

The Brown Street Beacon

"...Shine out among them like beacon lights,

holding out to them the Word of Life" (Phil 2:15-16)



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Is Your Soul for Sale?

Jesus said, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul" (Matthew 16:26). Is your soul for sale? The Devil would like for it to be. He'll give you anything within his power for it. Sadly, there have been many over the years who have sold their soul to the Devil, and in each case the Devil has gotten a bargain. The soul is the most precious thing in the world. You do not own anything that is as valuable as your soul. Yet, it is amazing that so many will exchange their soul for such little in return. Here are some examples:

Popularity

Everyone likes to be popular, at least up to a certain extent. It is nice to have people pay attention to you. It is nice to be flattered with words. It feels good to know that others like you. But are these things worth the soul? The answer, of course, is no. Paul realized that, and so he was willing to give up things that would certainly make him very popular. In Philippians 3 we read the following about Paul: *"Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ"* (Philippians 3:5-7). Paul went from being esteemed among the Jews to being an enemy. He could go back to Judaism and regain his lost standing in the Jewish community. He could sell his soul for popularity. But to Paul it wasn't worth it. What about us? Is popularity worth the cost of your soul? I hope not.

Earthly Riches

The Devil has frequently cashed in on man's desire to possess the riches of this world. Demas sold his soul for the things of this world. Paul said, *"For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world. . ."* (2 Timothy 4:10). He was not the last one to sell his soul for riches. In fact, it happens all the time. Many are obsessed by the lure of the mighty dollar. Think of all the people who have lived recklessly as they chase mammon. Think of all the drug pushers, thieves, scam artists, etc., that have one thing in common: the love of money. Think of those who have lost their life savings by gambling. It may be, according to society, that they have a disease; that they now can no longer stop themselves from gambling. But rest assured, it all started because of the love of money. Think about the murders that have taken place, the lives destroyed because of an over-bearing desire, a lust, to be rich. Truly, the love of money is the root of all evil (1 Timothy 6:10). The sad thing is that many sell their souls just by fanatically seeking for riches which most never obtain, and even those who do, do not seem to realize that riches will never completely satisfy them (Ecclesiastes 5:10).

Do citizens of the kingdom of God have to be careful of this? Yes! It is not just a problem among worldly minded people outside of Christ. It is a danger of which we must all be aware. Jesus was speaking to those who would be members of the body of Christ when He said, *“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”*(Matthew 6:19-21). Let’s all be on guard. Let’s be sure to set our affections on things above, not on earthly things (Colossians 3:2). Don’t sell your soul to the Devil for earthly riches that vanish with time. It is not worth it!

The Desires of the Flesh

This is another area where Satan has enjoyed great success. Many say, “what can be wrong in bringing a little pleasure to one’s self, especially when no one else is hurt by my actions?” “What is really wrong with gratifying my desire to feel good?” Commercials on T.V. abound with advertisement that suggest the only way to live is to fulfill fleshly desires that are contrary to God’s law, and many are buying into this doctrine of the Devil. People of intelligence conclude that there is nothing wrong with getting drunk once in a while, as long as one is not an alcoholic. What about the worldly concession that there isn’t anything especially bad about having sex outside of the union of marriage, as long as it is done safely? I have even heard pornography justified, as long as it is done with taste. Those who reason like this are those who have sold their souls to the Devil. The ones who have given in to the lust of the flesh have exchanged the salvation of their souls for the pleasures of sin that last for but a moment. Is it worth it? Of course not! Better to follow the advice of the Spirit and crucify the flesh (Galatians 5:24), than to sell the soul and spend eternity in a devil’s hell.

What is your soul worth to you? What is more important to you than the salvation of your soul? I hope nothing. If you want to sell something, sell yourself to Christ, the One Who purchased the church with His own blood, and serve Him all the days of your life. That’s something worth doing.

Don

"Church of Christ Basketball League"

by Mark White

Just recently, the Fry Road church received a letter of invitation from another Houston congregation to join them in forming a "city-wide Church of Christ basketball league." The letter stated that we could have 15 men on our team with a limit of 3 non-members of the church playing for us. There is even going to be a state tournament next March in Dallas! If we were so inclined, we could join our brothers in this "fellowship" as they call it, and we might even have a chance at beating the Baptists in a game of hoops.

Just imagine. Heaven must be elated with such plans among the brethren. Jesus is likely ecstatic that the churches are so focused on His mission and the work He left the church to accomplish. (I say this with sarcasm, of course.)

It was only a matter of time, I suppose, before this "Church of Christ Basketball league" was bound to form. After all, several Houston-area churches have long had their gymnasiums and multi-

purpose facilities. Why not put them to such good use with brethren from all over the area dribbling and shooting away? (Again, I speak in jest). **Who can seriously believe that Jesus died on the cross for such purposes?** Is there not a shred of spirituality left in us that we must condescend to such fleshly pursuits while the world is going to hell all around us?

let me be understood. Is there anything sinful about Christians playing basketball together? Not at all, as long as they behave themselves properly. But where in Scripture does God authorize **the church** to plan and implement a basketball program? What passage of Scripture supports a "city-wide Church of Christ basketball league"? And for that matter, will someone please help me to see what business the church has in building and maintaining gyms, playgrounds, "family-life centers", jogging tracks, or other recreational facilities? What the Bible calls "fellowship" is something much different and more meaningful than shooting a few hoops with your brethren.

This is liberalism gone to seed. The church of the Lord was not redeemed by the blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18, 19) for such foolishness as this.