

**Introduction:**

- Matthew 16:24-28
- “Alfred Lansing in his book, Endurance writes how in the early 1900s, a London newspaper carried an advertisement that read: *“Men wanted for hazardous journey, small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger. Safe return doubtful. Honor and recognition in case of success.”* Thousands of men responded to the ad signed by the famous Arctic explorer, Sir Ernest Shackleton. If Jesus were writing that ad today to secure help in establishing the Kingdom of God it might read: *“Wanted, men and women for hazardous journey, small wages, life threats and constant opposition. You will be rejected by many attacked by some and always opposed by a devil who wants you dead. It may cost you everything. You will be honored and recognized if successful.”* *“Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”* (Matthew 16:24, ESV)
- I want to talk to you this morning about honoring God with your life.
- Jesus had just heard Peter declare the great revelation, *“You are the Christ, Son of the Living God.”* This revelation is followed by Jesus starting to tell them how He will die. It is a very serious and sobering moment in the lives of the disciples because Jesus is serious about redeeming mankind. He is serious about honoring God with His life. And calls his disciples to do the same.

- I. Don't Squander A Minute Of Your Life** To squander is to spend or use carelessly. It is what the prodigal did before returning to the Father.
- A. This is Jesus' challenge to his disciple in Mt 16:24-28.
1. We only get one life. Make it count! Do not squander it. Even in difficult times make it count. Consider Job:
    2. When Job lost his 10 children he tore his robe, humbled himself and fell to the ground and worshiped. Did Job understand his loss? No. But he understood who he was living for. Here is what he prayed.
      - a) *“The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”*
      - b) Later Job says, *“In His hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind.”* (Job 12:10, ESV) Your life belongs to God, graduates! He holds it, make it count!
    3. James said it this way. *“Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”— yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.”* (James 4:13-14, ESV) Think about your life and what you will be spending it for.
- B. Our lives belong to God.
1. He made us and we belong to him.

2. He gave His Son for us so we could belong to Him. The price paid for our salvation is great! Do not think for a moment you can waste your life and not pay an eternal price.
- C. Jesus is jealous for your life! He is jealous that you not waste your life. Make every possible effort to honor Him with the life He has given you, how ever long or short.
  1. Jesus makes this point with these words: A person's "*life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions*" (Luke 12:15). Don't waste your life living for you.
  2. It is possible for you to waste your life. And Jesus is jealous that you not be called a 'fool' by God because you wasted your life.
- D. We squander our lives when we deny Christ rather than deny ourselves.
  1. "To "deny" means to dissociate oneself from a statement or a person. To dissociate oneself from one's own interests, which in this case means the willingness to risk one's own life. It means putting loyalty to Jesus before self-preservation." France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 638). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.
  2. Disassociate yourself from wealth, fame, possessions. And associate yourself with Christ! There is nothing wrong with having those things unless unless they give you identity in life. A plaque seen in an old store: "Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last."
  3. I am almost 63, and possibly 2/3 of my life has passed me by. "The river of my life is spilling over the falls of my days with tremendous speed. More and more I smell eternity. And oh, how I want to use my life well. It is so short and so fragile and so final. You get one chance to live your life. And then the judgment. I speak as a father to you, and I am jealous with Jesus that you not waste your life." John Piper. Therefore...

## II. Maximize The Return On Your Life

- A. Live life un-wasted!
  1. We maximize the return on our lives by honoring God with the very life He has given us.
  2. Denying yourself is a life disassociated with self and associated with Christ. It is a life that puts the infinite value of Christ on display for the world to see.
    - a) Christ is not seen in you when you live for you.
    - b) Christ is not seen in you when you are the center of your life.
    - c) Christ is seen in you when you allow Him to live through you.
- B. The greatest passion of the un-wasted life is to magnify Christ!
  1. We hear it in Pauls words, "... *it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to **live is Christ, and to die is gain.***" (Philippians 1:20-21, ESV)

2. Paul's driving energy was that whether in life or in death Jesus Christ be honored. In other words, he wanted Jesus in him to look like the treasure really He is.
  3. The reason you have life is to make Jesus Christ look great. Everything you do in life should make you ask, "Will this make Jesus look like the treasure in the field."
- C. There are two side of this verse (Phil 1:20-21)
1. The life side: How does Paul accomplish this? *"But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ"* (Philippians 3:7-8, ESV)
    - a) If it is a loss, it still has value.
    - b) If it is rubbish it has no value and is thrown out.
    - c) Paul lives for one thing and one thing only! My question is, who are you living for?
  2. The death side: Phil 1:21 *To die is gain!*
    - a) Death is gain because death means seeing Christ face to face!
    - b) It means to be with him – with him! It does not get any better than that!

### III. What Will You Do With Your Life?

- A. *"Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come (desires) after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."* (Matthew 16:24, ESV)
1. This means you have a choice. Choose today graduates whom you will serve.
  2. *"If anyone desires..."* A clear choice is thus offered between self-preservation at all costs and the risky business of following Jesus.
  3. *"Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."* (Matthew 10:39, ESV) Life lost out of loyalty to Jesus ensures that true life is gained.
- B. How did the apostle Paul do this (deny and follow) ?
1. *"But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong."* (2 Corinthians 12:9-10, ESV)
  2. Paul let Jesus be seen in big ways through his own personal weaknesses. *"When I am weak He is strong."*
- C. So I ask you graduates today, "Are you going to throw your lives away?"
1. Are you going to throw your life away with the rest of the world by striving to minimize your suffering and maximize your comforts in this life? Are you going to work for the bread that perishes? Build bigger barns? Lay up treasures on earth?

Strive for the praise of man? If you do it will be written over you, "*Fool! Whose will these things be?*" And the tragic word is: "Wasted!"

2. But if your passion is to display the worth of Christ, and thus to treasure him above all things, and thus to risk and sacrifice for the display of his supreme value, then I do not doubt that God will use you mightily and the commitments you make.
3. Then over your life will be written the words: "This life was not wasted. This life gladly displayed the glory of Christ, both in life and in death."

**Conclusion:**

- Honoring God with your life—Is making your life count for God.
  - Display Him in your life or in your death.
  - Treasure Him above all earthly possessions and people
  - Be willing to risking everything in order to encounter Him.
- *He will repay each person according to what He has done.* Mt 16:27