The World Is Not Enough

Mark 8:36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

Introduction: Life really is short
  • The longer I live,
    o the more I come to realize
      ▪ how short life really is.
    o The book of James says it best:
      ▪ Life is like a vapor
        • that appears for a moment
        • then vanishes away.
    o The truth is, however,
      ▪ that it is not the shortness
        • and unpredictability of life
        • that bothers me
      ▪ as much as the suddenness
        • and finality with which death
        • intrudes on the land of the living.
    o Death is even more unpredictable than life
      ▪ and, no matter how long
        • that you may know it is coming,
      ▪ no matter how prepared
        • that you may think that you are,
      ▪ you are never really ready
        • to face the death of a loved one.
  • It always seems as if death came to soon, as if life was cut too short.
    o There are always things that were left unsaid,
      ▪ deeds that were left undone,
      ▪ and dreams that were left unfulfilled.
    o At the end of it all,
      ▪ when life is considered in the context of death,
        • it never seems to be enough.
    o Life is always too short.
      ▪ We are always left with questions.
        • Why God?
        • Why did you take my loved one so soon?
        • Why did life have to end so abruptly?

Life And Death: We were not made for this world
  • I recently read the story of Marshall Shelley.
    o He is an editor for Leadership magazine.
      ▪ He and his wife, had a child that lived only two minutes.
• Toby was born with a rare
  • and severe genetic disorder
  • and his life ended
  • just moments after it began.
  ▪ To compound the grief,
    • their two year-old daughter, Mandy,
    • died three months later.
• Marshall and Susan Shelley were left with one pressing question: Why?
  o Why did God create a child to live for only two minutes?
    ▪ Why did God create a child to live for only 2 years?
  o The question is universal and we’ve all asked it.
    ▪ Where’s the justice in death that seems to come too soon?
    • How do we make sense out of life
      o that always seems to be too short?
• There is an answer to that question
  o and it is an answer that each of us needs to hear today.
    ▪ God didn’t create a baby to live for just 2 minutes.
    ▪ He didn’t create a little girl to live for just 2 years.
    ▪ And he did not create me to live for just 40 years,
      • nor did he create you to live for threescore and ten years.
    o **God created us all for eternity.**
      ▪ **We were not made for this world!**
• When God formed you in your mother’s womb,
  o when you were fearfully and wonderfully made,
    ▪ he made you with heaven in view.
  o He didn’t make you for the short, temporal, momentary life
    ▪ that you will experience in this world.
  o He didn’t make you for the fleeting lifespan of a vapor
    ▪ that is here for a moment then quickly dissipates.
  o He made you for an everlasting existence in heavenly places.
    ▪ He made you to experience the wonders of eternity.
    ▪ He made you to live forevermore, with him.
  o He didn’t make you to be a citizen of earth.
    ▪ He made you to be a resident of heaven.
  o From the first breath that you ever breathed,
    ▪ you were destined for better things
      • than this world could ever offer.
  o From the moment that your life first began,
    ▪ you were intended for eternal life.
• This world seems so permanent,
  o it seems so real,
    ▪ it seems so final.
  o But let me remind you
    ▪ that the span of time that you spend here
      • is no more permanent
than the nine months that a baby spends
• in the womb of its mother.
  • And the reality of eternity is as far beyond your comprehension
    • as the reality of this present world is
      • to the baby that hasn’t yet been born.
    • You can’t even begin to imagine it.
      • The half has never yet been told.
      • Eye has not seen.
      • Ears have not heard.
      • It’s never even entered into the heart of man
        • what God has prepared for us in eternity.

• I come to this pulpit on a Sunday afternoon to tell you, you were not
  made for this world!
  • You were not made for the temporary pleasures of this life.
    • You were not made for the shallow, fleeting moments
      • that you encounter down here.
  • There really is a heaven to gain.
    • There really is a city where the lamb is the light.
      • There really is a place where there never comes a night,
        • a place where there is no sorrow,
        • a place where there is no sickness,
        • a place where there is no more death and dying.
    • That is what you were made for.
      • That is what you were created for.

