

Who Am I?

I Am Of Great Value

(Lk 15:1-7)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Evening
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of lessons on "Who Am I?"
 - a. Today we will look at "I Am Of Great Value."
3. The message of **Luke 15**.
 - a. This is a set of three parables.
 - i. Lost Sheep **Lk 15:1-7**
 - ii. Lost Coin **Lk 15:8-10**
 - iii. Lost Son **Lk 15:11-32**
 - b. Each parable has a central theme...God loves the lost.
 - i. There is however something unique here giving us more insight into this truth concerning God and His love for mankind.
 - ii. That truth is that He cares specifically for each of us individually.
 1. We see rejoicing after "one" lost sheep is found.
 2. We see rejoicing after "one" lost coin is found.
 3. We see rejoicing after "one" lost son returns.
 - c. We never have to worry about whether or not God specifically cares about me or you individually.
4. With that in mind let us examine why "I Am Of Great Value" to God.

I. God's Love For Us

- A. God's love for us shows our great value to Him
 1. This explains the great price He paid for us.
 - i. **Jn 3:16** "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."¹
 - ii. **Ac 20:28** "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."
 - iii. **Ro 5:8** "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
- B. His love for us is seen that mankind is the greatest of all God's creation
 1. He loved us so much remember He made us in His image and likeness.
 - i. **Ro 8:29** "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."

¹ All Scriptures are in the NKJV unless otherwise noted.

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- C. His love for us is seen in that although man is disobedient, God has given us the opportunity for forgiveness "through" His Son
 - 1. **Ti 2:11** "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men"
 - i. We have to be willing to do what is necessary to take hold of that free gift.
 - a. **Ro 6:23** "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (ESV)
 - b. **Mt 7:21** "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."
 - 2. **Ep 2:4-9** "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved **through faith**, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast." (emphasis mine)
- D. So God's love for us shows us our great value or worth

II. We Have God's Image Stamped On Us

- A. Our spirit is that which is made in God's image
 - 1. The human brain is a marvel. It controls our voluntary and involuntary actions.
 - 2. It is much more intricate and complicated than the most sophisticated computer.
- B. Imagine two rings with one inside the other
 - 1. In the inner most ring imagine the word spirit written in there.
 - i. This represents man's spirit or his "inner man."
 - a. **Ep 3:16** "that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man"
 - ii. This is life and that which can only be given by God.
 - a. Life is given by God.
 - 1. **Gn 2:7** "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."
 - b. Life goes back to God.
 - 1. **Ec 12:7** "Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it."
 - c. Body cannot live without the spirit.
 - 1. **Ja 2:26** "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

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2. In the middle space imagine the word soul written there.
 - i. This represents man's eternal aspect or conscience.
 - a. The soul is that which can reason, make decisions, and feel.
 1. It includes our mind, our will, our emotions, and our intellect.
 - ii. This is that which will spend eternity with God or without God depending on our choices.
 - a. **Mk 8:36** "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?"
 - b. **Ja 1:21** "Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls."
 3. In the outer space imagine the word body written there.
 - i. This represents man's physical body.
 - a. Our blood, organs...
 1. **Ps 139:13** "For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb."
 4. Mankind is the only one who has all three aspects.
 - i. **I Th 5:23** "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."
- C. Imagine the same two rings but reversed
1. Instead of showing the makeup of man, from the inside out, this image represents the dimensions of man.
 2. In the inner most space imagine the word body written there now.
 - i. This illustrates that the body is the most confined dimension. It is limited to the physical realm. It cannot go beyond it.
 - b. As notice before it will return to the earth.
 3. In the middle space imagine the word soul written there.
 - i. This illustrates that the soul is not as confined as the body but it still is confined.
 - ii. It is limited by us. This is the freedom God has given us choice. We can limit it by our lack of knowledge and/or our lack of emotion.
 - a. We can choose to limit its influence in our lives or not.
 4. In the outer space imagine the word spirit written there.
 - i. This illustrates that the spirit is not confined and has no limit.
 - a. In other words this is our part that is truly in God's image.
 - ii. This is that part of man that makes him look upward. To look for something more than himself.
 - a. Notice all the religions in the world. People are looking for something more than themselves, why because we were created this way.
 - b. This isn't limited to "religious" people so to speak.
 1. Atheist and agnostics alike are looking for more than themselves they just call it science instead of religion.

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- iii. Thus in this sense it is limitless. That doesn't mean it cannot be misguided.
 - a. Look around there is little unity amongst people as a whole.
5. So God's stamp, in His image, shows us our great value.
 - i. We see our value in that it is our spirit through whom Christ lives.
 - a. **Ph 2:5** "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus"
 - b. **Ga 2:20** "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."
 - c. **Ep 4:23-24** "and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness."

