



Fairgrounds Road
C H U R C H O F C H R I S T

MESSENGER

“And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.” 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – May 8, 2022

The Things Above ...

Every culture points to certain things for one to acquire and achieve to find their value. Our culture insists that you are nobody unless you have a fulfilling career, status, power, looks, and material wealth. Are these really the markers of our worth? What does Jesus say? ***“If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what does it benefit a person to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what could a person give in exchange for his soul?”*** (Mark 8:34-37) Jesus raises the eternally crucial question, what is more valuable than your soul? The biblical word used for life in this passage is *psyche* (where we get our word psychology) which denotes one’s identity and self. Jesus is teaching us not to build our identity or look for our value in gaining the things of the world because it will never be enough, and it offers nothing in matters of eternity!

We are to live in a way that treats our soul as the most valuable thing we possess. How do we do this? Jesus shows us the way. ***Deny self, take up your cross, follow Him.*** To deny self is to lay aside control, selfish ambition, and personal agendas. When we say, “I’ll follow Jesus *if* my career thrives, *if* I’m in good health, *if* I’m comfortable and accepted, then the thing on the other side of the *if* is our real master and goal. We are still living for ourselves. Why take up our cross? Jesus does not ask us to do a thing He has not also done. We take up our cross because he went to the cross for us. We follow our Lord because how can we not give ourselves to the One who gave Himself so completely for us. ***“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”*** (Galatians 2:20) We properly value our soul when we lay aside self, find our identity in Christ, and follow Him in faith due to the marvelous love He has demonstrated toward us. Let us always live for what matters most.

- Kason Lawrence