

THE PRICE OF OUR SOULS  
*A Meditation for Maundy Thursday*  
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First Presbyterian Church  
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I Corinthians 11:23-26

I want to begin with a frivolous subject for such a solemn night: selling stuff on eBay. I trust that any of you who are computer savvy know about eBay, the online auction. They say you can sell anything on eBay. Post it on their website and see who's willing to pay for it, and how much.

Someone told me about selling a jar of ticket stubs to University of Georgia football games. These folks had had season tickets, and after each game they had tossed the ticket stub into a jar. So they put the jar with its stubs on eBay, and somebody bid \$500 to buy it. You can sell anything on eBay.

Or, almost anything. Just the other day I was reading about a man who offered to sell his soul on eBay. He would sell his soul to the highest bidder. The people who run eBay learned of it, and decided he had to produce a document from a higher authority before he could auction off his soul. Hmm—about the only authoritative document I could think of was the words of Jesus: “What does it profit to gain the whole world and lose your soul? For what can you give in return for your soul?” It sounds like Jesus is saying that selling your soul on eBay is not such a good idea.

The amazing thing, though, is that before the eBay folks stepped in, the man had gotten 58 bids on his soul! Fifty-eight people had sought to buy the man's soul.

But of course the most tantalizing detail was left out: They did not tell how much these 58 bid on the soul. What's a soul going for these days?

A group of us preachers got to talking about this strange state of affairs the other day, and we wondered if, say, Mother Theresa's soul would be worth more than Jack the Ripper's. Or, as Maggie observed in our discussion, maybe it's the other way around?

What's a soul worth? How much would someone give for your soul? What's the price of our souls?

Here's the price Jesus was willing to pay: "This is my body that is for you. This is my blood poured out for you." Here's the price that Jesus was willing to pay for our souls. He paid with his very body. He paid with his life blood. How much is my soul worth? How much is yours? It cost Jesus his very life.

Johann Sebastian Bach's magnificent Mass in B Minor is a huge work, taking over two hours to perform with symphony and chorus. But one of the most moving parts of the entire work is the little two minute chorus that says: "He was crucified even for us under Pontius Pilate." The choir sings it in Latin, and the various voices call back and forth to one another in wonder and mystery "etiam pro nobis"—even for us, even for us. He was crucified even for us.

How much are our souls worth? They cost Jesus his life. He paid that price even for us.

We might wonder if sometimes people pay too much for things they buy on eBay. Is a jar of ticket stubs worth \$500?

So what about here? Is my soul worth the life of Jesus? Is yours? Paul marvels at the idea: "One would hardly die for a righteous person, although perhaps for a good person one would dare to die. But God shows great love for us in this: While we were sinners, Christ died for us."

Do not come casually to the table tonight, dear friends. What we do here this night cost Jesus his life. He wants us for his friends, and he is willing to give his life to have us.

What's the price of our souls? What do you think?✠