

Taking the Great Gamble

Mark 8:34-35

“For David served the purpose of God in His own generation...” – *Acts 13:36*

AIM – The overall goal of this message is to help people understand what it means to live a fulfilled life in which the lasting fulfillment they desire is found ultimately through living for and serving Jesus Christ.

Four Parts to the Great Gamble

- Living the servant life, a life focused on unconditionally serving the Savior, brings to mind for most people an uncertainty that makes them feel uncomfortable. Many people ask such questions as:
 - What will I have to give up?
 - What will I have to do?
 - What is in it for me?

Living the servant life is truly a *Great Gamble* for many people. It is a gamble that many choose not pursue because they cannot see the immediate benefit or reward that accompanies this type of a lifestyle.

Part #1 – The Question

- *What's in it for me?*
 - The first part that you will encounter in taking the *Great Gamble* comes in the form of a self-examining question: What's in it for me? It is the same question that Peter asks of Jesus in Matthew 19 and we learn much from the response of the Savior.
 - **Answer:** *An Unmatchable Reward*
- **Mt. 19:27-30** – Peter answered him, “We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?” Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.

Part #2 – The Attitude

- The second part of the *Great Gamble* is learning that our focus is not meant to be upon ourselves and what we will get out of it but rather what we can do for Jesus Christ through our service. Basically we need an Attitude Adjustment in which we adjust our attitude to being more like our Savior. This is a humble servant attitude in which we put others above ourselves not for our own gain but for His.
- **Philippians 2:3-8** – Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be

the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Part #3 – The Heart

- The third part of the *Great Gamble* is preparing ourselves for the pursuit of a pure heart. I know that this sounds cliché and virtually impossible in our modern day culture. The truth is that pursuing the pure heart is possible but only for those that desire it above the pleasures that the world offers.
- The pure heart must be pursued if we truly want to live for Jesus. We must cast off the obstacles associated with this world that block our vision of God's direction for our lives.
- **Mark 8:34-35** – Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.”

Part #4 – The Action

- The final part of the Great Gamble is seen as we take everything that we have learned and put it into practice as we simply serve. Rise to the challenge for the next month and focus each day on serving, not being served, but make a conscious effort to SERVE others. Serve Christians and Non-Christians alike and it is then that you will experience your True Reward.
- **John 13:12-17** – ¹² When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. ¹³ “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶ I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 9:35 – Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.”

