

“Say What?”
Once Valuable now worthless
Philippians 3:7-11
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This is the 4th sermon in a series entitled “Say What?” It is based on scriptures that has in it a Paradox. Now before I once again describe and explain the theme of the series let me say the puns are getting out of hand and well...are contagious. For example tell me what you see in the picture **(image of 2 ducks)**. Yes a Pair of Ducks. And yes this is not original, but suggested to me by one of our church leaders. Oh my!!!!

So the “Say What?” series is on Paradox not Pair of Ducks. The definition of a Paradox is statement where it seems to be opposite but is actually true. You will be relieved that there is only one more week of this sermon series. Next week the Paradox is “Weak but strong.” It is also a day when we recognize those that help the weak and are strong in doing so. We are calling it “Blue Service.” We want to thank and bless our First Responders in our community. If you are a current or former first responder we want to honor you. Also if you know of any law enforcement, fire, paramedic, EMS, current or retired please invite them to next week’s service. It is going to be a day when we see that the week is strong and to see before us Honor, Courage, and Sacrifice. So next week’s theme is “Weak but strong. Today however, the paradox is “once valuable, but now worthless”...Say What?

Now I’ve found a few signs that are a Paradox. So please indulge me yet this week.

(Image) Do Not Read Under Penalty of Law....Say What?

(image) No Pets Allowed...All Pets Must be on Leash...Say What?

(image) Bottomless Pit...65 feet deep....Huh, Say What?

(image) Pumpkin Patch /tomatoes///I’m so confused right now.

(image) No under-standing any time...Say What? Maybe “No Standing Under, any time.”

And this last one is profound....**(image) This is not a door.** Say What?

Beloved this is not a Book. (Bible) It is the Word of God. It is our map to eternal life. It is our inspiration. It is not a book it is our instructions on how to live. It is not a book it a book of history...that is HIS story. It is not a book it is a Life Saving manual.

And this Book says there are things that were once valuable but are now worthless.

It has happened with our children growing up perhaps you can relate. For birthday or Christmas we search and search for the perfect gift. We try our best to find that toy that they have been talking about for months. That toy that “everybody” else has. We search and search and find that toy. We give that gift and our child is overjoyed. Their eyes light up, they give us a hug they can’t wait to play with that toy, “It’s all I wanted” they cry. A month later, maybe even a week later.....we do not see the child playing with the toy. We go into their room....it is not on their shelf. We look and search....and finally find it under the bed with dust on it. Oh what so wanted, what was perceived as so Valuable is now worthless.

I hold in my hand a trophy. It is valuable. Oh, not valuable in price, but valuable in sentiment. It is a trophy I was given in 1970 for baseball. Now I loved baseball, but to be honest was not really any good. If the coach had to put me in it was in the later innings if we had a lead and guess what position.....deep deep right field where hardly anybody hit it. But I have this trophy because in 1970 our team was the Champions. Now one reason I didn't put it on the screen is because back when I was 11 years old in 1970 (due the math) society wasn't as Politically Correct. In our town the older kids played Little League.

The very small kids (what today we would call T-ball league) in town was called Atom League. But after I played in Atom league as I got older I went up to the next division. This was the division before actual Little League. So it is in that middle league that I got this trophy. So the trophy says, David Baldrige....Midget League Champs 1970.

When in High School at my particular school...yes Centralia, Illinois. Yes we were the Centralia Orphans. What a name for a mascot. True story. If you made good grades they would award you once or twice a year with a trophy in the red/white colors of the school with an Aladdin type lamp on top. Now I say that to say I graduated in High School in 1977. I was blessed to have received many of these Academic trophies and graduated with honors. Now here is the sad part. When I got them I thought they were so valuable. So I kept them. Through college, through marriage, through the birth of children, even while being a pastor. I kept those trophies about 10 years. I was in my second pastorate and when out into the storage shed....and I wondered what was in the box. I opened it up and there were all my High School Academic trophies. And I said....this is a waste of space. I hadn't even opened the box nor had these trophies out in years. What once was valuable now worthless. Guess what....they went into the garbage. You see I began to realize what was really valuable in my life....it certainly wasn't trophies.

Let's look again at scripture: **Philippians 3: 7-9 'But Christ has shown me that what I once thought was valuable is worthless. ⁸ Nothing is as wonderful as knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have given up everything else and count it all as garbage. All I want is Christ ⁹ and to know that I belong to him.**

Sometimes it takes time, sometimes it takes experiences, some time it takes even some tragic situations to help us realize what is truly valuable. For many years our Student Ministry (Soldiers for Christ) has gone to Belize. Every year has been life changing not only for the Mayans and people of Belize they minister to, but also for our students and adults who go on this mission team. This year due to circumstances it became a year where God's presence and what is really valuable came very much to the forefront. Some our Belize team are in college so they are not here today, but if you were on the Belize team this summer would you please stand. You've already seen some pictures today, but now we have the honor of hearing how "valuable" this trip was....in a spiritual way.

