

The Power of Consecration

Romans 12:1-2

Consecration is giving our bodies as a living sacrifice to Christ. That is what Jesus says as we open to Luke 9. The truth of consecration is: "Losers are Keepers"¹? God's ways are so different than ours.

Remember when you went to school as a kid? Out in the playground you learn a lot of things that stay through life. Here's one I learned at the Haslett Elementary School in 1962 as someone scampered off with my quarter that had fallen out a hole in my jacket pocket as I was hanging upside down on the monkey bars, I'm sure you have heard the same:

"Finders keepers, losers (what?) weepers". Right?

But is that truth for life or just for a moment? Well let's find out. Turn to Luke 9:23-26 with me and follow along as we listen to what Jesus says;

Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him **deny himself**, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. 24 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but **whoever loses his life for My sake will save it**. 25 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? 26 For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels.

Consecrated believers are living sacrifices for Christ. That is why repeatedly throughout Christ's teachings He kept solemnly affirming that everything in life **we lose for Him** we get to keep forever. But what we find and **keep for our self** we lose forever.

So in God's accounting of our earthly lives (which is reality and what will last forever) we see that—*Losers are Keepers and Keepers are the Weepers!*

So our lifelong reminder is to beware of:

Gaining the Whole World But Ending up a Loser

¹ 021124AM GDGW-37

In 1965, when I was about 9 years old, my family was caring for an 88-year-old saint from our church named Dora Kaiser who lived in our home. Now Mrs. Kaiser was quite adventurous, but also very weak. She always wanted to go with us but usually had to find a place to sit down soon after she got anywhere.

My dad heard that a famous exhibit was coming to a museum here in Michigan, and wanted us to go. I wasn't sure what we were going to see but it was exciting all the same. After the 90-minute ride we rolled up to the curb in downtown Detroit at the Metropolitan Museum hosting this national event.

Soon we saw that there was a line of people, half a block long, waiting to get in. So I was assigned to take Mrs. Kaiser to find a comfortable bench inside the building where we were to sit and wait. Turning around I soon saw people coming out a door just in front of where we parked by the curb.

So being obedient, I guided my elderly friend through the wall of people flowing out of that door saying, "Excuse me, please excuse me", as I led her inside searching for a soft seat for her to rest while we waited.

Within moments of entering the building, I was astounded as we began to walk by glass cases filled with gold objects. More gold than either of had seen in the 97 years we had lived between us.

Mrs. Kaiser never found a bench to sit down on.

In fact we never stopped walking against the flow of people and looking in amazement at row after row of displays. Finally, after a half an hour, Mrs. Kaiser stood with me at a large square box of stone with a glass top. Looking down I found myself looking into the serene face of a three-thousand-year-old teenager. Here was the teen that died mysteriously, 30 centuries ago, yet to this day most of the civilized² world still recognizes and are familiar with his face.

The Teenaged King Who Had it All

I was overwhelmed at the warmth of the gold, the sparkling beauty of the gems that make up the final resting place of the boy king. The golden mask with its exquisite beauty has an almost spiritual quality to it. I noticed that each person who came to stand by me reacted the same way – with quiet awe and wonder. I was standing next to the earthly remains of the man who seems to sum up all that was the best of one of the greatest of all the Ancient World's Civilizations. I was face to face with Tut-ankh-amun -- 12th Pharaoh of Ancient Egypt's 18th Dynasty.

After about 45 more minutes of wandering in wonder through the King Tut exhibit at the Museum of Detroit we actually bumped into my parents. They had just made it in. After waiting 75 minutes in the half a city block long line and paying the \$5 fee, they were

² This is an adaptation of Paul Doherty's inside cover summary of his book *The Mysterious Death of Tutankhamun*, New York: Carrol & Graf Publishing, 2002.
MACINTOSH HD:USERS:JULIABARNETT:PUBLIC:DTBM:MP3:DWM THE DELIGHTS OF A WORD FILLED MARRIAGE:DWM STUDY GUIDES:DWM-54_THE POWER OF CONSECRATION_091004AM.DOC 3/2/10 page 2

now starting to view "The Treasures of Ancient Egypt Exhibit" – which I had just finished viewing!

Almost 20 years later as an adult I stood at the same stone box in Cairo, Egypt. And just as the first time, King Tut glowed with wonder. This boy was buried with tons of golden treasures that were so numerous that it took Howard Carter nearly ten years to catalogue each one of them.

So why am I giving so much detail? Because, the grave of Tut-ank-hamun is such a tragic reminder of a wasted life, with a horrible ending – a life lived only for earth, and not for Heaven.

Please open your hearts and listen to the voice of Jesus explaining the power of consecration, the call to become a living sacrifice for the service of God, as I read His words recorded flawlessly in Luke 14.26-33.

"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. 27 And whoever does not **bear his cross** and come after Me cannot be My disciple. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and **count the cost**, whether he has enough to finish it— 29 lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish'? 31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. 33 **So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.**

Jesus called out to all who would listen: become a living sacrifice, consecrate your life to me, come follow me each day, and be my disciple for life.

Don't waste your life; don't end life horribly unprepared for the true afterlife. Jesus stated for all who would listen that only in making a clear choice to give themselves unreservedly to Him could they truly be His followers. That reminds us again of the essence of consecration summed up in the simple statement:

Only Two Choices On the Shelf

Pleasing God or pleasing our self is the constant choice we make each moment as we go through life.

There is no middle ground, no safe neutral spot.

Everything either pleases God or it does not.

