

2023 Vision Series

A Vision for Your Life

Mark 8:34-37

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Mark 8:34-37

Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life[a] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?”

“Why is it important to have a philosophy [of life]? Because without one, there is a danger that you will mislive— that despite all your activity, despite all the pleasant diversions you might have enjoyed while alive, you will end up living a bad life. There is, in other words, a danger that when you are on your deathbed, you will look back and realize that you wasted your one chance at

living. Instead of spending your life pursuing something genuinely valuable, you squandered it because you allowed yourself to be distracted by the various baubles life has to offer.”

- William B. Irvine, *A Guide to the Good Life*

“Don’t lose the plot.”

Losing the Plot?

- a. They go round in circles, repeating their actions, getting nowhere.
 - b. They end up inactive and are pushed around by goal-driven characters who use them for their own ends.
 - c. They become secondary, then tertiary characters, who eventually drop out of the story completely.
- Ewan Morrison, “Losing the Plot” from *Psychology Today*

What do they want?

“There are only two human problems: (1) knowing what you want, but not knowing how to get it; and (2) not knowing what you want.”

- Stephen Covey

Do you know what you want?

And is what you want worthy of your whole life?

Are you sure about that?

There is a great danger of mis-living.

We have a vision for your life too.

“The Good Life refers to the habits of practiced wisdom that produce in the human soul deep and lasting flourishing.”

- Jonathan Pennington, *Jesus the Great Philosopher*

How do we live a whole, meaningful, and flourishing life?

John 14:16

“I am the way and the truth and the life...”

John 10:10

“I have come to give life, and to have it to the full.”

“Our Lord Jesus Christ through His transcendent love became what we are that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself.”

- Irenaeus, 2nd Century theologian

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“For whoever wants to save their life...”

“The task of all philosophy, including Christian philosophy, is the therapy of souls who have been led astray by the demands of the passions and false pictures of happiness.”

- Darius Karlowicz

Jesus invites us to deny, die, and become his disciple.

“When the Enemy [God] instructs humans to lose themselves, He only means abandoning the clamor of self-will; once they have done that, He really gives them back all their personality.”

- C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*

“But there must be a real giving up of the self...Christ will indeed give you a real personality: but you must not go to Him for the sake of that. As long as your own personality is what you are bothering about you are not going to Him at all. The very first step is to try to forget about the self altogether. Your real, new self (which is Christ’s and also yours, and yours just because it is His) will not come as long as you are looking for it. It will come when you are looking for Him. Does that sound strange? The same principle holds, you know, for more everyday matters. Even in social life, you will never make a good impression on other people until you stop thinking about what sort of impression you are making. Even in literature and art, no man who bothers about originality will ever be original: whereas if you simply try to tell the truth you will, nine times out of ten, become original without ever having noticed it. The principle runs through all life from top to bottom. Give up yourself, and you will find your real self. Lose your life and you will save it. Submit to death, death of your ambitions and favorite wishes every day and death of your whole body in the end: submit with every fiber of your being, and you will find eternal life. Keep back nothing. Nothing that you have not given away will be really yours. Nothing in you that has not died will ever be raised from the dead. Look for yourself, and you will find in the long run only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin, and decay. But look for Christ and you will find Him, and with Him everything else thrown in.”

- C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

“The flourishing and happy life does not happen accidentally. It must be sought after. And the means of pursuit is the life of discipleship to a philosophy, a way of seeing and being in the world that is pursued and practiced. First become aware of yourself; then turn away from foolish and

non-life-giving habits and thoughts (in biblical language, 'repent'); and then, over time, learn new ways of living through failures and successes in practice."

- Jonathan Pennington, *Jesus the Great Philosopher*