

# Save and Lose Lose and Save !

IF ANY MAN WILL COME AFTER ME, LET HIM DENY HIMSELF, AND TAKE UP HIS CROSS DAILY, AND FOLLOW ME. FOR WHOSOEVER WILL SAVE HIS LIFE SHALL LOSE IT; BUT WHOSOEVER WILL LOSE HIS LIFE FOR MY SAKE, THE SAME SHALL SAVE IT.



## Where has it happened ?

- ▀ Esther's story – If I perish, I perish !
- ▀ Mary and the costly alabaster oil

## Study Questions

- ▶ What does it mean to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Christ (Mark 8:34)?
- ▶ Jesus gives us the first reason to deny self, take up our cross, and follow him in Mark 8:35. What is the reason?
- ▶ In what ways are you tempted to save your life? How can you continue to fight those temptations with this passage?

Important point to note in Mark 8:35 is Jesus says “ Whoever whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me AND THE GOSPEL will save it.



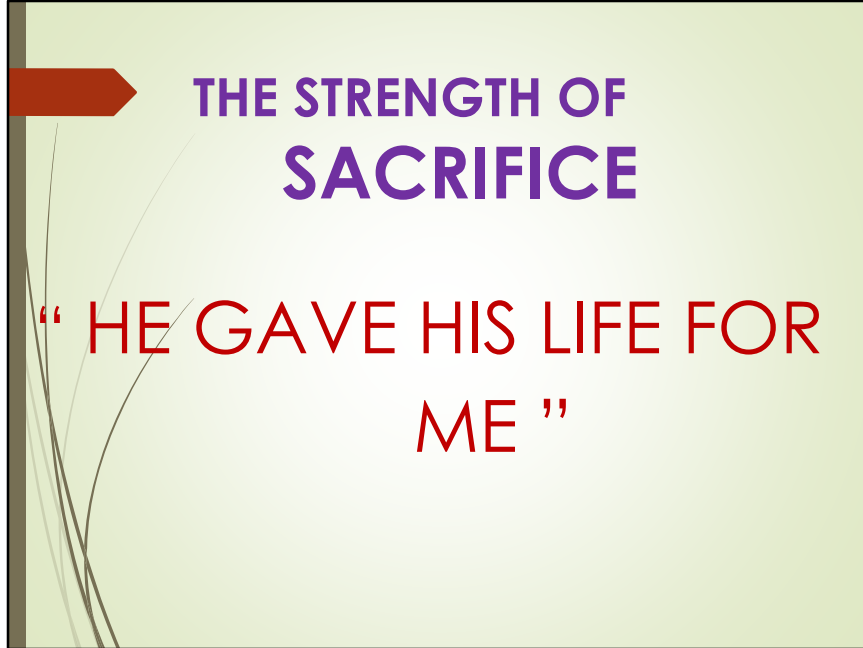
## What are we giving up ?

- ▶ Time
- ▶ Resources
- ▶ Finances
- ▶ Ourselves !!



## What are we gaining ?

- ▶ A STRONGER relationship with JESUS
- ▶ GREATER HARVEST of SOULS
- ▶ Eternal LIFE
- ▶ His ETERNAL KINGDOM !



**Becoming a Contagious Christian – Bill Hybels and Mark Mittelberg**

Page 81 from the Book

Sacrifices move people, they melt people. They stop people in their tracks and make them ask “ Why ? Why would you go out of your way for me ? What would motivate you to put my interests before your own?

Has someone ever melted your heart by sacrifice done on your behalf ? Has anyone put your concerns in front of their own in a way that really cost them something ? If so, it stays fresh in your memory. Sacrificial acts are rarely forgotten.

Small investments with big dividends – Read the flower story Page 82



# THREE SACRIFICIAL GIFTS



This probably is not hard to guess, and its impact is huge. It's the sacrifice of TIME. Time, they say is money and its becoming as rare a commodity. Work weeks are longer, leisure breaks are shorter and the pace of life is faster. In the midst of a world like that, you make a huge statement to others when you joyfully offer them the gift of time.

