

## THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP: SURRENDER OF SELF

What can a person give in exchange for his self / soul / life? The Greek word *psyche* could mean “soul” or “life”, and some times it functioned as a reflexive, meaning “self.” The mistake some people have been making is to assume that it always means “self”, or the whole person, even in the context of death and dying. The soul is physical life. Without spiritual life, souls are bound for destruction. People can destroy bodies, but only God can destroy souls, in hell. The individual soul is attached to the body; it is not confined to the body.

So what can a person give in exchange for his life / soul / self? Nothing. But the Gospel tells us today that being a disciple of Jesus means being willing to surrender our selves. There is a cost to pay. Though Jesus brings us peace, there is often division because of Him, even in close family units. Surrender of self is like the condemned criminal who takes up his cross-bar, on which he is going to hang before public gaze in great shame and suffering. If we find our lives we will lose them. If we lose our lives for Jesus’ sake we will find them (Matt 10:39). Giving up making our own persons, needs, wishes, and desires the chief focus of our lives and actions isn’t the end, even in this present age. Jesus is our life, and we don’t live for ourselves, but for Him, who for our sakes died and rose again. There are many compensations, such as having peace with God, living in a state of grace, knowing that death has lost its sting, and having the hope of the glory of God for Jesus’ sake. God’s blessing continues with us, in spite of our being crucified to this world. But through it all we find eternal life. The real compensation comes in the age to come, when Jesus has promised to take up our confession and acknowledge us before His Father in heaven. There is a gracious bonus that even the most insignificant deed done to the lowliest of Jesus’ followers does not escape our Lord’s notice. Life lost is life regained, indeed. There is also tremendous incentive here to honour Jesus through serving and honouring His followers. So the final goal of surrender of self is not glory for ourselves, but the praise of Him who was totally committed for our sakes. He denied His self, and took up His cross. He didn’t cling to His life, but lost it for our sakes. When He did so, He was highly exalted by the Father, and through doing so He won eternal life for us all.