

Dead Men Walking.

(Text: Matt 16:21-27).

Introduction:

- 1- This title comes from a 1995 movie starring Sean Penn and Susan Sarandon. The movie was based upon a book by Helen Prejean, a Roman Catholic nun, who was opposed to the death penalty and became the spiritual advisor to two men on death row.
- 2- In the movie, as the condemned man was led into the execution chamber, one of the guards called out, "Dead Man walking."
- 3- As I thought about it, this is a fitting description of a Christian (Gal. 2:20).
- 4- The passage for consideration this morning, Matthew 16:21-27, calls us to become walking dead men. From it, we notice three things.

Discussion:

- I- Jesus predicted his own sacrificial death (16:21-23).
 - A- The passage makes a transitional stage in the ministry of the Christ.
 - 1- Note the phrase, "from that time..."
 - 2- We see that in rapid succession Jesus predicted his approaching death, that moment when he will have completed his fathers work (16:21, 17:22-23, 20:17-19).
 - B- Jesus was well aware that he was a 'dead man walking' well aware of the fact that He was born to die, that death was his destiny. (Rev 13:8)"...The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world..."
 - C- We look at 16:22 and see that this was not sitting right with outspoken Peter, "Far be it from you Lord, this shall not happen to you."
 - 1- Far be it, or (NASV) "God forbid," I am to understand that this is a strong negative and means literally, "May God be merciful to thee, for this must not, will not happen to thee."
 - 2- I think that Peter could not see how the Lords death could fit the plan for a victorious messiah. Look at (Is 53) at the prophecy of the suffering of this Christ the Son of God.
 - 3- Was it not in 16:16 that this man had confessed the Christ? Peter did not have a problem with who Christ was but rather the nature of His messiah ship. That Jesus was the liberator, the saviour yet he was talking of dying.
 - 4- Not the response of Jesus in (Verse 23). Jesus saw this as a seduction from Satan to make him think that there could be a cross without a crown. How wrong he was.
- II- Jesus called his disciples to a death to self (16:24).

- A- Following the rebuke of Peter He talks of what it takes to follow Jesus. He makes it clear that self sacrifice is the very nature of, the essence of discipleship.
- 1- It is more than just denying self of what we like, it cuts to the core of denying our very self.
 - 2- Christians are those who are described as being dead to self, dead to the old but alive to the new. Think on this passage (Romans 6:6-13, Col 3:1-4) companion passage.
 - 3- There are two verbs here.,(16:24)"**Deny and Take,**" action words both suggest a one time action, while **follow** suggests continued action.
 - a) Consider a paraphrase: "***If anyone wishes to be an adherent of mine, he must once and for all say farewell to self, decisively accept pain, shame, and persecution for my sake, and in my cause, and must then follow and keep on following me as my disciple***" (Hendriksen).
- B- You know, Jesus went as far as saying that following him may mean suffering, even to the point of death, with the first century Christians even facing ,as Christ; crucifixion.
- 1- His followers were to take up their crosses, just as a condemned man carries his own cross to the place of crucifixion, and follow Jesus wherever it may lead. (I Pet 2:21), "***Christ suffered for us leaving an example.***"
 - 2- Ever heard of, 'Bargain basement, Jesus offers no 'bargain basement deal,' no half price sale.
- C- Without question, verse 24 is one of the most significant sayings of Jesus (Matt. 10:28; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23; 14:27).
- 1- One commented, "***Self-sacrifice is the word written over the gateway to the Kingdom of God.***"
 - 2- ***It is a call to become, "walking dead men."***

III- In (Matt 16:225-27) Jesus provided motivation for death to self.

- A- This call is not without motivation and I will suggest why?
- B- Three sentences begin with that word "**For...**"
- 1- "***For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.***"
 - a- Paradoxically, Jesus says that the way to gain life is to lose it.
 - b- "Biggest Losers" end up being the biggest winners.
 - c- The importance of this principle is seen in the emphasis Jesus placed upon it (Matt. 10:39; Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24; 17:33; John 12:25).
 - 2- . "***For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?***"
 - a- The call of Jesus here is to realise the value the soul.
 - b- The wealth of the world pales beside the value placed by Jesus on just one precious soul.

- 3- ***"For the Son of man will come in the glory of His Father with his angels, and then He will reward each according to his works."***
 - a- Jesus makes the coming judgment the premise for this call to self-denial and sacrifice.
 - b- In fact judgment will be upon the basis of what we have done in this life clearly taught in Scripture (Rom. 2:6; II Cor. 5:10).

Conclusion:

- 1- What we have discussed to day is the very reason why many are not Christians.
- 2- It is also a reason why those of us who are Christians find it, at times to be a daily struggle.
- 3- Jesus calls us today to be "walking dead men." The execution chamber for the old man awaits, but so does new life in Christ.
- 4- I leave you with these two verses to respond to.

II Corinthians 5:17
Galatians 3:26-27

Allan Fowell.

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Outline Courtesy T.Miller.