

I WOULDN'T MISS HEAVEN FOR THE WORLD

By Mark Beaird

Text: Philippians 3:7-14

One fundamental point of Christianity is "a man cannot make other things his gain, and also gain Christ" and eternal life. That is to say, only Jesus Christ can be first in a person's life if that person wishes to make heaven his home. The Apostle Paul had come to the place that all had become secondary to Christ. All possessions, ambitions, and worldly pleasures were, in comparison, as dung--simply worthless. Paul was willing to give up the world to win an eternal prize.

I'm reminded of the famous Jim Elliott quote that says, ■ "He is no fool who is willing to give up what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose."

■ Jonathon Edwards said, "The way to heaven is ascending we must be content to travel uphill though it be hard and tiresome, and contrary to the natural bias of our flesh.

■ Colossians 3:1-4 assures us, "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory." (NIV)

No matter what the world may offer. I wouldn't miss heaven for the world!

I. I WOULDN'T MISS HEAVEN FOR THE WORLD'S POPULARITY.

A. What they call peer pressure has caused many to go astray.

B. Don't let the friendship of the world cause you to push Jesus away!

II. I WOULD'T MISS HEAVEN FOR THE WORLD'S PLEASURE.

A. We must make a choice between the eternal and the temporal.

■ Martin Luther said, "I would not give one moment of heaven for all the joy and riches of the world, even if it lasted for thousands and thousands of years."

■ Hebrews 11:24-26 "By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward."

B. The temporal, by its nature, can last for only so long.

Solomon found out the pleasures of this world alone would leave us empty.

■ Ecc. 2:9-11 "I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me. I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my work, and this was the reward for all my labor. Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun."

(NIV)

■ Ecc. 12:13-14

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." (KJV)

III. I WOULDN'T MISS HEAVEN FOR THE WORLD'S POSSESSIONS.

A. In this materialistic age many are trusting in what they possess.

■ Just like the Rich Fool -- Luke 12:16-21

But those rich toward God are different.

■ Hebrews 11:8-10 & 15-16, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But not they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city."

v. 15 notice--"If they had been mindful of that country..."

■ Someone said, "Looking back ends in going back."

■ A young lady told her friend, "I would give the world to have a Christian experience like yours." Her friend replied, "That is exactly what it will cost you."

■ I John 2:15-17 says, "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever."

CONCLUSION

■ Kierkegaard, the Danish philosopher, told a story about a goose who was wounded and who landed in a barnyard with some chickens. He played with the chickens and ate with the chickens. After a while that goose thought he was a chicken. One day a flight of geese came over, migrating to their home. They gave a honk up there in the sky, and he heard it.

Kierkegaard said, "Something stirred within the breast of this goose. Something called him to the skies. He began to flap the wings he hadn't used, and he rose a few feet into the air. **Then he stopped, and he settled back again into the mud of the barnyard. He heard the cry, but he settled for less.**"

-- Leighton Ford, "Hope for a Great Forever," Preaching Today, Tape No. 96.