

SAVORING THE THINGS OF GOD

Mark 8:34-9:1

Intro: I am taking my subject from a part of what our Lord said to Peter after Peter rebuke the Lord for saying that He was going to die. I believe that the translators of the King James version have grasped the idea that the Lord was expressing in verse 33 when He said to Peter, “Thou savorest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.” Actually to savor anything is to take delight in it, to relish it, to be keenly interested in it. A synonym for the verb to savor is the verb *to taste*.

We have an illustration of this in Genesis 27 when Isaac called Esau to come to him, and this is what he said to Esau:

2b . . . Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death:
 3 Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison;
 4 And make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die (Gen. 27:2b-4).

Esau knew how to cook venison in a special way, and his father loved it. It was his favorite dish. He called it “savory meat.” In the area of food, there wasn’t anything that you could prepare for Isaac that would please him more.

Think about what is your favorite food, the food that is number one on your list of foods. The joy that you feel when you know such a dish is going to be on the table for you, is what this word *savory* expresses.

Actually the word that our Lord used in rebuking Peter (φρονέω) is a verb which *to have an understanding, to feel, or to think*. But this verb is used sometimes *to manifest an intense desire to know something, and to promote it*. To savor the things of God is to understand the things of God, and to seek to pursue them so as to understand them better. Peter understood who Jesus was, “the Christ, the Son of the living God,” but he did not yet understand *why* the Lord Jesus had come, and when the Lord sought to tell him, He rebuked the Lord. He felt that the Lord didn’t know what He was talking about. Having the Lord’s commendation as to who the Lord was, he also felt that he understood why the Lord had come into the world. *And it certainly was not to die!* But he was just as wrong on the purpose of the Lord’s coming as he had been right in identifying

Who the Lord was! And furthermore, he was not at all interested in pursuing what the Lord had started to tell him and the other disciples. He really did not relish the Scriptures.

We all have a tendency to do this. When we come to something in the Word that is different from what our ideas have been, we tend to ignore it; we are not really intent on understanding what the Lord has to say, and then to act upon it.

There are actually two ways to go in this life, and the Lord mentioned both of them here in Mark 8. There are “the things that be of God” and “the things that be of men.” The things that be of men can be subdivided almost endlessly, but the things that be of God can only be known by the Spirit of God from what has been revealed to us in the Word of God. The Bible doesn’t make sense to the multitudes of people. It is foolishness to them. They are not able to understand it, and so they write it off. And this has to do especially with the Gospel. There would be no Gospel if the Lord Jesus Christ had not died, and died to save sinners from their sins. He died so that we would not have to do. He paid the penalty for our sins so that we would not have to suffer eternally for them. How could Peter have been saved at this time when he was challenging the Lord about what the Lord was telling the disciples about His death and His resurrection. It is no wonder that the Lord did not want him to preach at this point in his life. He knew a very important part of the truth, that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God. But that should have made him seek to know more, but it didn’t. He wanted to make the Lord fit into his plans rather than to let the Lord make Peter delight in knowing more of the will of God.

I hope that what we know about the things of God, will make us delight so much in the truth that we know, that we will long to know more, and then more, and then even more. Peter, without knowing it, was taking sides with Satan, God’s adversary. You and I can be sure that the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ are two subjects that Satan does not want men to hear. Paul actually said this in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4:

3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

So what did the Lord do after He rebuked Peter in such a strong way?

Did He dismiss Peter from the apostles? No. If He had He probably would have had to dismiss all of the others. No, He did not turn Peter out. Instead, He called the people who had gathered around them “with His disciples,” and He began to teach them, or you can call it preaching. The only way to do away with error is to teach the truth. And that is what the Lord did at this point. He wanted each one of them individually *to savor the things that be of God.*

Possibly this is an abbreviated report of what the Lord said; I don't know. But then a sermon doesn't have to be long to be powerful. This may be all that the Lord said to them. It would have left them with plenty to think about. The people had come to Him, perhaps for healing, perhaps because great crowds came to Him, perhaps they were fascinated by the things that He taught. But in verse 34 the Lord made it clear that if we are to come to Christ, and to benefit from our coming, we have to deny ourselves, which would mean turning away from our ways, our thoughts, our plans and purposes, to take up our cross, that is, to prepare to face the opposition of the world, meaning persecution, and possibly death, to follow the Lord. Following the Lord means to accept Him, to believe what He teaches, and to live according to His will. If we are going to come to the Lord and follow Him, we must be prepared to receive the same kind of treatment that He received. When the Lord was with His disciples before He was arrested and crucified, He said this to them:

18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me (John 15:18-21).

But what if you decide to keep your life for yourself, and to live your life the way you want to live it. I have heard people say, “I don't want anybody telling me how to live my life.” And they include the Lord in that. In verse 35 the Lord Jesus said that this is the way to lose your life. We here in the United States interpret civil rights as the right to do whatever I want to do – and the limits on that are being expanded all of the time.

