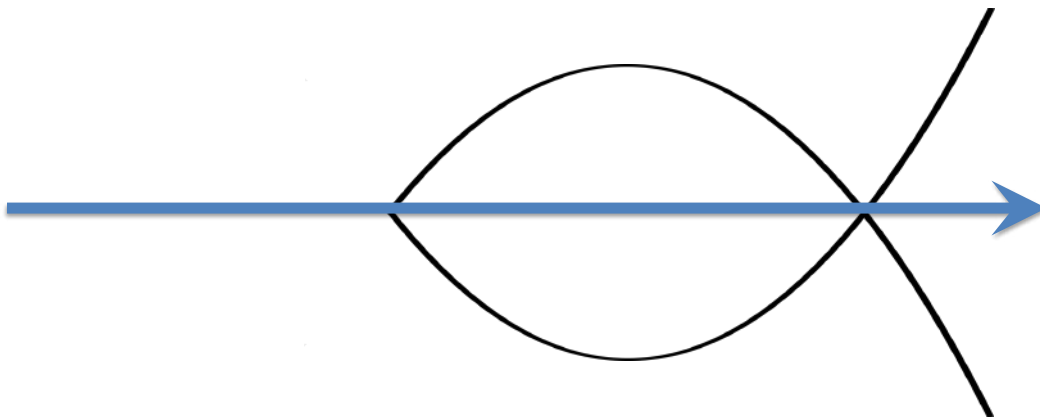


Halloween: the weirdest holiday

- We reward dressing up as scary and evil things with candy
 - One important lesson for kids:
“Not everyone offering you candy is there for your good!”
- The world rewards questionable behaviors with things that are not good for our souls...yet we love them!
 - What rewards are tempting to people?
 - What rewards are tempting to you?
- A key lesson for everyone
 - **Not every path promising your favorite reward is there for your good!**

What is the right path for a truly good and lasting life?

1



A Truly Good and Lasting Life

Mark 8:31–38

bib.ly/Ma8.NIV
tiny.cc/cmchandouts

2

Mark 8:31-33

[Jesus] then began to teach [His disciples] that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. “Get behind me, Satan!” he said. “You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

Jesus' path to glory required Him to suffer and die first
Merely human thinking rejects Jesus' path as foolish or worse

3

Mark 8:34-38

Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.”

A truly good and lasting life requires following Jesus
Merely human thinking rejects Jesus' path as foolish or worse

4

The Big Idea

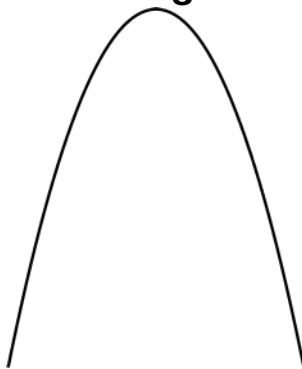
A truly good and lasting life
is only found by following Jesus
and **He put God before everything else**

5

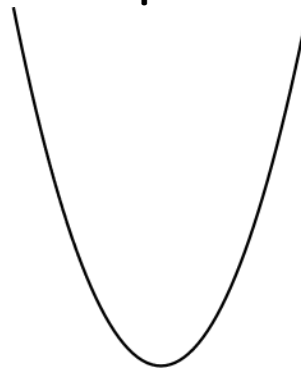
Life is like a parabola

- $y = a(x-h)^2 + k$
- The starting point doesn't really matter
- What does matter: is "a" positive or negative?
 - Does it curve up or curve down?

"a" is negative



"a" is positive



6

And they look so good!

Many paths promise to make our lives...
 more pleasing, better, easier
 more money & free time
 more pleasures

But they never give all they promise

Even if we get everything they promise, they fail us at death
 → "lose one's soul"

7

Jesus said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."

Leading to Jesus' glory & joy forever

and join His glory & joy forever!

Jesus' path included...
 difficulty & sacrifice
 putting others before self
 letting go of the world's goods

But also: Fellowship with God and God's people
 Much joy and pleasure too

It didn't look so good!

8

Mortality has trained us well: paths that lead toward self-denial and death are to be avoided!
 “Merely human thinking” sees the upward path as undeniably better

Jesus showed and taught the opposite!
**And when you see the whole path,
 clearly the best way is to follow Jesus!**

9

So why would we choose a downward path??

- **This is what our Savior did for us**
 - And His disciples follow Him
- **That’s where our Savior meets us**
 - The One who loves us more than life itself
 - “Apart from my Lord, I have no good thing.” *Psalm 16:2*
- After the trouble, **He promises joy forever with Him**
- The alternative seems so good at first, but then it **leads to disaster!**

10

The Big Idea

A truly good and lasting life
is only found by following Jesus
and **He put God before everything else**

11

Application

Pursue a truly good and lasting life

- 1st & 2nd order questions
 - 1st: What is the meaning of life? Is there a God? Can I know Him?
 - 2nd: Will I graduate? Be honored? Get married? Have “enough” money? Be healthy (physically and mentally)? Be happy?
- 2nd order answers can never give a truly good and lasting life
- Pursuing 2nd order answers often **leads away** from a truly good and lasting life
- **Be cautious of any path that promises 2nd order benefits!**
 - **The list of people who have sacrificed 1st order things in order to achieve 2nd order things is very long!**

12

Application

Pursue a truly good and lasting life in Jesus

- **Pursue Jesus instead of “merely human values”**
 - Money, health, happiness, success, ...
 - “To follow Jesus means **one must die to one’s own agenda**, whether social, political, or spiritual”
- **Get to know Him and His ways**
 - Read the Bible to learn His ways, pray, join with His people, follow His teaching, ask good (and hard) questions to learn, ...
- **Follow Him and His ways**
 - Expect His way to be different from “our way”
 - Have courage to follow Him when our paths diverge from His
 - Hold on to God more than life itself

13

The Big Idea

A truly good and lasting life
is only found by following Jesus
and **He put God before everything else**

Jesus said, “I am the way...and there is no other way.”
“Whoever loses (releases their claim on) their life
for me and for the gospel will save it”

Let’s choose His path daily
until we meet Him in His Kingdom!

14