So Christ's call in Luke 9 expresses the two³ approaches to life:

EITHER --	OR --
We belong to Jesus	We belong to our self
We deny our self	We live for our self
We give everything back to God	We keep our stuff
We take up our cross	We ignore the cross
We follow Christ	We follow the world
We lose our life for His sake	We save our life for our own sake
We forsake the world	We try to gain the world
We keep your soul	We lose our soul
We share His reward and glory	We lose His reward and glory

This life of choosing to please God is called the life of consecration. Is your life given back in surrender and consecration to Christ?

Consecration means we give back to the Lord all of our life. Our body, our future, our time and all our resources – all are to be consecrated to the Lord. Lets go back to Cairo for a moment by way of another pastor who has written about his impressions as he also saw the King Tut exhibit in Cairo. Here are his words.

The⁴ King Tut exhibit at the Egyptian national Museum was mind-boggling. Tutankhamun, the boy king, was only seventeen when he died. He was buried with solid gold chariots and thousands of golden artifacts. His gold coffin was found in a burial site filled with tons of gold. The Egyptians believed they could take earthly treasures into the afterlife. But all the treasures intended for King Tut's eternal enjoyment stayed right where they were until Howard Carter discovered the burial chamber in 1922. Tutankhamun tomb glittered with unimaginable wealth.

The Rewards of a Consecrated Life

Another life is in stark contrast to the wealth in King Tut's grave. Another grave can be found if you look closely on a back street in an overgrown and rarely visited cemetery. This lesser-known grave in Cairo can only be found after choking through the gray dust of this city of 12 million+ Egyptians. Down a long dirty alley and into a fenced cemetery only findable by a guide lays the Protestant Cemetery of Cairo. In a plot of overgrown grass stand rows of sun-scorched tombstones. If you dust off the right one these words faintly appear:

"William Borden, 1887-1913."

³ Wiersbe, Warren W., *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1997.

⁴ Randy Alcorn, *The Treasure Principle*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, Inc., 2001, p.34-36.

Below those words is etched an epitaph that testifies of his love and sacrifices for the kingdom of God and for Muslim people. The words end with a penetrating phrase: "Apart from faith in Christ, there is no explanation for such a life."

May I fill you in on that magnificent life of William Borden today? He is the one buried in the other tomb in Cairo. In 1904, William Borden, a member of the Borden dairy family, finished high school in Chicago and was given a world cruise as a graduation present. Particularly while traveling through the Near East and Far East, he became heavily burdened for the lost. After returning home, he spent seven years at Yale and Princeton University, the first four in undergraduate work and the last three in seminary. Rejecting a life of ease to reach Muslims, he gave away his fortune. After he did so he penned these words in the back of his Bible: "**No reserves.**"

On his way to China to witness to Muslims he stopped in Egypt to learn Arabic. As he studied there he penned these words in the back of his Bible under the no reserves. He wrote: "**No retreats.**"

After 4 months on intense studying and regular evangelism among the poor of Cairo he contracted cerebral meningitis there in the slums. He died within a month at age 25. His mother arrived from Chicago at his bedside just an hour after his death. As she was looking through his Bible she discovered the third and final set of words: "**No regrets.**"

So William Borden's life was a life consecrated to Christ's call, and he summed it up in only 6 words – No Reserves, No Retreats, and No Regrets!

Which Grave will Yours Be Like?

Think about the direction of your life. What direction is your life headed? Is it pleasing God by a consecrated living sacrifice life, or is it pleasing self and trying to live for the world and still make it to Heaven?

Are⁵ you struck by the contrast between these two graves?

- *Borden's grave is obscure, dusty, and hidden off the back alley of a street littered with garbage. Tutankhamun tomb glitters with unimaginable wealth. Yet where are these two young men now?*
- *One, who lived in opulence and called himself king is in the misery of a Christ less eternity. The other, who lived a modest life on earth in service of the one true King, is enjoying his everlasting reward in the presence of his Lord.*
- *Tut's life was tragic because of an awful truth discovered too late-he couldn't take his treasures with him. William Borden's life was triumphant. Why? Because instead of leaving behind his treasures, he sent them on ahead.*

⁵ Randy Alcorn, *The Treasure Principle*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, Inc., 2001, p.34-36.

- *We'll each part with our money. The only question is when. Jesus warns us not to store up treasures on earth, not just because wealth might be lost; **but because wealth will always be lost.** Either it leaves us while we live, or we leave it when we die. No exceptions.*
- *He wants us to store up treasures; he's just telling us to store them in the right place! Anything we put into the Father's hands will be ours for eternity. If we give instead of keep, if we invest in the eternal instead of the temporal, we store up treasures in heaven that will never stop paying dividends. You can't take it with you, but you can send it on ahead.*

Consecrate Your Life Today

So, knowing what Jesus wants, we are compelled to pray that our children consecrate their lives to Christ!

- ***A Consecrated Christian Believes That Losers Are Keepers.*** Matthew 16:24-27 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 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 Consecrated Christian wants to be Rich Towards God:*** Luke 12:13-21 Then one from the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." 14 But He said to him, "Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?" 15 And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." 16 Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. 17 And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' 18 So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry." ' 20 But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' 21 **"So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."**
- ***A Consecrated Christian Believes in*** GIVING OUR BODIES, MINDS, AND EVERYTHING ELSE TO THE LORD. Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

The power of consecration is giving everything back into Christ's control. Remember what Jesus said?

Luke 9:23-26 Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him **deny himself**, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. 24 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but **whoever loses his life for My sake will save it**. 25 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? 26 For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels.

Consecrated believers are living sacrifices for Christ. That is why repeatedly throughout Christ's teachings He kept solemnly affirming that everything in life **we lose for Him** we get to keep forever. But what we find and **keep for our self** we lose forever.

So in God's accounting of our earthly lives (which is reality and what will last forever) we see that—*Losers are Keepers and Keepers are the Weepers!*