III. We Are Free To Decide

- A. Unlike animals we operate by thinking, feeling, and acting.
 1. **Gn 1:28** "Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.""
 2. **Ep 3:16-19** "that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the **inner man**, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to **comprehend** with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— 19 to **know** the love of Christ which passes **knowledge**; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." (emphasis mine)
- B. We are given the right to choose whether we will seek God or flee from Him.
 1. He will not force us to come to Him but longs for us and desires that we love Him as a parent does for a child and obey Him because He knows what best for us.
 - i. **Is 59:1-2** "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. 2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear."
 - ii. **Lk 9:23** "Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."
 - iii. **II Pt 3:9** "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

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2. Some have taught through the years that we have no choice our "destiny" is set in stone. We are predestined for heaven or hell... Calvinism.
 - i. Some will say well Judas didn't have a choice, because God prophesied it would happen, Jesus had to be arrested and crucified in order to fulfill God's purpose.
 - ii. Example: If I was to write on a piece of paper this, "most people will raise their hands at my request and make a fist." I then asked, without letting everyone know what I wrote, for everyone to raise their hands and make a fist.
 - a. Was it your decision to lift your hand and then make a fist? Did you have to do what I said?
 - b. Each of us make the decision to do God's will or not. It is our decision.
- C. Thus we valuable to God because we can choose to love Him or not

IV. We Are Unique Creations

- A. We are unique because we are crowned with glory and honor by God
 1. **Ps 8:4-5** "What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? 5 For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor."
- B. We are unique because we are wonderfully made
 1. **Ps 139:14** "I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well."
 2. Our bodies are amazingly put together and by far exceeds anything man has created.
 - i. Scientist have found that they can isolate genes which carry certain diseases and are learning how to introduce altered genes into the body. Amazing!!!
 3. What we keep learning is that we don't even come close to knowing the human body. We have discovered only a tiny part of God's design.
- C. We are unique because we have a great commission
 1. To those that have obeyed the gospel and are striving to obey God we have been given a command to go out into the world and teach the gospel.
 - i. **Mk 16:15-16** "And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."
 2. As ambassadors for Christ, we are His earthen vessels through which He speaks.
 - i. **I Co 4:5-7** "For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. 6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."
 3. We are God's workmen.
 - i. **I Ti 2:15** "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

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- ii. **Ep 2:10** "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."
- D. We are unique because we have a great future
 - 1. God has planned for us to live eternally with Him.
 - i. **Jn 14:1-4** "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And where I go you know, and the way you know."
 - 2. This place is a place of perfection for His children.
 - i. A place where there is no sin, tears, sorrow...
 - 3. This place was created because of how much He values each of us.
- E. We are unique because we know our roots
 - 1. Jesus knew His roots – **Jn 13:3**
 - i. Jesus knew that God had put all things under His power.
 - ii. Jesus knew that He was from God.
 - iii. Jesus knew He was returning to God.
 - iv. Yet Jesus served others giving an example of how we are to be.
 - 2. We too know our roots.
 - i. We can know how we got here.
 - a. We were created by God.
 - ii. We know why we are here.
 - a. So we can be loved by God, love God, and tell others about God.
 - iii. We know where we are going.
 - a. We are going to spend eternity with God in heaven if we obey Him putting Him first in our lives.
 - iv. Knowing all this should motivate us to serve others and put their interests ahead of our own, because we see the value of others.
- F. We have great value to God because of our unique characteristics and qualities

CONCLUSION

- 1. God in a very loving way showed us how valuable we are to Him.
 - a. God showed that great love in sending His Son to die for us. When we consider there is no greater love than one laying down their life for another, we must conclude that we are of great value to God.
- 2. Illustration: "During the last year of the Civil War, a man paid a visit to the battlefield of Chickamauga, where, on September 19-20, 1863, the army under General Rosecrans was almost destroyed and was driven back into Chattanooga by the Confederate army under General Bragg. The battlefield was not then, as now, a beautiful and sacramental place, with stately monuments rising amid the trees, but still bore the scars of battle and was furrowed with recent graves. Over one of these new-made graves the visitor was a man on his knees planting flowers. Walking over to him, he asked, "Is it a son who is buried there?" "No," the man answered. "An uncle, then I suppose, or perhaps a brother? At least some relation?"

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"No," the man again replied. The visitor then said, "May I ask, then, whose memory it is that you cherish and thus honor?" Then the man told why was there to decorate that grave. He had been drafted into the Confederate army, and no substitute, as the custom was, could be procured. Just before he was to say good-bye to his wife and his family and report to the training camp, a young man came to see him and said, "You have a wife and a family depending upon you. When you are gone you cannot support them, whereas I am unmarried, and have no one depending upon me. Let me go in your place." The offer was accepted and the young man went off in his place to the training camp. At the battle of Chickamauga he was mortally wounded. The news of his death drifted back to the Southern home of the man whose place he had taken. As soon as he could save sufficient money, he made the journey to Chickamauga and, after a search, found the grave of his friend with its rude marker. The visitor, much touched by the narrative, went on his way over the battlefield; but coming back he passed this grave again. It was now well covered with flowers, but on a rough board at the head of the grave were cut these words: "He died for me."

3. Invitation

- a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
 - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
- b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Believe Jesus Is The Christ **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**