

LAYING HOLD ON ETERNAL LIFE: BY CONSECRATION “LOSERS ARE KEEPERS”

Losers are Keepers

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

Well let's find out. Turn to Luke 9.23. What does Jesus say? He says that what we lose for Him we get to keep forever. What we find and keep for self we lose forever. So in reality Losers are Keepers and Keepers are the Weepers!

One of the best illustrations of that is in the tale of two men – one who lost and gained and one who gained and lost it all.

Sometimes I am amazed at some of the unexpected opportunities I had growing up. Let me share just one. I was about 9 years old. My family was caring for an 88-year-old saint from our church named Dora Kaiser. 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 the Museum of Detroit 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. Soon we saw that there was a line half a block long waiting to get in. So I was assigned to take Mrs. Kaiser to find a comfortable bench inside where we were to sit and wait. Turning we 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 crowd saying excuse me as I went in search of 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. In fact we never stopped 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 years old -- teenager. Here was the

teen that died mysteriously, 30 centuries ago, yet most of the civilized¹ world today recognizes and are familiar with his face.

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 Tutankhamun -- 12th Pharaoh of Ancient Egypt's 18th Dynasty.

After about 45 more minutes of wandering in amazement through the King Tut exhibit at the Museum of Detroit we actually bumped into my parents. They had just made it in. After waiting in the half a city block long line and paying the \$5 fee, they were 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 Tutankhamun 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 as I read His words recorded flawlessly in Luke 14.26-33.

Jesus called out to all who would listen – come follow me and be my disciple. Don't waste your life; don't end life horribly unprepared for the true afterlife. Making a clear choice to give themselves unreservedly to Him marked his followers. This call expresses the two² 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

¹ 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.

² Wiersbe, Warren W., *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1997.

We are looking at the 4th and final area we are to pray for as parents and grandparents for those we love. We are to pray that they lay hold on eternal life. We have seen that God's Word says we must lay hold on eternal life; then we lay hold by contentment; and this week we lay hold by consecration.

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.

The³ 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.

There is a second, lesser-known grave in Cairo. It stands as a powerful contrast, a lesson to all who will reflect for a moment. May I take you there? You have to choke through the gray dust of the 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."

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 this morning? 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 ministered in there in Egypt. He

³ Randy Alcorn, *The Treasure Principle*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, Inc., 2001, p.34-36.

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!

Are⁴ 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.*
- *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.*

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

Remember, parenting is life long. Remember that praying keeps us on the front lines of our children's lives – all through our lives. Remember that great parenting means that you raise a godly family – one prayer at a time.

Prayer is the key to raising, nurturing, and launching children that please the Lord. This morning is a practical, how to lesson in learning how to pray for our children.

Living like Christ's Child – means to pray for REALITY IN THEIR SPIRITUAL LIFE: is seeing them genuinely saved, loving God's Word, living in victory, thinking of heaven, finding sin repulsive, staying tender toward God.

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

Looking Christ like – means to pray for INTEGRITY IN THEIR PERSONAL LIFE: is seeing them maintaining a clear conscience, learning to stand alone, seeking to stay pure, cultivating a servant's heart, never becoming bitter in trials.

Loving One Another -- means to pray for STABILITY IN THEIR RELATIONAL LIFE: which is seeing them cultivating a love for their brothers and sisters, learning to trust God with hard situations and not to rebel, each loving the way God made them as men and women, waiting to meet God's chosen life partner for them.

Laying Hold on Eternal Life – means to pray for VITALITY IN THEIR ETERNAL LIFE.

THIS MEANS SEEING THEM CHOOSING A LIFE OF CONTENTMENT. Philippians 4:11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for **I have learned**, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. (KJV) CONTENTMENT is a habit of life that helps us avoid things that deeply offend and grieve our Heavenly Father.

- The desire for things more than God
- The desire for pleasure more than godliness
- The desire for satisfaction through things more than to be satisfied by God.
- The desire for better things and other things that others have more than thanking God for what we have.
- The desire for the rewards of the physical world more than a desire for eternal rewards.

THIS MEANS SEEING THEM CHOOSING A LIFE OF CONSECRATION. 1 Timothy 6:9-12 But **those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare**, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, **flee these things and pursue** righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, **lay hold on eternal life**, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (NKJV)

Now, lets learn the verses we pray from to see Consecration in our children.

CONSECRATION 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.

CONSECRATION IS RETURNING TO THE LORD THE TITLE DEED TO ALL WE OWN.

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**.

CONSECRATION IS 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.

CONSECRATION IS BELIEVING THAT WE WERE BOUGHT AND PAID FOR BY THE LORD.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

CONSECRATION IS GIVING OUR SELF BACK TO GOD.

2 Corinthians 8:5 And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.