

Title: TO SAVE A LIFE, THE HEALING POWER OF DISCIPLESHIP, MT. 16:21-28
(Chatham, NJ; 09/04/11, AM) [Pt – Two-Point Outline]

Theme: The demands of discipleship are not just requirements for serving God; they are also healing methods for the sin-sick soul.

Purpose: To demonstrate the healing power of discipleship and to encourage others to follow Jesus for the sake of their souls.

Introduction:

1. Self-preservation is one of the strongest motivators.
2. Peter appeals to this in Acts 2:40. He says, "Save yourselves."
3. The way to salvation is through the Gospel of Christ.
4. The particulars of how it works out in practice provide us with the insight and power to overcome the death and destruction caused by sin.
5. Today we'll see how this heals.

I. Begin with the Death and Resurrection of Christ

- A. Jesus explains the plan
 1. Peter has let the cat out of the bag
 2. Jesus affirms it
 3. But now he begins to explain the plan, 21
 4. Suffer, be killed, rise on the third day
- B. Peter does not agree with the plan
 1. Perhaps Peter has Jesus' best interests at heart
 2. He wants to protect him and preserve his life
 3. But he does not understand the plan: "This won't happen to you."
- C. Jesus sees two worlds in conflict
 1. He had already refused the Kingdom that Satan offered him, Mt. 4:9
 2. Satan's is a worldly and worthless kingdom about to fall
 3. Jesus sees the contrast between the way of God and the way of man
 4. The plans are diametrically opposed
 5. Peter must have been shocked to hear Jesus call him Satan
 6. He does not realize that he is thinking in worldly terms
 7. This is a turning point in the ministry and for the disciples

II. The healing cross

- A. All four Gospels contain this connection between the cross and discipleship
 1. Matthew addresses the disciples
 2. Mark 8:34 addresses the crowds
 3. Luke 9:23-27, take up cross daily
 4. John 12:23-26 explains it as a metaphor: a seed dies and transforms into a plant
 5. Discipleship is directly associated with the cross: death, burial, and resurrection
 6. Here are the elements and how they heal
- B. First the disciple must deny himself, 24
 1. Reject sinful impulses and desires
 2. Col. 3:5 insists that we must put them to death (crucify them)
 3. Deny what has caused judgment (Rom. 2:6-9) and death (Rom. 6:23)
 4. Kill off the free radicals that cause cancer
 5. We have learned that good things in some foods help fight them

- C. Second, the disciple must lose his life to save it, 25
 - 1. A paradox of the cross: only by dieing could Jesus be resurrected
 - 2. Only by losing our life can we save it
 - 3. John's metaphor of the seed dieing, Jn. 12:24-25
 - 4. Paul uses baptism to symbolize the same thing, Romans 6; we die and are resurrected to live a new life
 - 5. Furthermore, Jesus suggests that it is a worthwhile trade-off; if we gain the whole world and lose our soul we gain nothing

- D. Third, the disciple receives from God according to his deeds, 27
 - 1. Jesus elevates the doing of good deeds and of a life of holiness
 - 2. Romans 2:10 affirms it
 - 3. Though we don't earn salvation, sanctification has its own rewards
 - 4. Your efforts do not go unnoticed

- E. A prescription
 - 1. A way of life that heals, 2 Cor. 4:16-18
 - 2. We are being renewed day by day
 - 3. The way of the cross is a way that puts off the mortal and puts on immortality
 - 4. The pain of dieing on the cross will some day be worth the pain

Conclusion:

- 1. Learn to see the difference between the way of the world and the way of God (Peter did).
- 2. The life of discipleship is a way of true life and healing.
- 3. Self-denial, losing your life, and living righteously are the particulars of the prescription.
- 4. These are the ways that truly preserve life.