

# Was It Worth It?

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Most likely what I am about to share with you will not be all that important to some of you while to others it will resonate. I can only say that I believe it is a worthy illustration to make the point I want to make concerning the Lord's Supper: "Was it worth it?"

It was 1957 when I was only twelve years old. My parents were extremely hard workers; mother was a "housewife"; dad was a supervisor over several drivers who delivered bakery products from door to door. I have no idea how many hours each of them labored to keep me and my two brothers fed and clothed; but, whatever it took, that is what they did.

It was Christmas time and there was one thing I really wanted - a basketball and a basketball hoop. But, looking back, little did I know then that even that had to have been a financial difficulty for them to get. I didn't know that they were on the verge of losing our home. Times were difficult. How they did it, I don't know. But there were more than enough gifts under the tree for us to have a memorable Christmas. And, among those that I received was a basketball and a basketball hoop.

On Christmas day afternoon, dad went outside and put up the hoop on an

electric pole that stood in our yard - no backboard, just a hoop that was attached to a metal plate that was nailed to an electric pole. With great excitement and anticipation my younger brother and I went outside to shoot some "hoops." In less than five minutes the hoop broke from its attachment to the metal plate. Obviously, it was very cheaply made but that's probably all that my parents could afford to buy. Whatever they paid for it, the hoop was not worth it.

Over the years I have thought about that experience many times. Even though my father is dead and gone, my heart is saddened when I think of how happy he must have been to get those two gifts for me, gifts that he really could not afford, only to see me enjoy it for only about five minutes.

Now, more than half a century later, as a Christian, I find myself asking, "Was it worth Christ going to the cross to pay an infinitely higher price for my salvation than my dad must have paid for that hoop? Or, from His perspective, am I also broken and damaged? How much more should I be heartbroken if this is the case? Was it worth the price He paid for my salvation?"

As we surround ourselves around His



sacred Table on this Lord's Day, dare I ask? "Was it worth Christ going to the cross to pay the price He paid for your salvation?"

That question may sound almost heretical to some who are in this assembly. How dare I question whether or not it was worth it for Christ to go to the cross for any of us! But, the question is not a reflection upon the worthiness of what Christ did, for He has no fault. Rather, it is intended to be a stimulus for each of us to examine ourselves in light of the price that Christ paid to save us from sin, death, and hell; is there some spiritual defect with us that needs to be repaired?

The Bible not only exhorts us to remember Him at this Table; it exhorts us to "*examine*" ourselves while we sit here. It was the Apostle Paul who reminded his Corinthian brethren that "*...whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.*" And then, continuing, he said, "*...let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.*"<sup>1</sup> Not long after that, he wrote another letter to those same brethren and urged them to "*Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith.*"<sup>2</sup> What better place or time is there to "*examine*" oneself and answer the question before us - Was It Worth It? - than here, at the Table of our Lord?

Paul's account of the institution of the Lord's Supper says that Jesus told His apostles to eat the loaf and drink the cup "*in remembrance*" of Him, Christ. Both

the "*loaf*," which is His body, and the "*cup*," which is His blood, remind us of the cost Jesus paid to save us from sin, to save us from ourselves. So, wrapping all of this up in one package, I ask again, "Was *it* - His death for you - for me - worth it?" Or, did He die in vain? Did He die for nothing? Did He die for a cheap basketball hoop?

More than once the Apostle Paul wondered if he had labored "*in vain.*" In *Galatians 2:2* he wondered if he had "*run*" "*in vain.*" In *Galatians 3:4* he wondered if the Galatians had suffered "*in vain.*" In *Galatians 4:11* he was concerned whether or not he had labored for the Galatians "*in vain.*" In *Philippians 2:16* he longed for the day when he would know that he had "*not run in vain or labored in vain*" for the Philippians. In *I Thessalonians 2:1* he was glad to be able to say that his ministry to his Thessalonian brethren "*was not in vain*"; and, in the same book he told them that he had even sent a special messenger, Timothy, to them to make sure that he had not labored for them "*in vain.*"<sup>3</sup> It was important to Paul that he had not spent his life for the cause of Christ "*in vain*," that it all had been worth it. Should we think any differently about our Lord?

In *Mark 8:36* Jesus asked, "*What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?*" Jesus said gaining the whole world would be "*in vain*" if it cost a man "*his own soul.*" Are we mistaken to think that Christ might be saying about you or me, "What did it profit Me to die for him or her and when they are losing their '*own soul*'?"

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<sup>1</sup> *I Corinthians 11:27-27*

<sup>2</sup> *II Corinthians 13:5*

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<sup>3</sup> *I Thessalonians 3:5*

In *II Peter 3* the Apostle observed, "...if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning...it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them." <sup>4</sup>

Beloved, it is not my business to know any of the things that you have done or not done in your life that have been sinful. It is not your business to know any of the things that I have done in my life that have been sinful. But as we examine our past life, and more importantly, as we examine our present life, when it comes to whether or not the death of Christ was worth it as far as we are concerned, no one can answer that question but ourselves. "Lord, am I faithful to You? Lord, am I an obedient follower? Lord, did You die for me '*in vain*'?"

This is a good place and a good time for both individual and congregational repentance. This is a good place and a good time for praising and glorifying and worshiping Him for purchasing our salvation. This is a good place and a good time for us to remember Him and thank Him for His grace. Believe me. It will be time well spent. It will be well worth it.



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<sup>4</sup> *II Peter 2:20-21*