

Luke 9:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

Analysis

Jesus declares a paradox: 'For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.' The Greek 'psychē' (ψυχή) means life/soul. Attempts to preserve life through self-protection, self-indulgence, or self-advancement result in losing true life. Conversely, losing life—dying to self, sacrificing for Christ, prioritizing kingdom over comfort—results in gaining true, eternal life. This counterintuitive principle inverts worldly wisdom. Self-preservation destroys; self-sacrifice saves. The cross demonstrates this—Jesus lost His life to save ours.

Historical Context

This statement immediately follows Jesus' call to take up the cross daily (v. 23). First-century hearers knew 'losing life' could mean literal martyrdom. Early Christians faced exactly this choice—save physical life by denying Christ or lose it by confessing Him. Paradoxically, martyrs gained eternal life while apostates lost it. The principle applies beyond martyrdom—daily dying to self-will and living for Christ's purposes results in abundant life. Conversely, living for self—even achieving worldly success—results in spiritual loss. Jesus' own death and resurrection embodied this principle—He lost His life and gained resurrection glory.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the paradox of losing life to save it contradict worldly wisdom about self-preservation and success?
2. In what practical ways does this principle apply beyond literal martyrdom to daily Christian living?

Interlinear Text

ὅς	γὰρ	ἂν	θέλη	τὴν	ψυχὴν	αὐτὴν	σώσει	ἀπολέσῃ
whosoever	For	G302	will	G3588	life	it	save	shall lose
G3739	G1063		G2309		G5590	G846	G4982	G622
αὐτήν	ὅς	δ'	ἂν	ἀπολέσῃ	τὴν	ψυχὴν	αὐτήν	
it	whosoever	but	G302	shall lose	G3588	life	it	
G846	G3739	G1161		G622		G5590	G846	
ἕνεκεν	ἐμοῦ	οὗτος	σώσει	αὐτήν				
sake	for my	the same	save	it				
G1752	G1700	G3778	G4982	G846				

Additional Cross-References

Luke 17:33 (Salvation): Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

John 12:25 (Parallel theme): He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

Revelation 2:10 (Parallel theme): Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Revelation 12:11 (Parallel theme): And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Hebrews 11:35 (Parallel theme): Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

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