//////Belize team interviews//////

Thank you youth for showing for us what is truly valuable.

**What is eternal is that which is internal.
The external doesn't dictate the internal or the eternal.**

Are you with me? xxxxx

To get a better grasp of the scripture that was read earlier we have to put in context what Paul, who is writing this to the church at Philippi. What was read for us were verses 7-11 of chapter 3 of Philippians. Right prior to that Paul gives us his Religious Resume. His Piety Pedigree. I will paraphrase but he is identifying who he is and from what type of background from which he has come. He says his parents made a commitment for him. He states I am a Jew and a true child of God. I am from the fine elite tribe of Benjamin. I am a Hebrew of Hebrews. I am a Pharisee, I know the religious rules and regs. I am strict and devout in being a follower of God's laws. I am zealous, I get excited, I am fiery in defending who God is. I am blameless.

Wow. What a background. Woo-hoo and toot toot toot. Look at who I am. See all my degrees. See how good I am. See how church-ed I am. See how religious I am. Why I am strict follower of God things. It's as if Paul says, that is who I am, and I am proud of it! All of that up through verse 6

However we then come to **VERSE 7 But Christ has shown me that what I once thought was valuable is worthless.**

In essence he says, "In contrast to all that I've just said....Christ has shown me that as valuable as I thought that was....and it is a very fine Religious Resume....it really is worthless. We might wonder how all those good religious things are now viewed by him as worthless.

First part of **VERSE 8** he says "**Nothing is as wonderful as knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have given up everything else and count it all as garbage.**" Nothing....degrees, trophies.....religious background. NOTHING is as wonderful as knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have given up everything else and count it all as garbage, trash. Throw those trophies in the garbage because in the end they are worthless.

He says, "I now realize what I truly need." For us we might say and our society pushes us to say....All I want is a great career, or a nice house or a better car. All I want is more money. Beloved money can't buy you happiness.
Money can't buy you health.
Money can't buy you friends.
Money can't buy you success.
Money can't buy you integrity.
Money can't buy you reputation.
Money can't buy you love and relationships.
Money can't buy you true freedom, grace and forgiveness.

We are reminded of the other paradox we've already talked about to be in the world, but not of the world. What was once valuable is now worthless.

The end of verse 8 and the first part of verse 9 he sums it up. **All I want is Christ ⁹ and to know that I belong to him.** Is that your primary want....Jesus Christ? Do you know, I mean really know that you belong to him? You can know that today.

The end of verse 9 says **God accepted me simply because of my faith in Christ.** I like the word “simply.” It’s not complicated. It’s not about our Religious Resume. It’s not how religious our parents were. It is simply about a faith in Christ. Simply and simple. It is not complex. (From song, “Happy Day” by Tim Hughes) We sang it this morning: “Oh happy day, happy day, You washed my sin away, Oh happy day, happy day, I’ll never be the same, Forever I am changed!” Woo-hoo!!!!

Forever I am changed because I now realize that what was valuable is worthless and I know where real value lies....it is in a relationship with Jesus Christ. Because with that relationship I’ll never be the same. Changed forever. Changed for eternity.

Verse 10 All I want is to know Christ and the power that raised him to life. All Paul wants is Christ. He wants to know Christ and the Power....that’s right the Power that raised Christ to life. You mean we can know that power. Paul says that is what he wants....he want to know the power that raised Christ to life.

Would Christ really accept me? Yes simply because of confessing your sins and that simple faith in Jesus Christ. (from song: Christ is Able to Save” Tommy Walker) “Come ye...poor and needy, Come ye wounded weak and worn, There's a harbor for the broken, Where the hopeless are reborn, Come ye lost afraid forgotten, let your wandering souls find rest, At your hearts door He is knocking, you His precious blood was shed, He is able He is able, Christ is able, and Christ will save.”

Friends....you are valuable. I like how this little boy said it. **(Image) I know I’m somebody, Cause God don’t make junk.**

The most valuable part of this church is right here....you the people. And I am also aware that there are others outside the walls that need to know Jesus and have them know that Jesus is able and Jesus will save.

You may wonder....can Christ accept me...with all I’ve done, with all I’ve been through. To be honest you may think....I feel like junk. Let me remind you...God doesn’t make junk. Have you given up everything else and counted it as garbage. Is all you want Christ. Is all you want is to know Christ and the power that raised him to life?

Let me put it another way: **(image) God doesn’t make junk He makes masterpieces.**

Sometimes the Master has to put the pieces back together. Beloved, Jesus loves you. You are valuable. You are His child. Oh we come just as we are....and God begins to make a masterpiece as we accept Him by faith and realize that what was once valuable is really worthless compared to knowing Jesus. The most valuable thing is knowing Jesus, everything else is worthless.