Eternity In The Heart: Heaven is your heart’s desire
• King Solomon was the wisest man that ever lived and he wrote scripture
  under the inspiration of God.
  • In Ecclesiastes 3:11 he opened a door
    • of understanding into the human condition.
  • A portion of this verse read from the Amplified Bible
    • tells us that God has “planted eternity in men’s hearts...”
  • The verse goes on to explain,
    • “there is a divinely implanted sense of a purpose
      • working through the ages
      • which nothing under the sun
      • but God alone can satisfy.”
• I want you to understand something this afternoon,
  • when God made you,
    • when he created you,
      • He put a little bit of eternity in your heart.
  • There is portion of your spiritual makeup
    • that knows what it is to have fellowship with the all-mighty.
  • There is a part of you that has tasted
    • a peace that passes all understanding,
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- a joy that is unspeakable,
- and a love that is unfathomable.
- There is a desire within your heart,
  - planted there by God, himself,
    - that nothing in this world will ever satisfy.
- There is a deep stirring
  - and craving within your soul
    - that nothing in this life can ever fulfill.
- It is a gnawing feeling
  - somewhere in the back of your mind
    - that is always with you
    - that always reminds you
      - that something within you is not satisfied.
    - **Something within you will never be satisfied**
      - **by anything in this world**!
- It doesn’t matter how much you achieve,
  - there will always be that unfulfilled desire.
    - It doesn’t matter how many material things you obtain,
      - there will always be that aching in your soul.
- It doesn’t matter how successful you become,
  - your successes will never satisfy
    - the longing that God has planted in your heart.
- You were not made for this world!
  - You were not made for the temporary joys
    - and triumphs of this life.
  - They will never satisfy the eternal longing of your soul!
- Men have believed that the wealth of this world
  - would satisfy the longing of their souls
    - – but the wealthy have thrown their lives away
      - under the influence of an unexplainable depression
      - because all of the money in the world
      - can’t satisfy the longing of your soul.
- People have believed that power and prestige,
  - position and recognition
    - would somehow satisfy that desire within
      - but they have been sadly disappointed
      - as they have discovered that
      - when they reach the pinnacle of accomplishment
      - there is still something on the inside
      - that is not satisfied.
  - Still others have tried to fill the void
    - with education and knowledge
      - but all the knowledge in the world
        - will never satisfy that craving in your heart.
• There is a part of you this morning,
  o that will only be satisfied
    ▪ by the presence of God in your life!
  o There is a longing in the heart,
    ▪ there is an aching desire within you,
      • there is a part of you that longs for eternity.
  o It is hard to explain
    ▪ but we long for something that we’ve never known,
      • a home that we’ve never inhabited,
        o a place that we’ve never seen.
• The old songwriter said it this way:
  o Call me a dreamer, cause I call it mine, Heaven. But I don’t care.
  o And call me crazy, cause I’m homesick for it yet I have never been there.
  o Call me a stranger, cause that’s all I am, I know I don’t belong...
    ▪ You were not made for this world.
    ▪ You were made for heaven!

Strangers And Pilgrims: Just passing through
• This world is not our home.
  o Let us never forget that we are strangers and pilgrims here.
    ▪ This world is not what we are living for.
  o This life, with all of its joys and sorrows
    ▪ is not the sum of our existence.
  o The highest heights that we reach down here
    ▪ will never satisfy the eternal longing in our hearts.
  o The greatest achievements that we accomplish down here,
    ▪ will never measure up
      • to the hope for heaven that resides within us.
    ▪ We are just passing through.
      • We are on a temporary journey
        o to an eternal destination.
• The metaphor of strangers and pilgrims
  o is a rich biblical testimony
    ▪ to the fleeting nature of this life.
  o It illustrates the truth that our stay here is temporary,
    ▪ the pilgrim is on a journey
      • through a foreign land
      • on his way home.
  o Heaven is our home
    ▪ and this world with all of its short-lived rewards,
      • is a foreign land in the context
        o of the eternal desire
        o that God has placed within us.
  o We were not made for this.
We were not created for this.
- This is not the sum total of our existence.
  - We were made for heaven.
  - We were made for eternity.
    - We were made for something far and away greater than anything that this world has to offer.

The Apostle Paul expressed it well, in Philippians 3:20:
  - **Philippians 3:20-21**
    - 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,
    - 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

Our citizenship is in heaven and we eagerly wait for the savior.
  - There is something within us
    - that lives in hopeful anticipation
      - of the day when the Lord will come again
        - in glory and power
        - and He will transform this lowly body
        - to conform it to his glorious body!
  - There's a day coming when everything is going to change.
    - There’s a day coming when momentary sorrow
      - is going to give way to uninterrupted joy.
  - There’s a day coming when trials and troubles
    - will surrender to eternal victory.
  - There’s a day coming when death
    - will be swallowed by life everlasting.

