

## MISSIONS POSSIBLE - "The Jesus List"

We begin a series today that focuses on the Great Commission. This lesson I'm entitling "*The Jesus List*" and before we're done I'm pretty sure you'll understand why. Next week will be our Faith Promise Rally\_ with a presentation from Lori Saia from Builder's without Border, highlighting the work in Haiti that we support. The following week, I'll share a message from **Psalm 66** that I call "*Come and See.*" Then, on October 25<sup>th</sup>, we'll close out with a message entitled "*Go and Tell.*"

Let's start with a basic question this morning. "*What is a soul worth?*" Before we answer too quickly, let's allow for Jesus to give us some insight into this. Turn to **Mark 8:34-38**.

**<sup>34</sup> Then He called the crowd to Him along with His disciples and said: "If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. <sup>35</sup> For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life FOR ME AND FOR THE GOSPEL will save it. <sup>36</sup> What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? <sup>37</sup> Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? <sup>38</sup> If anyone is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His Father's glory with the holy angels."**

The soul is more than our physical life. It is our eternal self; the essence of our identity that endures forever. What is a soul worth, then? Jesus indicates that *the worth of a soul is more than we might think*. Yet, many who doubt the existence of the soul, ignorantly trade it for what will eventually prove to be worthless things: the pursuit of riches and power, fleeting popularity or temporary pleasures, and surface relationships. In **Luke 12** Jesus tells a parable:

**<sup>16</sup> "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. <sup>17</sup> He thought to 'himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' <sup>18</sup> "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.' <sup>19</sup> And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.' <sup>20</sup> But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' <sup>21</sup> "This is how it will be with ANYONE WHO SORES UP THINGS FOR HIMSELF BUT IS NOT RICH TOWARD GOD."**

So, he spent his life amassing fortune, only to die unexpectedly and leave it all behind. Talk about a waste. We might expect this of someone who doesn't understand the value of a soul. But, we do, right?

What is your own soul worth? How about the souls of spouse or your children or your grandchildren? What about the souls of your parents or your neighbors or your best friends? What are they worth? God's Word indicates *a soul is so valuable* that He paid the price of His own Son's blood to redeem them.

Perhaps you have seen Stephen Spielberg's film, "*Schindler's List.*" It is a dramatic account of one of the darkest periods in human history. It was in **1941**, when the "*Final Solution*" to exterminate all the Jews, Gypsies, and other "*impure*" groups in Europe was implemented. The Nazis violently evacuated Jews from the ghettos, sending them to Auschwitz, Treblinka, and other death camps to face the gas chambers. Bodies of the murdered were cremated in large ovens, often making the sky above the death camps and surrounding towns black with smoke, with human ashes raining down like snow.

During this bleak and terrifying period, Oskar Schindler, a war profiteer and womanizer, had such a conviction in his heart, that he used his fortune to bribe Gestapo officials and Nazi generals to gain permits to build a camp on the site of his factory to house Jewish workers.

He even had the camp surrounded with barbed wire and watch towers to provide refuge for those in his employ. He not only protected his work force in Kraków from the Nazis, but provided for all their needs by buying food, clothing, and medical supplies on the black market. The German forces intervened more than once, even arresting him a time or two, but he always managed to “*buy his way out*” and continued to keep his workers safe.

There were over **1000** Jews in his employ who came to call themselves “*Schindler Jews*”. Given that the Nazis killed millions of people during the Holocaust, this number might seem insignificant. However, these were **1100** unique human lives, all of which would have ceased to exist if not for Schindler, and they produced some **6,000** descendants. Despite the overwhelming scale of the Holocaust as a whole, the powerful story of the man who risked his life and wealth to save their lives has endured. I’ve added closed captions to the ***closing scenes*** of the film. (It can be viewed at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gIDET\\_HP3s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gIDET_HP3s) )

I wonder if we will ever be so convicted as Schindler was. Will there be a time when we will bitterly weep over all that we have wasted\_ while people that could have been saved were lost. Next week is our **Faith Promise Sunday**. Let’s be determined to do our part....

How? I’ve run the **FAQ’s** about Faith Promise in the bulletin for several weeks now. It suggests we might have increased income. That’s what we all want isn’t it? Yet, if we did, would we automatically give more to missions? As I watched the film clip, I could not help but think about the other options. Decreased expenses\_ or making sacrifices. Is there a commitment that I’ll be done with this year that could free up some money? Could I cut current costs in my budget so I could give more to missions? If you’re like me, you may think there’s not much you can trim. But, then again, how much do I waste? Or how much do I spend on my own personal comfort? Could I reduce my cable bill? Eat out less? Take fewer weekend excursions or plan a vacation that is less extravagant? Might I put off buying that new car, appliance, or electronic gadget a few more months\_ even another year?

Yet, as the Apostle Paul says in **2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 9...**

**<sup>6</sup> Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. <sup>7</sup> Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. <sup>8</sup> And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. <sup>9</sup> As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." <sup>10</sup> Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. <sup>11</sup> You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. <sup>12</sup> This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. <sup>13</sup> Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. <sup>14</sup> And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. <sup>15</sup> Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!**

So, I need to pray, pledge, and trust. I need to be responsive to what God leads me to give, keeping in mind that if Jesus comes back as soon as I hope He will, I won’t be taking it with me\_ but there may very well be a few more some souls who will join me.