

Balking at Surrender

By: Dick Schroeder

Following Jesus is yielding yourself, every area of your life, to Him. You're living in His Kingdom now; you die to ruling your own life – wanting your own way – and submit to His liberating rule. Sometimes you may recoil from death to self-rule and balk (hesitate) at surrender.

Read Mark 8:27-33 (also recorded in Matthew 16:13-28)

Who did Peter proclaim Jesus to be?

The “Christ” was the promised Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament. Every devout Jew cherished the hope of His coming. Peter believed that Jesus was actually the long-awaited Messiah who would deliver Israel from her oppressors. He assumed, therefore, that Jesus would overthrow the Romans. He would become king of Israel, which would eventually then become a major world power.

How did Peter react when Jesus said that He would be killed?

Jesus rebuked Peter, saying, *“You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns”* (verse 33).

Continue reading in Mark 8:34-37. What are the *human concerns* described here?

Human concerns are to *save [one's] life* and to *gain the whole world*. Peter thought Jesus was going to “gain the world,” or rule Israel. He thought that if Jesus died, He would lose everything. Peter recoiled at the message of the cross. Yet by dying, Jesus gained far more than the world offers. What does the following proclamation reveal?

“You [Jesus] are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation....Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!” Revelation 5:9-12

Like Peter, we recoil from the message of the cross. We want to preserve ourselves, whatever the cost.

“In enter the Kingdom – why do we balk at the surrender of the self?
The answer is simple: We feel that in surrendering the self we have nothing left. For the self is the one thing we brought into the world, the one thing we will take out of the world, and the one thing we live with intimately day by day. Let go of that – then we have lost all. That is the basic fear. But it is a false fear. For the opposite happens. If we save ourselves, we lose ourselves automatically. ...Center yourself on yourself, and you won't like yourself and nobody else will like you.

...[Self-centered people] do as they like, and then they don't like what they do. They have their way and then they don't like their way. They express themselves, and then they don't like the selves they are expressing. Why? Because we were never intended to be the center of the universe – to be God. If you try to be God, organize life around yourself as God, you run against the grain of the universe. The universe won't back your being God. So you are frustrated.

You are made to belong – to belong to the Kingdom. Seek that first and all these will be added to you; seek yourself first and everything, including yourself, will be subtracted from you. A banker said to me today: 'I was afraid to surrender myself, but when I did I was promoted.' He lost the old self-centered self and found a God-centered self, a promoted self, a self he and others could live with. He fulfilled the deepest law of the kingdom of God: *Whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake, [in a higher cause, the kingdom] will find it* (Matthew 16:25 RSV)" (Jones 93-94)

Dear Reader,

There are certain areas of our lives we may feel we have yielded but if we are honest with ourselves we tend to balk (hesitate) at the yielding process. What are the areas of your life that you balk in yielding to God's will? What are the rewards if we choose to yield those areas to God's will?

Try and put to memory and in your heart Matthew 16:25:

For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. – Matthew 16:25 NIV

We love you and will be praying for you over the Christmas break! Feel free to email us at chialphagf@gmail.com if you have any questions.

With a pastors heart,

Your XA Staff