For The Sake Of Christ More Than That I Count All Things To Be Loss In View Of The Surpassing Value Of Knowing Christ Jesus My Lord For Whom I Have Suffered The Loss Of All Things And Count Them But Rubbish Dung In Order That I May Gain Christ And Be Found In Him Not Having A Righteousness Of My Own Derived From The Law But That Which Is Through Faith In Christ The Righteousness

Which Comes From God On The Basis Of Faith Wow This Is Nothing More Than Another Expression Of Self Denial And Paul Is Deprived Of All Of Christ Was And What He Did No Person Whoever Lived Lived More For Others Than For Himself Apart From Our Lord Jesus Christ And

[40 : 51] Paul Is Another Sterling Example In A Different Category Because No One Is In The Category Of Our Lord Losing One's Life Does Not Necessarily Entail Martyrdom But It Might It Has Meant That For Several Tens Of Thousands Who Have Gone On Ahead And Have Paid The Ultimate Price But Losing One's Life For Christ's Sake Is Back To That Same Thing Of Taking Up Your Cross It Means That We Do Have An Attitude That Allows Us To See The Needs Of Others And Prioritize Them Over Our Own It Means Putting Others First That's What Self Denial Is And You Know Something You Can Do That As A Multi Millionaire Some

Of The Most Godly People In The Bible Had The Most By The World's Goods Abraham Was Regarded As The Father Of The Faithful He Was A Very Wealthy Man So Was Isaac And Jacob And They Had Their Faults They Had Their Downtime But They Were Also Sterling Examples Of Trophies Of God's Grace Way Back In The Old Testament Wealthy Men In The New Testament You See This Too Is Part Of Our Skewed Thinking We Tend To Think That And This Is Part Of What Contributes To The Class Warfare We've Got Going On In Our Culture Today You'd Be Surprised How Many People Think That The Millionaires And The Billionaires That So Many People Complain About They're All Crooks They're All Crooks They All Earned Their Money On The Backs Of The Poor They All Earn Their Money By Cheating And There

Are Cases In Which That's True There Are Cases Where There Are People Who Are Millionaires They Are A Bunch Of Crooks But Don't Brand Everybody With That There Are Some Godly People Who Are Millionaires That's Right Well If They Were Really Godly They Would Have Given You Some Of It By Now Wouldn't They See That's Our Attitude That's Our Standard See But Wealth Wealth Or The Lack Thereof Does Not Make For Godliness Or Wickedness It Depends On The Heart The Mindset And God Knows That You Can Be A Very Wealthy Person And Be A Very Christ Honoring Person You Can Be A Pauper Live Below The Poverty Level And Spiritually Be A Skunk Completely Self Centered So It Isn't Wealth Or The Lack Thereof You Need To Understand That When Jesus Says Deny Himself It Doesn't Mean You Do Without A Lot Of The Earth Things That It Has To Offer It Doesn't Mean You Do Without Indoor Plumbing Doesn't Mean You You Know It's Just You Deny Yourself

You Deny The Person Of Self Not Things To Self It's An Attitude An Inner Attitude It's A Beautiful Thing And When You Come To The Truth Of Greater Than Ourselves To Serve I Jotted Down A Couple Of Points Here That I Just Want To Run By If I Can Find Them One Of These Days I'm Going To Get Organized And When I Do Boy You're Going To Hear Some Real Preaching Then This Denying Ourselves Requires The Establishment Of One's Priorities And Then Acting So As To Pursue Them What Really Matters Question What Really Matters In The Final Analysis Find

Out And Give Yourself To That And It's Not About You No Matter How Great The Tendency And Temptation Is To Think So It's A Serious Business To Be Made In The Likeness And Image Of God And To Be Entrusted With A Free Will As A Free Moral Agent The Very Existence Of Our Being Is Sufficient To Prompt The Important Questions Are Here That's What's In What's In The Final Analysis The One Who Pours Himself Into Himself Will Ultimately Lose Himself That's That's What Jesus He Who Would Save His Life Shall Lose It But He Who Loses His Life For

[45 : 54] My Sake And The Gospels The Same Shall Find It We Need A Cause That Is Greater Than Self Much Greater So He Who Pours Himself Into This Greater Than Himself Cause Will Surely Find Values Untold And Therein Lies The Secret Of Real Fulfillment In Life If You Want To Know How To Be Ultimately Happy How To Be Ultimately Blessed How To Ultimately Live A Life Of Satisfaction That Just Won't Quit Just Pour Yourself In To The Person Of Christ And Be Available To Him And Responsive To Him Look Out For The Needs Of Others Lose Yourself In Serving Others

