

June 12, 2011

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Monday

John 10:10 "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

"You can't have your cake and eat it too?" What is that supposed to mean? I confess to some dullness in understanding the proverb. I figured, "It's my cake; I'll eat it if I want to." Then someone explained that it's all about the choice you have to keep the pretty decorated cake in its wholeness or to cut it, eat it and enjoy it. You can't have it both ways. Life is like that, you can't tenaciously hold on to what you have and receive what you want. You can't live a life of adventure and stay safely in your comfort zone. You can't have abundant life, if you are unwilling to risk living. Real living is reserved for those willing to cut the cake and find what it holds.

Tuesday

Mark 8:33 But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."

Now that's an ouch! He called Peter "Satan". And He called him Satan right in front of all the others. REBUKED! Why? Because Peter, looking at the prospects from a human perspective, simply could not understand the grand plan of God. We might defend him saying, "But his heart was right." It was. That doesn't matter. His understanding was wrong, ungodly, ill advised, and unbiblical. Peter thought he knew the mind of God, so he wasn't really listening. When we think we already know the heart of God, we sometimes cut off the very word of God. "Lord, help us; open our eyes to your word; open our hearts to your plan."

Wednesday

Mark 8:37 "For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

God runs a "life exchange". Like a money exchange where you can swap dollars for Rupees, or Euros for Pounds, God's exchange allows you to exchange your sinful, unproductive life for His righteous, wonderful and eternal life. The question posed is one of logic. Why would any one refuse to make the swap? What could be so alluring as to keep you from taking God's offer of abundance? Perhaps it's lack of knowledge. More likely, it's a lack of trust in God. He has promised you life, abundant life. But you must trust him enough to give him yours in exchange.

Thursday

Mark 8:35 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it."

What does it mean to die to self? It's a concept often proclaimed. How? Why? The "why" is easy. Jesus demands it. But the "how" is often misunderstood. When you die to self you kill your own will; you slay your own 'rights'. You decide to do what God desires even when it is not what you want to do. When you die to self you allow Jesus to rule your life. This is not always easy. Like death itself, it requires trust in God's plan. Ego is powerful. Change is difficult. Jesus desires the death of the first and the acceptance of the second.

Friday

Matt. 16:24 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

Three aspects of the crucified life are evident. I crucify my perspective and see life from God's point of view. I crucify my priorities and take up the priorities of God. I crucify my right to choose my life, my vocation, my place of service and allow God to guide, direct, and orchestrate His plan. The cross was not something to be worn around my neck as jewelry; it is and was an instrument of death. It was not an easy death or a delightful death. It was a painful death, a public death, and a permanent death to self. Jesus cried when facing the cross, "Take this cup from me, but not my will, Yours be done." Perhaps you need to pray the same prayer today?