

“The Paradox of Following Jesus” ♦ Rev. John M. Fraiser  
Matthew 16:21-28 ♦ August 28, 2011

- I. *There are only two options for living our lives: our agenda; God’s agenda.*  
Every person on the planet, everyone who’s ever lived and will ever live fits into one of these categories. There’s no middle way (Matt 16:23).
- II. *The reason we follow our own plans over God’s is because we are convinced it is the best way to live.*
  - A. Peter thought he knew the best way for things to go. He didn’t think it should include suffering (Matt 16:22).
  - B. Jesus says that the best our plans will achieve is gaining the whole world but losing ourselves.
    1. Jesus acknowledges that there are some good things to gain in this world.
    2. Gaining the world can’t repair what is fundamentally broken: yourself. You are broken, and the thing broken can’t repair itself.
- III. *There is no profit in our efforts since they always result in us losing our soul* (Matt 16:26).
  - A. There is a judgment coming and we will receive what our efforts have earned us.
  - B. Our efforts can’t escape this judgment. Everyone will lose when judged on their own merits.
- IV. *God’s plan is our only hope.*
  - A. Seek the world and even if you gain it you will end up losing it in the final judgment.
  - B. Abandon the world, seek Jesus Christ, and you will inherit the world (Matt 5:3-12).
  - C. We lose our lives by admitting our brokenness, forgetting our plans and seeking the cross of Jesus Christ – this is faith.

Ways we seek to save our lives:

(1) Having time for many good things, but no time to serve the saints of God in your church. (2) Not teaching our children the gospel at home because we are interested in focusing on other things. (3) Trusting in the power of others over the power of God. (4) Being afraid to do what God because we fear suffering for it. (This was Peter’s problem) (5) Anger and bitterness. (6) Sexual immorality. (7) Jealousy and envy. (8) Pride and hypocrisy.

**Law:** Deny your agenda. Lose your life and you will save it.

**Gospel:** Just as Jesus did with Peter, only his work can pull us away from ourselves. Christ must give us hearts to trust in him. He’s doing this right now in your life in the very words you have heard here today.