When I think of examples of individuals doing this, I can't think beyond our church – whether it's befriending a homeless man, helping out at the toddlers club/ Sunday church, tending to the garden, giving our time to those needy – spiritually, mentally or just being indispensable to the church – we have it all and more. We all know that we have what it takes and I can be prouder to be part of this family.

Jesus challenge to us this morning is – Can we go the extra mile? Are we talking about our faith to people he puts in our path, are we sharing the good news – PLAIN AND SIMPLE – JESUS LOVES YOU MY FRIEND, HE GAVE HIS LIFE FOR YOU AND ME – I HAVE EXPERIENCED IT IN MY LIFE AND I WISH YOU CAN TOO !

There was a huge crowd of people following Jesus in Jericho. Suddenly Jesus surprised everyone when He stopped the procession and asked a man named



Zacchaeus, if he could spare a few hours to have a leisurely dinner together to discuss spiritual issues.. Zacchaeus must have gasped in disbelief. But he consented to the meal and before the stroke of midnight he was a different man ! He had experienced spiritual birth that transformed him from the inside out.

The key to his conversion was that Jesus gave Him time. He stopped the parade and focussed on this one person. And as a result, Zaccheus life was forever altered.

Zaccheus was a like a lot of people we know. He was interested in the spiritual dimension of life. He was open enough to look for a strategic place along the parade to catch a glimpse of Christ. But to help him past the curiosity stage, somebody had to sacrifice time to set up the dinner and turn the conversation in the direction of spiritual matters. Jesus took the time and that made the difference.

How else can time make a difference ?

1. Set up a holiday part – let people know they are welcome – it serves dual purposes of having fun and exposing your non believer friends to your believer friends
2. Events for KIDS – use school holidays, get mums together perhaps ?
3. Share a meal
4. Watching the game
5. Sporting activities
6. Exercise Time – health club/ gym
7. Babysitting



## 2. REINVESTING YOUR RESOURCES

A second kind of sacrifice that turns the heads of people searching for spiritual reality is the giving up of resources. “ Money isn’t everything “ we have heard it said, but is sure beats whatever is in the second place. Giving up our resources – be it setting a barbeque and inviting your new neighbours to come and join you and friends might be one way of starting the conversation, giving our church to be used for an event that brings people around could be another.

Read page 87

“It is more blessed to give than to receive “– if we find we cant actually find people to bless with our resources, there are several institutions/ organisations that share gospel in the unreached areas of the world that constantly are in need of our support and prayers. They act as our FEET ON THE GROUND



### 3. MODELLING OVER THE LONG HAUL

The third kind of sacrifice is a sustained, long term effort that will affect the lives of millions of people outside the family of God. It's the sacrifice of a consistent, godly lifestyle. Spiritual cynicism runs deep in certain people. They need to watch a Christian live out his life or her faith over a substantial period of time before they'll be convinced the whole thing isn't a scam.

This means that we have to keep living a life that backs up our words. We have to make the sacrifice of running a marathon and not merely a 100 yard dash.

Are we willing to make the sacrifice of living a consistent, high integrity, Christian life – not just for the season, but for the long haul ?

Romans 12 – 1-2 says “ Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God which is your spiritual worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world. But be transformed by the renewing of your mind

The author of this book, Bill says he and his wife had the opportunity of spending a day with Billy Graham and his wife Ruth. One of the memories that lingers in his mind is the realization that these two have paid the price of Christian consistency for sixty years of ministry together. That's more than half a century of being “living sacrifices “.

More than half a century of resisting temptation, compromise and seductions that could have put them in the ditch. More than half a century of developing and expressing truth and compassion and servanthood and humanity.

One reason he believes God had used Billy Graham so powerfully, especially in the later years of His ministry is that there is a whole generation of his peers who Billy had worn down. He simply outlasted them. In effect he said, You know what I told you ten years ago and twenty years ago and thirty years ago and forty years ago and fifty years ago and sixty years ago is still as true today as it ever was. Its true in my life and its true in millions of other lives.

And a lot of his peers are saying “ You have made your point, I have watched you for more than half a century and Im beginning to believe its real”