

You are precious – 07/08/2016

“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.”⁴⁵ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls,⁴⁶ and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. (Mt.13:44-46)

Beloved in the Lord,

The value of something is determined by the amount someone is willing to pay for it. Currently there are a number of houses for sale in our street. The value of homes in our area, as across most of Sydney, has steadily increased over the last years. The value is going up because there are people who are prepared to pay large sums of money to purchase property.

Of course there are many factors that influence the market, for example location, but the bottom line is what people are willing to pay. This is the case in not only real estate but in many other things.

In our text today Jesus is speaking in parables and He is using common examples from life, to illustrate the value of God’s Kingdom and the value of a human soul. Jesus speaks about two people who having found the Kingdom of God, sell all they have in order to gain it. There is nothing more valuable than the Kingdom of God. That is why Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount:

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” Mt.6:33

God’s Kingdom should be the top priority in our lives. Jesus also taught that we should store our treasures in Heaven because they are the only ones that will last. Everything we store here on earth will stay here. As someone rightly said: *“I have never seen a hearse with a trailer.”* We will not take our treasures with us.

Please understand that Jesus is not saying that we are not to have things or possessions, but what He is teaching us, is to keep a right perspective on them. Luther put it this way: *“Our possessions should serve us, but we should not serve them.”* When we get this, then we are blessed.

The most valuable thing that you have is your soul. That is the part of you that is eternal. One day your soul will leave your body and this world. The Bible clearly teaches that the soul will live forever, either with God in Glory or eternally separated from Him in outer darkness.

This brings us to our central idea today, and that is how valuable is your soul? In God's eyes it is very precious. You are very precious. Remember we stated at the outset that the value of something is determined by how much so one is prepared to pay for it.

Loving us, God valued our soul, not in terms of gold and silver, but in the Blood of His Son Jesus. By reason of sin we deserve eternal death, but God does not desire that for us. He so loved each one of us, that He paid the highest price imaginable to redeem us.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (Jn.3:16)

God so loved us, so highly He valued our soul, so great was His desire for us to be with Him, that He paid a tremendous price for us. He gave up His own life, shed His own blood to pay for our sin, to redeem us from the power of sin and death.

Jesus suffered hell so that we would not have to. His only motivation was love. Using Jesus parable of the pearl we can look at it like this:

We are that precious valuable pearl. Jesus gave up all that He had in order to be able to purchase us for the Father. That is hard to comprehend isn't it? We usually do not place such a high value upon ourselves. God values us very highly indeed.

I have read and heard about people who own something very valuable, perhaps a painting, but they do not know it's true value. Maybe it is gathering dust in a garage, until one day someone discovers it and reveals the true value. Everything changes immediately. Suddenly what was dumped somewhere is now the centre of attention.

I believe that far too often we under value ourselves, we do not see the true value of our soul, and so we do not give it the attention it deserves. It is important that we understand that our soul has an eternal value, and that we are bought with a high price.

We read:

“For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.” (1. Cor.6:20)

Paul repeats this idea in the next chapter:

You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.(1.Cor.7:23)

I believe that we need to read these two Scriptures together, because living in God's freedom, we glorify God.

Understanding that we are bought with a price, we can surrender our lives totally to God, in the sure knowledge that He will take care of us.

If you have something that is very valuable, you take extra care of it. You do all to preserve and protect and maintain it. The more valuable something is, the greater care and attention we pay.

The salvation of our soul cost Jesus His own precious, holy and innocent Blood. We can be sure that He will never leave nor abandon us.

Our duty is really quite simple – we need to surrender all to Him and trust Him. It is easier said than done, but it is what we must do. Everyday anew we should surrender our lives to Him and place our trust in him alone.

Last Sunday we considered that God's thoughts and His ways are always right, and that when we trust in Him, then we are blessed.

God knows better than us what our soul needs and therefore we should fully trust Him. Paul writes in his letter to the Romans:

“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”
(Rom.12:1-2)

I know that I quote this Scripture often, but I believe that it cannot be over emphasised. I know that I have to regularly remind myself to surrender all to Him. I know that that brings great blessing. My desire is that that would be your experience as well.

God is good. God is love. God's thoughts and His ways are good. He loves us with an everlasting love, and all that He has planned for us is ultimately for our good and His glory.

I believe that we miss out on so much in our life, because we simply do not believe the above statement, God has given us, and continues to give us so very much. We need to keep our sights on Him and His Kingdom.

Psalm 121 puts it so well:

***I will lift up my eyes to the mountains;
From where shall my help come?
² My help comes from the Lord,
Who made heaven and earth.
³ He will not allow your foot to slip;
He who keeps you will not slumber.
⁴ Behold, He who keeps Israel
Will neither slumber nor sleep.
⁵ The Lord is your keeper;
The Lord is your shade on your right hand.
⁶ The sun will not smite you by day,
Nor the moon by night.
⁷ The Lord will protect you from all evil;
He will keep your soul.
⁸ The Lord will guard your going out and your coming in
From this time forth and forever.***

The God who created the Sun and the Moon and everything else is watching over you. Think about it, He is watching over you. He protects you and provides for your every need. He loves you and you are precious to Him.

To Him and Him alone be all the glory, honour, praise and thanksgiving always.

Amen

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.***

August 7, 2016

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