

Priceless Love

How much is your life worth? Now, before you can answer that, you must consider 'your market'. By that, I mean your life is worth only as much as someone else is willing to pay for it. You may think you're a worthless bum or that you're worth the world, but that's irrelevant. Why, even Satan told God in the book of Job, "...all that a man has he will give for his life." (Job 2:4) What really matters is what someone else thinks you're worth.

So what do you think? \$10? \$100? \$100,000? How about a whopping \$1,000,000? What would someone else pay for your life? In Africa today, you can buy a goat for \$50 and a slave for just \$35. If we consider only the raw materials, you'd be worth between \$5 and \$10. And that's only if we could find someone who needs the chemicals.

"Wait a minute!" you say. "I'm not just a bunch of chemicals. I'm me! I'm a person!"

And you're right; but, the value of a person is what? – Depends on who's doing the valuing, the price fixing so to speak. In the Bible, Judah sold Joseph for the price of a child slave – 20 pieces of silver. Judas sold Jesus for the price of an adult slave – 30 pieces of silver.

It would seem that Judah didn't value his little brother very highly. His brothers with him had plotted to kill Joseph anyway. And Judas? Well, who knows what was going on in that guy's head. Clearly, he didn't value the Son of God very much. So you see, your value -- the price for your life -- is related to how the

one valuing you perceives you and/or feels toward you.

May 10, 1748 was a day in which one man began to perceive, and thus value, many things quite differently. On a homeward voyage, while he was attempting to steer the ship through a violent storm, John Newton experienced what he would later refer to as his "great deliverance." When all seemed lost and he knew the ship would surely sink, he exclaimed, "Lord, have mercy upon us." Later in his cabin he reflected on what he had said and began to believe that God had spoke to him through the storm and that grace had begun its work in him.

Over the course of time, John came to value the lives of the slaves he was transporting entirely differently. These were men and women and children and no longer cargo. He treated them much more humanely; meanwhile, his perception of the slaves continued to be radically changed. Seven years later, he gave up seafaring forever and pursued with increasing enthusiasm a life of humble ministry under the mentoring of George Whitefield and John Wesley. A few years afterward, he wrote this song:

Amazing grace! (how sweet the sound)

That sav'd a wretch like me!

I once was lost, but now am found,

Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,

And grace my fears reliev'd;

How precious did that grace appear,

The hour I first believ'd!

Salvation by grace taught John to see others more as God sees them – to perceive them as eternal beings.

And then there's love. Do you love anyone? What does that love do to your sense of their value? The more you love, the more you value someone. Unfortunately, human love is often short lived. It can be changed by mood, circumstance and the sense of reciprocity.

Before Calvary, buoyed by his loving devotion to Jesus, Peter vowed that he would never deny Christ, yet you all know he did so three times. After the resurrection, on the shores of Galilee, he was ministered to by Jesus. Twice, our Savior asked Peter if he loved Him using the word for godly love (agape). Peter responded each time yes, that he loved Him but answered with the word for human relational love (phileo). Finally, Jesus asked him a third time the same question but used Peter's own word. *Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love (phileo) Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You."* (John 21:17) Peter knew he had phileo love for Jesus but such love is what left him in the crisis of Gethsemane.

Now, all of this pertains to our studies on Revelation 5:11,12 which say, *Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with*

a loud voice:

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain

To receive power and riches and wisdom,

And strength and honor and glory and blessing!"

We've looked at power, riches, wisdom and strength in previous essays. Herein, we're considering honor.

This word in the Greek means:

- 1) a valuing by which the price is fixed

and comes from the word meaning

- 1) to pay, to recompense
- 2) to pay penalty, suffer punishment

In comparing this word "honor" in Mat 15:4 and its reference to Ex 20:12, we see that the Hebrew word for the honor Jesus is worth of means essentially to be 'heavy or weighty'. In other words, it is very substantial.

Surrounding the throne, this heavenly throng will proclaim that Jesus is worthy of supremely heavy or weighty value – that's what this "honor" means. But why?

The apostle John wrote, "...we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (1Jn 3:2) So, how did John see Him? There at the throne John saw Him – "I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a **Lamb as though it had been slain...**" (Rev 5:6) Now, we will also see Him in His splendor and glory, but this scene is pertinent to our study. This is the scene in which Jesus is proclaimed worthy of honor.

There was a price to be paid. What for and how much? To answer that, we'll look at something Jesus taught his disciples concerning value or honor. He said,...

*the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and **sells all that he has and buys that field.*** Mat 13:44

*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of **great price**, went and **sold all that he had and bought it.*** Mat 13:45,46

That field, that dirt, is planet earth. That pearl, that piece of dirt covered by countless layers of beautiful grace, is you. Those that have taught that it's you that goes and sells everything to buy God have got it all backwards. God's not dirty and He's no piece of grit in need of a covering of grace. And you simply don't have enough to purchase Him anyway.

But note that in each case the One doing the buying sold all that He had to obtain His desire. This speaks to how Father God values you. Not \$10. Not \$100. Not \$1000. Not even a whopping \$1,000,000. He could have given the whole cosmos but no, he sold ALL that He had – Himself, His Beloved Son. He gave what was more valuable than all the created order – more than the entire spiritual and physical universes put together.

What's your life worth? In God's eyes, all that He had, for it is Christ who is "all in all" and "in Whom all things consist". The Bible says, "You are bought with a price."

(1 Cor 6:20) What's your life worth? There's simply no value, no honor in this cosmos that can compare to the value God has placed on you.

Now, because of what happened in Eden, the price was set – a sinless man for a sinless man (see 1 Jn 2:2, 1 Cor 15:2). And there was only one way for a sinless man to do the job. God's Son became a man. There simply was no other way, and Jesus submitted to that in the garden of Gethsemane. Father God values you and I, all of us, so highly! That's because He sees us through the lens of His infinite love. Greater love – greater value.

Thus, He sacrificed His Son, His Lamb, a Lamb who was above creation for that which was mortal. He paid a price that can never be measured. It can never be valued enough. It can never be honored enough.

In contrast, the enemy of our souls, Satan, despises our very existence for we are made in the image of God. Satan thinks we're worthless hunks of dirt.

But we already know that, don't we. We know that it's only because of God's measureless love and unfathomable grace that we're saved. We know it's Jesus who is so worthy of our acclamation. He is the value, the honor, the heavy, weighty price of our salvation.

*Unto you therefore which believe He is **precious**.* (1 Pet 2:7) *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be **honor** and glory for ever and ever. Amen.* (1 Tim 1:17)

Forever, worthy is the Lamb!