



Today I want to talk to you about selling your soul at a loss, but not so that you would suffer this tragic kind of loss, but that when it comes to your turn to stand before that awesome presence which accepts no excuses, you won't have to make very many. Turn with me to Matt. 16:26: "And what shall it serve a man to gain the whole world if he loses his own soul and what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?." Mishpocah, don't sell you soul at a loss.

Materialism, along with all the power and prestige it brings, is a pretty powerful distraction, which believers have not always had very much success overcoming. Esau is not the only believer who sold his birth right for a little soup. We live in the richest society this planet has ever seen and, despite our grumbling about inflation and the rising cost of living, our disposable incomes are not getting smaller, we just have less money left after we buy all the new gadgets and toys which this good modern life has to offer. In this environment, instead of a garden of grace and love, our souls are in danger of turning into a junkyard we have to sift through, if we don't want our lives to burn up when the L-rd finally shows us the errors of our way. Amen?

There are two extremes to this demon of materialism, one which is obvious (riches) and one which is more subtle (poverty which covets the riches). I am not going to keep you long this morning, because the concept does not need much development, but I want to give it a twist that will remind us that time is running out on our lives and eternity is coming – what are you filling your heart and life with? All of us will pass before the scrutiny of the G-d of Israel who suffers from a double allergy, which we would do well to pay attention to.

You know that I am allergic to perfume. Our Heavenly Father is allergic to sin and to excuses, I am trying hard to find a polite word for *bovine excrement*. He can't stand sin, nor its cousin, which is sin disguised as self righteousness: "Well I tried but, the devil made me do it and I couldn't help myself". Let me give you a partial quote from the Bible so you can see the satanic subtlety of this kind of spiritual compromise: "The good which I would, I do not, but the sin which I would not, that I do... who can deliver me from the body of this death (Rom. 7:19 & 24)?"

So you see, I am trying, but I just can't do it, even though I really want to, sort of, you know, really deep down where it counts. What was that polite word for bovine excrement? I Cor. 10:13 And all of Romans chapter 8 fly in the face of this kind of spiritual sickness. It is a spiritual sickness which will eat away and consume the spiritual harvest of our stubborn souls, until we have nothing left to offer our King when we stand naked, and weeping before the King who has called us to inner and outer victory - you know deep down and every day, where it really counts.

How do we avoid this kind of tragedy and stop wasting our time and energy on things which have no eternal value? Turn with me to I Tim. 6:3-16. Holiness, which is another way of saying spiritual maturity, is worth more than all the gold in Fort Knox or all the oil in the Middle East. Without holiness, Bill Gates is the poorest man on the planet, building sand castles on the shores of eternity, with his back turned on the tide which is rising to carry all of our sand away. If you can't take it with you, why spend you life trying to get as much as you can? Do you really believe in eternity? How many sand castles are you building?

Now I am not building up to an offering, you're in a shul and we have a box at the back for that. I am building up to the single greatest event of your life – the **eternal judgment** which we will all have to experience. Now shouldn't I be saying that our salvation is the greatest moment of our lives – that marvellous moment when we gave our lives to the Saviour and He washed away our sin and imparted Everlasting Life to our penitent souls? *I don't see any difference between the two concepts*. When I admitted that I was a sinner and that I needed to be saved, what did I need to be saved from? Not my guilt, not my pain, and certainly not all the anger and resentment which the folly of this world had built up in my hippy heart.

I needed to be saved from the folly of selling out my soul at a loss. I was angry with all those greedy people who kept the developing nations from their share of the material wealth of the planet. I was angry with the establishment which allowed injustice to prevail in the courts and in the government agencies of our society. But the real enemy was the one lurking in the shadows of my own soul – I wanted the ***Ring of Power*** for myself, so I could use the ***Dark Side*** to strike back at all the bad guys and make everyone obey me and live in a world where I was the boss.

In the end, unless we realize that all the darkness of Auschwitz and of Wall Street lurks in our hearts too, ***we will also sell out in an attempt to get our fair share of the useless sand which is already passing away and we will miss the greatest treasure this universe has to offer – holiness with contentment.*** Instead of empire building with the sand of materialism, of ambition or any other desire which wants to make our agenda the centre of the universe and the purpose of life, we need to realize that our salvation has placed us on the edge of eternity ***with a growing view of the incoming tide.*** We should know better, because we know what is coming. All the things of this world are going to burn, the question I want to close with this morning is how much of our lives are going to burn with them? Have you sold your soul at a loss? Is your soul a mouldy garbage dump full of junk which you need to sift through and jettison before it is too late to get rid of it? Unless today is a good day to die, what is it you are really living for?

It is not the one who dies with the most toys who is the winner. It is not the one with the biggest biceps or the most fame who is really ahead of the game. Neither is the zealous activist rushing around, saving the planet and fighting for social justice, in order to make our world safe for democracy. The love of money, and the love of self and the love of ambition and the love of hatred and revenge – the love of anything other than the Eternal Kingdom of our Glorious L-rd is the root of all evil, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. ***May He grant you all that you need as part of the over and above which comes after the seeking first of His kingdom.***

Everything else is useless, futile and tragic. Fill your soul with things which cannot pass away, and send as much on ahead as you can, where neither moth, nor rust, nor thieves can touch – before it's too late. The tide is coming in, mishpocah, faster for each of us as each year passes. Let's quit playing in the sand and give all of our energy and time to building the kingdom – His not ours. You want to talk more about this? Come to Yeshiva and, this week only, earn double, nay triple eternal air miles for your soul's final journey, to the Jew first and all to the Gentile.

See what happens at Missionsfest? Do you know what eternal condition your soul is in?

Let's pray.