I’ve come to this pulpit today to remind somebody
  - that this world is not your home!
    - This is not what you are living for.
  - We are just passing through.
    - We are on journey
      - and this isn’t our destination!
  - Heaven is our home.
    - Don’t get so caught up in what’s going on down here
      - that you forget the real purpose of your life.
    - Don’t get so caught up in the tragedies and triumphs that occur down here
      - that you lose sight of the eternal purpose
      - for which you were made.
  - Don’t get so involved
    - with the pursuit of fleeting treasures
      - and momentary fulfillments
    - that you forget that nothing in this world
      - can satisfy the eternal longing of your soul!
The Wrong Side Of The River: Trading the promise for the present

- Number’s chapter 32 contains an interesting story.
  - At the end of a long journey.
    - After many years of wondering through the wilderness.
  - As they stand poised to finally possess the promise of God,
    - the tribes of Reuben and Gad
      - become enamored with the lands
      - of Jazer and Gilead.
  - The bible tells us that the tribes of Reuben and Gad
    - had a great multitude of cattle
      - and these lands were particularly well suited for cattle.
  - They had gentle rolling hills,
    - huge green meadows
      - and beautiful rolling streams.
  - The conditions were perfect to settle there
    - and raise their cattle.
  - There was only one problem.
    - Those lands were on the wrong side
      - of the Jordan River.

- When God made his promise to Abraham,
  - about the land that his seed would possess for an inheritance,
    - he was very clear about the boundaries of the promise.
  - And Jazer and Gilead were on the wrong side of the boundary.
    - There is no doubt that,
      - when God promised the Canaan land
        - to the seed of Abraham,
      - there was portion of that land
        - that was intended for the children
        - of Reuben and Gad.
  - But they became enamored
    - with what they saw on the wrong side of the river.
  - They became attached
    - to the land that they were supposed to be passing through.
  - Somehow, something tragic happened
    - and they started putting down roots
      - in a land that was supposed to have been a temporary dwelling.
  - Before they ever even crossed over into the promised land,
    - while the promise of God was yet a distant hope
      - over the horizon,
    - they decided that what they had found here
      - was better than what they would receive over there.
      - **So they traded the promise for the present.**
  - At the time, it seemed like a fair trade.
• At the time, it seemed like the right thing to do.
  • But what they didn’t realize
    o was that they were condemning their children
      • and their children’s children
      • to a brutal oppressed future.

• The Promised Land that God described to Abraham
  o was separated from all of the lands that surrounded it
    • by remarkable geographical features.
  o These natural boundaries
    • would prove to be vital to the security of that nation.
  o Some of Israel’s worst enemies
    • lived on her eastern border
      • and the river Jordan was more
        o than just a line that God drew
        o on a map somewhere,
          • it represented a formidable barrier
          • for invading armies.

• When Reuben and Gad decided
  o that they would settle for something less
    • than the promises of God,
  o when they decided that they were satisfied
    • with that land that lay on the wrong side
      • of the river Jordan,
  o they unwittingly placed their family
    • on the frontlines of the battle
      • for Israel’s existence.
  o Because they were on the wrong side of the river
    • they were exposed to the constant attack of the enemy,
      • they were vulnerable
      • because they were living outside
        o of the boundaries that God had prescribed.
  o The land that they settled for
    • never became the blissful paradise
      • that they had imagined.
  o Instead they were constantly under attack,
    • their homes were constantly in the frontlines of a raging war.
      • There was never any peace there.
      • There was never any prosperity there.
      • There was never any satisfaction there.
  o Instead, their attachment to the wrong side of the river,
    • became the greatest source of heartache
      • and trouble in their lives.

• First of all, let me say this, God established the boundary for a reason.
  o It didn’t make any sense to Reuben and Gilead.
    • They didn’t understand why God drew the line where he did.
And they didn’t really respect the fact that God established the boundary for their own protection.

God established the river Jordan as the eastern boundary of the Promised Land for their own good.

But they were so enamored with what they saw on the wrong side of the river, that they thought they could just annex it into the promise of God.

They thought that they could enlarge God’s boundaries without any consequence.

And they learned the hard way that boundaries matter.

- God separates us from certain things in this world, not to deny us some pleasure but to save us from unnecessary trials, heartaches, and pain.
- When we foolishly try to cling to things that we know are outside of the boundaries: that God has established for our lives, we make ourselves vulnerable to the attacks of hell.

The men of Reuben and Gad never understood that until it was too late!

- They weren’t created to live on the other side of the river.
- They were made for the Promised Land.

But somehow they became so enticed by the foreign land that they were passing through that they decided to settle there.

