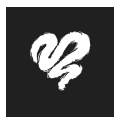


JESUS: THE UNAVOIDABLE DECISION

FROM THE MESSAGES OF
ADRIAN ROGERS



Jesus: The Unavoidable Decision

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INTRODUCTION

JESUS IS THE ANSWER

Every day you are faced with multiple decisions. Some are small, and some are life-changing. Some seem insignificant at the time, but become more significant as time goes by. The decisions you made about which church to attend or which charities to support will not get you into Heaven. You may think you don't need to be saved because sin and the afterlife are man-made constructs. But you know how deceitful your own heart can be. You have listened to those who say that the final judgment will never come and that there is no Hell. But you have a sneaking suspicion that, without these, justice will never prevail. Only one decision matters: what you decide about Jesus.

You don't want to blindly follow what your family believes or what you learned as a child. You want to learn more so you can understand what it really means to be a Christian. The Bible is part of how God reveals Himself to us. He gave it to us so that we could know Him and His Son, Jesus. He loves you and made a way for you to spend eternity with Him in Heaven through the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

If you are skeptical about Christianity, this study presents biblical evidence. If you want to know more before you decide, this study invites you to consider the biblical reasons you should believe. If you are a new believer, this study will help you understand the depth and importance of your decision. If you are a growing believer, this study can help strengthen your faith and equip you to share the Good News with others in your circle of influence.

The decision you make about Jesus cannot be avoided. Once you settle this decision, a new life waits for you on the other side of the crossroads.

Want more? The audio messages by Pastor Adrian Rogers from which this study is derived are linked using the QR code at the end of this study.

You need to think about
eternity when you think
about your soul.

ADRIAN ROGERS



WEEK 1

THE VALUE OF YOUR SOUL

■ INTRODUCTION

A man falls in love with a young lady and decides to marry her. But he is nervous about popping the question. He buys a diamond ring and gives it to her as a present. When he sees her next, he asks about the gift. “Oh, it’s wonderful! The tiny little box is so soft with a golden hinge and the satin inside is so shiny!” When he asks about the ring, she says, “Oh? I threw that away, but I love the box.”

Obviously, no one would throw away something so valuable. But every day, people make choices that value the body more than the soul. We praise and pamper the box while neglecting the diamond inside. Your body may die, but your soul is eternal. Jesus made a statement about those who wish to save their lives, and then He asked a question:

“For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mark 8:35-37).

What would you trade for your soul? Once you understand how valuable it is, you will not throw it away. It is time for you to make sure your soul’s destiny is settled.

■ PRAY OVER IT

Dear God, I believe in You, but I also have a lot of questions. I want to know what Your plan is for my life. I don’t want to be afraid of death, and I want to know how to take care of my soul so that I can spend eternity in Heaven with You. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

DAY 1

THE SOUL: FABULOUS TREASURE WITH CREATIVITY, POTENTIAL, AND DURABILITY

■ PONDER IT

When you are looking for a fabulous treasure, consider your soul. It's worth more than all the rubies, diamonds, stocks, bonds, cash, cars, lands, or houses in the world. All the wealth of this world put together cannot begin to equal the value of your soul. In the Bible, we can find five reasons your soul is so valuable. We'll explore the first three today.

Creativity. Raphael, Michelangelo, and Picasso created works of art worth millions of dollars. Their creativity and innovation made those pieces valuable because they created works that were unlike anything else. When God made your soul, wed it with your spirit, and placed it into your body, He said it was very good. Mankind was created in a unique way from the dust of the ground, in the image of God, with God's breath.

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being (Genesis 2:7).

God uniquely crafted you; that makes you incredibly valuable. You are the crowning work of God's creative genius.

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10).

Potential. You are valuable not only for who you are today but also for who you could be. You are three people right now: who you are; who you will be if you choose degradation and despair; who you will be if you give your heart to Jesus Christ.

Michelangelo stared at a piece of marble for months. When a visiting prince asked what he was doing just staring at it all day long, he simply replied, "I'm working." That marble hunk became David, his most famous statue. When Michelangelo described his process, he said, "I saw the angel in the marble, and I carved until I set him free." God sees in you a saint, made in the likeness of Jesus Christ, and He is working to set you free.

Durability. A young man started working, earning money, and buying his own clothes. He found a beautiful shirt and couldn't believe the price. He bought it and brought it home. It looked so good until he washed it. It seemed like a bargain, but it disintegrated in the wash. It had no durability.

You were made in the image of God. You could no more cease to exist than God Himself could cease to exist. Your soul will be in existence when the sun, moon, and stars have grown cold.