There are many of us living today who never conceived of things taking place like they are today. In my younger days as a pastor I visited a man from our church who was in jail for homosexual behavior. Today we have parades where such a lifestyle is flaunted, and where many of our public officials take part in the parade. But God has never changed His Word on that subject. The person who spends his life doing whatever he wants to do, is guaranteed to lose his life, lose it forever with no possibility of change. If you don't believe there is a hell, you will be thoroughly convinced that there is the moment you die. Our world is full of people who think it is great to sin however you want to, but unless they hear the Gospel, and believe in Christ, they are all losers, eternal losers, not exceptions to those who go on ignoring God and Christ and the Bible. And if you think that one way is just as good as another, you will find out that that is a losing game too. There is only one Savior for people throughout the world, and His Name is the Lord Jesus Christ. Cf. John 14:6; Acts 4:12. It is only through Christ and the Gospel that your life can be saved. The world says that if you believe the Gospel and think that Jesus Christ is the only One Who can save you, you are crazy. But make no mistake about it, God's Word is true.

In verses 36 and 37 we have two questions that the Lord asked His disciples and the crowd standing around. And I don't think that He would have asked those questions like we are accustomed to read them. He probably paused after each one to give people time to think about what their answer would be. Can you and I think of anything that is so valuable that it would be worth sacrificing our souls to get it? What if you could gain the whole world? What if you had all of the world's money, all of the world's power, all of the world's pleasure, if there any of it that is worth sacrificing your eternal soul.

Many people expect to do something about their relationship with God some day, but not now. Remember you don't have to reject Christ, to be lost. You are lost already, and if you keep on neglecting the salvation of your soul, you will find that it becomes rejection. But Hebrews 2:3 asks the question, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" Escape what? Escape the certain judgment of God. Make no mistake; judgment is coming!

Is there anything more important than the salvation of your soul? And by "your soul" the Bible means you, you are a living soul. You live in your body, but you are a living soul. And you are going to exist forever in one

of two places, either in heaven, or hell.

Now look at verse 38, and you will see that the Lord Jesus Christ is the One you need to be concerned about, both Who He is, and why it was that He came into this world. The Lord Jesus and His Word are scorned today like they have been in every generation. How did the Lord describe the people of the world. He called it “this generation.” And He described it as “adulterous and sinful.” “Adulterous” means corrupt, defiled, debased. Adultery is a sin that has become a way of life in America. It is displayed in theaters and on TV. If you let it, pornography will come right into your living room. What about the word “sinful.” People don’t like to talk about sin because that raises talk about God—and that is what it should do. God has not changed. His Word has not changed. And everything that the Bible has called sin is the past, *is still sin!* Are we going to let a profane, corrupt, sinful world determine how we are going to live and where we are going to spend eternity? You don’t have to do anything to incur the judgment of God. Everyone is under judgment already, and doomed to spend eternity in hell unless God in His grace intervenes.

Are you ashamed to be identified with Jesus Christ? Then, when He comes, and He is coming, He will be ashamed of you when He comes “in the glory of His Father with the Holy angels.” And then it will be too late to hear the Gospel and to talk about believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Twice in the book of Proverbs we have one verse give which declares in a few words what the Lord Jesus was saying in the few words that we have here at the end of Mark 8. I am referring to the words you will find in Proverbs 14:12 and Proverbs 16:25:

There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

It only has to be stated once because it is the truth. But it is stated twice so that if you missed it the first time, you may get it the second time. Repetitions in Scripture emphasize the certainty of what is being taught, and certainty means that in the end it will shown to be true. If you talk to people, you will find that there are many different ways that people are following, hoping that it is the right way. But there is only one right way, and that is God’s way. It alone leads to life eternal. God’s way is through Christ. God’s way is the way of the forgiveness of sins. God’s way makes us new creatures with the gift of eternal life. God’s way is the true way that leads to God and heaven. We don’t pay for it. We certainly don’t deserve it. But it is a free gift. But it was purchased by the suffer-

ing and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, a price that we may never fully understand. But every time you and I hear the Gospel preached, it ought to make us savor the things of God more and more.

Now the Lord's message did not end with verse 38. The last verse in His message got moved into chapter 9. The words of the Bible are all inspired by God, but the chapters and verses are not. They were added later so that we could find our way around in the Bible more readily. So the last of the Lord's message found here at the end of chapter 8 is found at the beginning of chapter 9. Let me read it to you again. (Read Mark 9:1.)

The Bible very clearly teaches that there is going to be a millennial reign of Christ upon the earth, millennial because it will last a thousand years. But the word "kingdom," "kingdom of God," here is not referring to that kingdom. No person living then saw that kingdom come, and it is still future. The Lord here was speaking of the Kingdom of God, or salvation. This is the kingdom that the Lord spoke to Nicodemus in John 3 where He talked about seeing the kingdom and entering the kingdom. Those who were living when the Lord spoke the words we have been considering this morning, were people who lived to the time when the Lord fulfilled what He first spoke of here in our text, and which had to do with the death of Christ and the resurrection of Christ. It is upon these two great truths that we have the Gospel, the good news of salvation. When we are saved we are born into the kingdom of God. The Lord Jesus is both our Savior and our Lord. Cf. Romans 10:9-10:

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Concl: So the truth is that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world, not that everyone in the world will be saved, but that He is the only Savior that there is. But the big question today is, Is He your Savior? If not, why not? Is it because the world is more important to you. Are you more concerned about the pleasures of this life than you are about the eternal welfare of your soul? Let me encourage you not to delay any longer. Come to Christ. Put your trust in Him. Salvation cannot be earned. You can buy it. Come to Christ as you are, acknowledging your sinfulness and your need of the Savior. Come to Him today and be saved.