

# FOR WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT A MAN MARK 8:36

Text: Mark 8:36

## **Mark 8:36**

<sup>36</sup>For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

Introduction:

Right now, everybody seems to be feeling the pain of a slow economy. Well, not everybody. At Exxon Mobil, the world's largest oil company, it's all profit. In 2007, the company set another record, with \$40.6 billion of net income. That works out to a cool \$1,287 of profit for every second of last year.

The Lord Jesus was not a business man. While He often spoke about money, He did not come to earth to make money.

While His mission was not economic, at the close of Mark chapter eight, He asked a question that dealt with the issue of profit and loss.

Through this question, Christ taught that it is possible for a man to gain and still lose. In fact, His question

implies that if a man could gain the whole world, with all its wealth, all its luxuries, and all its pleasures, and still end up a loser in the end.

The message revealed in this penetrating, insightful question is that a secure soul is more eternally valuable than the most profitable portfolio in the world.

If a man makes billions of dollars in profits, and yet his soul ends up in hell, his profit will be loss. All the money in the world will not make up for a soul that is lost forever.

In verse 36 the Lord Jesus asks one of His most penetrating and insightful questions. As this question is considered, there are three challenges that emerge from it.

As you read the question, these challenges must be answered in your own heart. First of all, this question:

## **1. CHALLENGES OUR PRIORITIES**

In this question there are 2 different sets of priorities.

One involves the pursuit of worldly things; the other involves the preservation of the soul.

What are the priorities that govern our life?

## A. Do We Have Selfish Priorities

Many in our day are like the little boy who was riding a wooden horse with his sister. Frustrated at her, he said, "If one of us would get off, there would be more room for me."

Let's be honest, and ask, do we live our life for the sole purpose of making our life better? When we evaluate what is most important in our life, do all our priorities somehow involve the improvement and benefit of ourselves?

## B. Do We Have Spiritual Priorities

Where do the things of God rank on our list of priorities?

How important is it to us to read the Bible? How much time do we spend in prayer? How faithfully do we attend church?

## **2. CHALLENGES OUR PERSPECTIVE**

How you look at something makes all the difference in how you will approach it.

Someone once said that David fought Goliath because he had a different perspective. All the other soldiers looked at Goliath and said, "He's too big to knock

down.” David looked at Goliath and said, “He’s too big to miss.”

There are basically two different perspectives on life. You are most likely living with one of these two perspectives. Notice them both with me. The first perspective is that:

#### A. Life Is Limited To Earth

There are those who view this life as if this is only journey they will ever take. They begin at birth, and death is the final destination.

For these people, the only philosophy that makes any sense is, “Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die.”

They live for the things this world has to offer, ignoring thoughts of anything beyond their last breath, and dismissing their loose behavior by saying, “Hey, you only live once.”

#### B. Life Is Lived In Eternity

The perspective He puts forth is that this life is mere preparation for the life that is to come. This life, with its brief span and vaporous speed are but the introduction, the preface to an eternal existence.

When you truly believe that life is lived in eternity, then the temporary things of this world are not nearly as important as the things that survive into eternity.

Accumulating the treasures of this earth is not nearly as important as sending ahead treasures for heaven, when you live with an eternal perspective.

There is a third challenge to be drawn from this question. It not only *challenges your priorities*, and *challenges your perspective*, but notice also finally that this question:

### **3. CHALLENGES OUR PREPARATION**

No one, no matter how hard they may try, could ever gain the whole world. Yet, there are many who have lost their soul.

There are two things you ought to ask yourself as you consider this text. First of all, you ought to ask yourself this:

#### **A. Where's The Concern for Your Soul**

We live in a day in which people are increasingly concerned about their physical appearance and the shape of their bodies.

People pay thousands of dollars for surgical procedures to shrink this and enlarge that, all in an effort to keep up their outward appearance.

However, most people have little concern for their souls. In many ways, they are like a person who pays thousands of dollars to have a house painted that is infested with termites. They are like a person who puts new tires and wheels on a car broken engine.

Charles Spurgeon, while preaching on this text in 1856 said, "Consider how precious a soul must be, when both God and the devil are after it."

## B. What Is the Condition of Your Soul

With His question in verse 36, the Lord Jesus presents the possibility of your soul being lost. The word "lost" in this text literally means to suffer damage.

What is the condition of your soul? Do you know for sure that if you have nothing else, you have security for your soul?

How can you know the condition of your soul? A good place to start is by examining your priorities? Are they selfish or spiritual? What about your perspective? Do you live as if life is limited to this earth, or are you living for the life that is to come?

Close:

The Lord Jesus measures the success of a life by very different standards than the world. If someone were to gain the whole world, no doubt he would be considered a success.

Yet Jesus says that if there was a man who could gain the whole world, it would not be profitable to him if lost his soul.

May consider this question in our heart and in an honest way.