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to everlasting shame and contempt (Daniel 12:2).

Your soul will be in existence, either in Heaven or in Hell, for eternity. You are fearfully and wonderfully made (see Psalm 139:14), and you decide whether to let God begin the work of setting you free.

■ PUT IT IN WRITING

- What is unique about you? How do you see God's creativity displayed in you?
- What are your dreams for yourself? Who do you think you could be someday? How do you see God at work in your life, helping you become that person?
- When you consider that your soul will exist forever, do you think you will be spending eternity in Heaven or in Hell? What have you done that determines your destiny?

Your soul is the diamond
that lives within you.

ADRIAN ROGERS

DAY 2

THE SOUL: FABULOUS TREASURE THAT IS RARE AND DESIRABLE

■ PONDER IT

Yesterday we considered that the fabulous treasure of your soul comes from the creativity, potential and durability on display in you. Today we consider two more attributes of your soul:

Rarity. If something is rare, it is valuable. There may be millions of souls in the world, but there is no one like you. You are the wonderfully original handiwork of Almighty God. When God created you, He decided there would never be another you. Just like He keeps two snowflakes from being identical, He doesn't make any two people alike. You are extremely rare.

The rarest stamp in the world is the 1856 British Guiana 1 Cent Magenta, and the rarest coin is a 1933 Double Eagle \$20 gold coin. Only one of each of these items exists in the world. Your soul—the combination of mind, will and emotion that comprises who you are—is rare and absolutely unique. God will never make another just like you.

Desirability. An appraiser can evaluate a house, a painting, or a car and let you know what it's worth. That appraisal compares your item to similar items that have already been purchased. Value is essentially what someone else is willing to pay for it.

Jesus thinks your soul is valuable because He paid for your soul with His life.

...you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Peter 1:18a; 19).

Jesus desires your soul. You are a fabulous treasure: created by God, full of potential, eternal, rare, and desirable.

■ **PUT IT IN WRITING**

- What are the unique things you contribute to the world? What would the world be missing if you weren't here?
- Do you believe that Jesus wants your soul? Why or why not?

You are the crowning work of
God's creative genius.

ADRIAN ROGERS

A FOOLISH TRANSACTION

■ PONDER IT

Jesus talks very rationally about profit and loss, much like a businessman. He wants you to understand what a foolish transaction it would be to barter away your soul for the hopes of gaining this world.

“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?” (Mark 8:36).

This is a foolish transaction for three reasons.

First, you can't gain the world. Many have tried; none have succeeded. All you will ever hope to gain is a little piece. But some people will sell their souls for very little. Judas sold Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. Some people wouldn't come to Jesus even if it cost them something inconsequential. Sometimes people cling to the things they can see and hold instead of clinging to Jesus Christ. Regardless of what they think they will gain or what they are asked to give up, nobody ever gains the whole world.

Second, even if you could gain the whole world, you couldn't keep it. Everything you think you own does not really belong to you. It's not yours. The gnawing tooth of time, the foul breath of decay, will take it away. If you want to know how much you really have, add up the things that money can't buy and death can't take away. The Bible says that the form of this world is passing away and will not last into eternity (see 1 Corinthians 7:31).

Third, even if you could gain the whole world and keep it, it would not satisfy you. God made you to be a part of Him. God is the element in which you are meant to live.

...for in Him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28a).

You will never find satisfaction until you find it in the Lord Jesus Christ. You will never meet the hunger of your heart until you meet it in the Lord. God made a fish to swim in the sea, and birds to fly in the air. If you take a fish out of the sea and put him in a tree, he is not a happy fish. If you take

a bird out of the air and put him under the water, he is not a happy bird. And if you take man out of fellowship with God, like a fish in a tree or a bird under water, he will not be satisfied.

■ **PUT IT IN WRITING**

- Jesus, what are some of the things you cling to for purpose, significance, or love?
- How have the things of this world satisfied you? How long will that satisfaction last? Have you ever found satisfaction in God? If so, is that different from other things you have used to satisfy yourself?

You can hold onto things for a little while,
but even your finest treasures are actually
just premature junk.

ADRIAN ROGERS

CONSIDER THE LOSS

■ PONDER IT

Every business uses a profit-loss analysis or return on investment analysis when making major decisions. Jesus provides us a profit-loss analysis when it comes to our souls. Here are some things to consider in this analysis:

To gain the whole world and lose your soul is an immeasurable loss. In fact, Jesus is saying that your one soul is worth more than the whole world. That's how valuable your soul is.

It's an irreplaceable loss to lose your soul. Some things you can replace if you lose them. But you will never find a replacement or substitute for your soul.

