

just the same amount of effort as you do? What if every member showed the same dedication to teaching others that you do? What if every member gave to the work as you do? Would this congregation be stronger or weaker if such were the case? Each and every one of us should so live that we would desire others to be "such as I am."

James Hahn

Some Quotes Worth Pondering . . .

"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever."
"You are the embodiment of the information you choose to accept and act upon. To change your circumstances you need to change your thinking and subsequent actions."

Beacon Electronic Edition

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Why Do People Remain Lost?
Jim Stauffer

All Have Sinned

When Jesus said in **Matthew 16:26**, *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?*, He illustrated the value of man's soul, his eternal component. This makes perfect sense when we consider the time one would have to enjoy the good things here on earth compared to eternity in the presence of God and His blessings.

Jesus makes that very point in **Matthew 5:29** when He says, *And if thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body be cast into hell.* He says common sense tells us to rid ourselves of anything that would cause us to be cast into hell.

He demonstrated this when He was tempted in the wilderness by Satan. When Satan offered him rule over all the kingdoms of earth in return for His worship, Jesus said, *Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* Even after fasting for 40 days and nights He retained this sense of value and remained faithful to the Father.

Jesus makes this point about the value of our soul eloquently with the story of the rich man in **Luke 12**. The rich man reasoned he should build larger barns to house the bountiful harvest of his crops. He was being selfish and placing his trust in earthly riches by thinking and doing so. Jesus says he was not rich toward God and as a result would suffer the loss of his life that very night. **Luke 12:20** *But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou*

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MEETING TIMES

Sunday - Bible Classes: 9:30AM
Worship Services 10:20AM & 5:00PM
Wednesday - Bible Classes 7:00PM
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hast prepared, whose shall they be?

Sin Separates us From God

Paul teaches clearly that we have all sinned and that the justification that remedies our unrighteousness comes from the blood of Christ. **Romans 3:23-25** *for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God;²⁴ being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:²⁵ whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God;*

The fact that our sins have rendered us unrighteous is set forth in Scripture by Isaiah, the prophet. **Isaiah 59:1,2** *Behold, Jehovah's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:² but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, so that he will not hear.* When we are separated from God there are grave consequences. Peter quotes the Psalmist when he says in **1 Peter 3:12**, *For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, And his ears unto their supplication: But the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil.* We lose God's favor when we live in sin. Paul describes this condition as being spiritually dead. He says the wage for our sin is death. **(Rom. 6:23)** As physical death is a separation of soul from body, spiritual death is a separation of our souls from God. Jesus says that such death would bring the judgment of God. **Matthew 25:30** *And cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.*

Being Separated From God Brings Eternal Death

Jesus says, **John 8:24** *I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.* From what we have already learned we know dying in our sins means we receive the judgment of God. The solution is believing that Jesus Christ is He. He in this passage is the Son of God. (see verses 18&19) What does it mean to believe in Jesus? It means we believe in God. Believing in God has always meant obeying Him. The Hebrew writer spent all of chapter 11 relating one example after another. By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice..... By faith Noah moved with godly fear and prepared an ark.....By faith Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac.....On and on the list of the obedient faithful goes.

Why Then, Do Men Remain Lost?

We mentioned early on that Paul cites the blood of Christ as the agent of justification. **(Rom. 3:23-25)** The first chapter of Ephesians tells us that God planned the redemption of man thru the sacrifice of Christ before the foundations of the world. While it is certain we have all become unrighteous through our own sin, it is equally sure that God has a plan to restore our righteousness. We can be justified in His sight as surely

as Abel, Noah and Abraham were. We must simply respond to His commands with obedience as they did. Therefore, the question of why people remain lost is very pertinent. A short and simple study of the Book of Acts will tell us one must repent of our sins and be baptized for their remission. **(Acts 2:38)** We must believe in and confess that belief in Christ. **(Acts 8:36,37)** According to Paul's writing we are baptized into the death of Christ and are raised to walk in newness of life.**(Rom. 6:3,4)** This means we have renewed life spiritually. We have been reconciled to our original relationship with God.**(2 Cor. 5:19)** So, why do people remain lost? It is simply a refusal to submit to God and obey His commands. It may be an unwillingness to admit our sin because of image or ego. King Agrippa may well have failed because of this. **(Acts 26)** It may be we would suffer either financially or lose a position of power. The Jewish leaders fell into this category.**(John 12)** It could be we have fallen prey to false teachers. Teachers who do not rely on the Bible as the source of what they preach and teach. They may follow Luther or Calvin or Wesley or any one of many men who originally intended to bring people back to the Bible but failed to accomplish their goal. As a result people follow things *they* taught that originated with *them* rather than seeking the authority of God by searching His word for the truth.

These were all men who believed they were teaching the truth. Yet when we look to Scripture we see that what they taught has no basis therein. Jesus warned of such teachers who thought they were doing His will but were not. **Matthew 7:21-23** *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven.²² Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works?²³ And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

We Control the Destiny of our Soul

Scripture makes it abundantly clear the plight of our soul is our own responsibility. First, the sin that separates us from God is our own sin. **(Rom. 5:12)** Second, the responsibility to respond to the gospel call is our own.**(Acts 2:36-40)** We will either value our soul properly and obey the Lord or we will trust in the things of the world and lose our own soul eternally. It is, after all, our choice.

“Such As I Am”

Paul, in his reply to king Agrippa, expressed the desire that all who heard him might "become such as I am." Paul was a dedicated Christian. He wanted others to be the same. Would you want others to be "such as you are?" What if every member of this congregation was just as dedicated as you are? What if every member put forth