If You Really Want To Find Yourself That's The Way To Do It Our Problem Is We Are Just Naturally Self Centered And As We Turn All Of Our Attention And Energies Inward On Fulfilling Ourselves Our Own Dreams Our Own Desires Our Own Goals To The Discounting Of Everybody Else's We We Just Become A Great Big Ingrown Unfulfilled Blob Of Nothing That's The Quickest Way To Lose Yourself Focus Everything On You There's No Dividends There The Secret Is In Serving Others That's Where The Satisfaction Is The Joy And Everything Else That Goes With It It's The Only Way To Fly Would

You Pray With Me Father These Principles Are So Old And Yet So New To So Many And They Are Powerful Because They Contain The Very Breath Of God We Are So Grateful That You Through Your Son Have Exhibited The Reality Of This In A Way That Is Unmistakable And Our Beloved Apostle Paul Came Along After His Lord Jesus And Saw The Giving Spirit In Him And Was Determined To Imitate It So That He Could Say For To Me To Live Is Christ Lord We Cannot Have A Greater Objective Than That Cannot Have A More Satisfying One Than That And It Would Be

Our Prayer That This Attitude Would Be Adopted By Everyone In This Congregation Beginning With Me Thank You For Making The Truth Available To Us Help Each Of Us As Individuals To Know How Best To Let You Apply It To Our Hearts We Pray In Christ's Name Amen Is There A Quick Question Or Comment Anyone Since There Is I Just Want To Run This By You I Don't Want To Ignore It Because This Party Was Kind And Gracious Enough To Write Out The Questions And Put Them In The Offering Box And By The Way You Can Do The Same Anytime You Want But In Reference To 2nd Corinthians 4 4 Where Satan Hardens If Our Gospel Be It Is To Them Whose

Mind The God Of This World Has Blinded Lest The Light Of The Glorious Gospel You Know The Passage In Romans 9 18 God Hardens In Hebrews 3 8 We Harden This Hardening By The Hardening Of The Heart Has To Do With Digging In One's Heels It's A Stubbornness It's A Rebellious Kind Of Attitude That Says I Won't And You Can't Make Me That's The Hardening Of Heart Pharaoh Did It And These Are Doing It Here That's Mentioned Is It Through Our Volition That Our Hearts Are Hardened Oh Yeah Oh Yeah It Is Our Volition It Is Our Will That Makes Us Dig In Our Heels And Says I Won't Or I Insist Or Whatever And It's Called Stubbornness In Addition To Hardness Of Heart It's Also Called Being Stiff Necked Have You Ever

[50 : 56] Had A Stiff Neck Pretty Miserable Isn't It You Go To Look Over That Way And You Have To Go Like This Boy You Get A Real Pain In The Neck And It Really Smarts It Means That You Will Not Be Turned Stubborn Recalcitrant It Is Through Our Volition That Our Hearts Are Hardened Either By God Or By Satan Or Ourselves And I Think It Is Principally By Ourselves And Can Satan Just Harden Your Heart No I Would Say Not Because If He Could He Would Harden All Of Them Satan Satan Has Enormous Powers That We Don't Fully Understand But He Certainly Does Not Have Unlimited Power I Was Talking About This Just This Morning In The Membership Class And I I I've Often Likken Satan To A Mad Dog On A Leash And God Is Holding The Leash And God Will Not Allow The Mad

Dog To Go Any Further Than What The Holder Of The Leash Wants To Allow Him To Go But He Does Have A Certain Amount Of Parameters That He Can Cover And He Manages To Strew Around A Lot Of Discomfort And A Lot Of Pain And A Lot Of Heartache For A Lot Of People But Satan Cannot Just Harden Our Heart At Will And I'm Not Sure That I Understand This Question Is It Because We Show God Where We Stand I Don't Know God God Does Read The Heart God Reads Our Intentions God Knows And Understands Our Motives And This Is The Thing That Allows God To Evaluate And Judge His People With Complete Total Accuracy And That Is Because He Knows Everything When We Want To Examine Someone We Haul Them Into Court And We Impanel A Jury And We Have A Prosecutor And We Have A Defense And

All They're Trying To Do Is Get Information But God Never Does That Because He Knows Everything He Doesn't Ask A jury For Their Opinion He Doesn't Look To A Prosecutor He Knows Everything And He Is Able To Render A Fully Totally Just Verdict About Everything And We Ought To Take Great Comfort In That Nothing Escapes Him He Is A Just Judge Of The Universe Any Other Comments Or Questions Anybody Thank you You Are Dismissed And