It is an irreversible loss to trade your soul. You cannot reject Jesus in this life, and then find yourself standing before Jesus Himself and say, "Now I understand. Now I see and believe." Grace, mercy, and forgiveness are available to you now, and you must choose to receive Jesus in this life.

And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment (Hebrews 9:27).

The Bible says that "the soul who sins shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4c). Your soul will not cease to exist; it will live in a state of eternal death, without God, without Jesus, without hope. You can't wait until you see Jesus to believe.

It is an inexcusable loss to lose your soul in this life. Since you have heard the message of the Gospel, there's no reason you should die and go to Hell when Jesus wants to save you. God wants to save anyone who wants to live.

For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it (Mark 8:35).

If someone offered you all the wealth, power, prestige, and pleasure this world has to offer, but it would cost your pinky finger, would you take that trade? What if it cost you your arm? Your hearing? Your vision, hearing,

and arm? At some point, most people would draw the line and walk away. How much would you give up to have everything?

You may already be giving a lot more than you're gaining. You are probably already operating at a loss. When you walk away from Jesus to gain everything the world has to offer, you are giving up your soul. Your soul is worth more than your hands, your eyes, your ears, and everything else. Your soul is made in the image of God—creative, full of potential, durable, rare, and desirable. What a tragic, foolish transaction!

■ **PUT IT IN WRITING**

- What are the obstacles that keep you from giving your soul to Jesus? What would it take to overcome those obstacles?
- What do you gain by trading your soul for everything the world has to offer? What do you lose by giving your soul to Jesus?

If you want mercy, you may have it;
if you want grace, you may have it; if
you want forgiveness, you may have
it. But you must have it in this life.

ADRIAN ROGERS

THE FATAL TRAGEDY

■ PONDER IT

Making the decision to keep your soul for yourself is a fatal tragedy.

A wealthy man decided to move from the Old World to the United States. He sold all he had and put it into a diamond, intending to bring it to his new country, sell it, and begin his new life. Standing on the deck of a steamer crossing the ocean, he took the diamond out to admire it. He was proud that he had so much wealth in that one diamond. People gathered to see it, and he enjoyed the attention. One day, he held it over the edge of the ship as the crowd gasped. They cautioned him to be careful.

The next day, the crowd gathered again. They gasped in awe as he tossed it into the air and caught it. As he was playing with this diamond, the ship lurched. The diamond bounced away from his grasp and dropped into the deep blue sea. Suddenly, he realized how foolish he had been.

If you are keeping your soul from Jesus, you are even more foolish than this man. Today Jesus is offering you salvation. He has poured out His blood for you, and you're just playing with your soul.

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest...learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:28-29).

■ **PUT IT IN WRITING**

- What have you realized this week about the value of your soul? How will you treat it differently?
- Do you know how or when you will die? Why is it foolish to count on a deathbed conversion? Why are you waiting to make a decision about Jesus?

I don't know much about chess, but
I know something about God, and
I'm here to tell you there's one move
you can make, and only one.

ADRIAN ROGERS

THE LAST INVITATION

■ PRACTICE IT

One day, you will hear your last invitation. The Holy Spirit will knock for the last time before you die. One day, your life will be over, and your soul will be lost. There's no reason to lose your soul. You don't have to go to Hell if you don't want to. Christ died for you. He desires your soul. He wants you to be saved.

If you do not know that you would go to Heaven if you died today, you need to call on the name of the Lord and be saved. You're not saved by joining a church or getting baptized. Those are good things, but they won't save you. You're not saved by keeping the Ten Commandments or living a clean life. That's good, but it won't save you. You need to trust Jesus as your Lord and Savior. If you commit your life to Jesus Christ, He will save you. You can pray a prayer like this:

Dear God, I'm a sinner, and I'm lost, and I need to be saved. Jesus died to save me; You promised to save me if I would trust You. And I do trust You, Jesus. Come into my heart, forgive my sin, and save me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

■ PROCLAIM IT

If you prayed to receive Christ, please share your decision with another Christian you know or with your pastor. We would also like to hear about it, so that we can provide you with free resources to help you grow in your new faith. Please let us know by going to lwf.org/discover-jesus, scrolling down the page and clicking on *I Believe*.

There are those in your circle of influence who need to know how valuable their souls are. Pray and ask God to give you opportunities to show them they are valuable and loved. Perhaps you will have the opportunity to share what you have learned this week.

There are people who sit in darkness
who'd give a million worlds like this one
to have the light you have right now.

ADRIAN ROGERS