They traded the promises of God for something far less.

They settled for something that fell far short of what God had intended for them.

The World Is Not Enough: Don’t settle for it

- Our text, this afternoon asks a very pointed question:
  - Mark 8:36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

- Think about it for a moment.
  - All of the riches in the world.
    - All the success and accolades in the world.
All of the material possessions,
  • the pride
  • and the prestige.

What is the value of the whole world
  when measured against the hope of eternity?
  • The answer is plain.
    o The world isn’t big enough.
    o The world isn’t wide enough.
    o The world isn’t high enough.
    o The world isn’t deep enough.
  o **The world is not enough!**

We were not created for this world.
  • We were not created for this life, alone.
    • We will never be satisfied,
    • we will never be fulfilled,
    • we will never find the peace
      o and the joy that we seek
      o on this side of heaven.

We were made for eternity.
  • We were made to dwell in heavenly places.
    • We were made to experience
      o the wonders of God’s glory
      o and we will never be satisfied
        • by anything less!
  • Rueben and Gad settled for a troubled existence
    o on the wrong side of the promise
      • because they had an exaggerated estimate
        • of the value of this world
      • and a diminished view
        • of the prize that lay before them.

Listen to your pastor this afternoon,
  • the downfall of many a good man or woman
    • has its roots in that same condition.

People settle for this world
  • because they develop an exaggerated estimate
    • of the importance of the temporal
  • and a diminished view of the eternal.
    • They lose sight of the wonder of heaven.
    • They lose sight of the grandeur
      o of the promises of God.
  o They become so enamored with this low land
    • that they are passing through
      • that they lose sight of the heavenly splendor
        o that they are living for.
  o They trade their treasure for trinkets.
They trade their blessings for momentary pleasures.

* They trade their promise for the present.

I’ve come to this pulpit today to tell you

- that the whole world isn’t enough
  - to trade heaven for.
- Because this world wasn’t made
  - to satisfy the longing of your soul!
- You need to stir up the hope of heaven in your heart today!
  - You need to refresh the eternal longing
    - that resides in the very center of your being.
- Sometimes we get so caught up
  - in the cares and concerns of this present life
    - that the promise of the future
      - loses its allure.
- Listen to me,
  - the hope of heaven cannot grow
    - in a heart that is enamored
      - with the riches of this world.
  - The hope of heaven cannot thrive
    - in a heart that is satisfied
      - with temporary momentary fleeting rewards.
- Shake yourself.
  - Stir yourself.
    - Remind yourself.
      - This world is not enough!
- Rueben and Gad settled for what they already possessed
  - because they allowed the allure of the present
    - to rob them of the wonder of the promise.
  - Beware, lest you make the same mistake that they made.
    - Beware, lest you trade the eternal for the temporary.
- Their minds were so captivated
  - with what was around them
    - that they lost sight of the promise
    - that awaited on the other side of the river!

It is time to renew the hope of heaven in your life!

- It is time to remind yourself of why you are living.
  - It is time to remember
    - that God didn’t make you to live 20 years
      - or 30 years
      - or even 80 years
      - in this life...
    - He made you to live for eternity!

Close: *Shadowlands*

- C.S. Lewis referred to this present world as “The Shadowlands.”
• What a brilliant way to conceptualize this life.
  ▪ We live in a world that is overshadowed by sin.
    • We live in a world that has fallen short of glory of God.
  ▪ Everything in this life is touched by the shadow of the temporal.
    ▪ Our greatest joys are fleeting.
    ▪ Our happiest moments are only temporary pleasures.
    ▪ Our highest achievements leave us longing for more.
      • Life is too short.
    ▪ All of our worldly treasures are corrupted.
      • Everything that shines and glitters in this life
        ▪ is tarnished with the passing of time.

• The world is not enough.
  ▪ Nothing in the whole world can satisfy
    • the eternal longing that God has placed in our hearts.
  ▪ Solomon said it best:
    ▪ there is a divinely implanted sense of a purpose
      working through the ages
      • which nothing under the sun
        ▪ but God alone can satisfy.

• This world cannot satisfy us but we have a promise.
  ▪ An inheritance incorruptible and undefiled
    • that never fades and is never tarnished.
  ▪ Heaven is more than just our eternal reward;
    • it is what we were made for!
• I’ve come to this pulpit this afternoon to encourage you,
  ▪ don’t trade this world for the promise of heaven
    • because the world is not enough.
      • The world will never be enough.
        ▪ You were made for heaven.