

Victory of the Lamb – May 12, 2019 – How Jesus Changed the World View of You Acts 2:17

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True story: picture this: Gloria, in her 70's, calls her neighbor on the phone to come over and move her refrigerator for her. Her neighbor gladly goes over and moves the refrigerator for her. What did that picture look like in your mind? How old was the neighbor? Was the neighbor male or female? Her neighbor was not some strapping young man but was a frail woman in her low 80's. This frail woman died earlier this year. As the family was going through the frail woman's belongings her son found a recent Bible class lesson that the woman had attended. In the margin she wrote, "**saved by grace through faith not works.**" At the frail woman's funeral, the little church she belonged to was filled to capacity. There was a luncheon after the service. People scurrying around serving, fixing things up, mostly women. One woman said, "all this is what the frail woman used to do." As the family was going through the frail woman's belongings her son found a recent Bible class lesson that the woman had attended. In the margin she wrote, "**saved by grace through faith not works.**" The little old lady was an influencer. The little old lady was my mom. I was blessed to have a great mom, not perfect, but a woman loved by God, a woman who loved God, and a woman who loved people.

God has been using women like my mom to influence the church for centuries. Acts 2:17 **In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.** Remember the reading that Pastor Ben had about how women used their own resources to support Jesus and his disciples. Historians say that when the Christian church was in its infant stage about 60% of the Christ followers were women. What is so amazing about the early church figures is that culturally women had little value. Jesus and the apostles did not promote or organize a woman's movement. Yet Jesus message of repentance and salvation had revolutionary effects on the lives of women. Author Alvin Schmidt writes, The early Christian church not only included women in the life of the church, but they also gave freedom and dignity unknown in the Greco-Roman and Judaic cultures. (p. 107 How Christianity Changed the World). Jesus entered a polygamous culture, yet when he spoke of marriage it was of one man and one woman. The direction of the Holy Spirit is this for husbands: **love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.** (Ephesians 5:25) That is far different than what Islam teaches in the Koran, Sura 4:34: "Men stand superior to women . . . But those who perverseness ye fear, admonish them and remove them to the bedchambers and beat them; but if they submit to you then do not seek a way against them. Ancient Hinduism taught that if the husband died first the woman was to die on the funeral pyre with her husband. "If her husband is happy, she should be happy; if he is sad, she should be sad; and if he is dead, she should also die." (Fire and Faith). As you turn through the pages of the first books of the New Testament, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John you will see numerous instances of Jesus meeting up with women. For example: Jesus met with a Samaritan woman (in the day that was at least two strikes) and shares the good news of God valuing her to the degree that he wanted to relieve her of her sin, give her direction for her life and spend eternal life with her in heaven. On the first Easter Sunday, the first people Jesus met after his resurrection were women. Jesus deeply values all women, all people. Christianity beginning in Genesis 1 is at the forefront of human rights for all people, the unborn, the adopted, the fostered, the immigrant, the trafficked, those struggling with mental or physical issues or both, to you and me.

Here is the thing. We don't always reflect God's values. In our culture we are always making value judgments. Here are some examples: Even if we think Aaron Rodgers is the best quarterback in football, we wouldn't trade him for anyone – when he throws an interception, we make a very bad value statement about him. We are always making value judgments. If you don't agree with me just watch: Raise your hand if you like Country Music? Hip Hop? Like the Brewers? The Cubs? These are seemingly harmless until we start to think that some people are jerks because of the kind of music they like or the sports team they follow. We will often give people a certain value based on what kind of clothes they wear, what kind of house they live, what gender they have - what color of skin they have. Crazy but true. Think about it: is that you?

We don't always value others because we often don't see our own value. So the question I have for you is: What gives you your personal value? Is the kind of music that you like, the kind of car that you drive, that kind of home you live in, the accomplishments that you have made, the grades you made in school, the school you go to, whether or not you can put an orange ball into an orange hoop, how much money you have or don't have? Whether life is easy or difficult. How many likes, hearts, you get on social media. Less than two weeks ago “during Facebook's annual F8 software developer conference in San Jose, California, . . . , Instagram's top executive Adam Mosseri explained that the photo-sharing service is going to start a test later this week that hides the number of likes on each post from other users. The goal, he explained, is to make Instagram feel less “like a competition.” (BGR – Andy Meek) You see there is so much stress and anxiety and depression going on because people are feeling worthless because their picture, their story is not getting the likes and hearts that other people are. Can you picture it? Sure many of us can, because we post something and we want to see the traction it gets and if it doesn't get the same amount of likes, views, hearts as a previous post, or even if it is not getting the traction we think it will we feel like failure. People often seek value in things that offer no lasting value because we are broken..

We were created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26 Then God said, **“Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness,**) but because of sin we are broken. I have been wanting to break things on this stage for months but Sammi, aka the voice of reason, aka the mean office manager lady, wouldn't let me. Lets say I have a vase that is valued at \$10K and I drop and shatter it. How much is it worth? Imagine trying to glue it back together. We were created in the image of God, nothing more valuable, nothing more glorious. But we fell into sin and we are shattered. We have all these pieces lying around, there are cracks we try to hide cover up, we have sharp pieces sticking out. What is our value? A person's value is not based on what we look like, or whether we have it all together, our value is the intrinsic value that God gave every person. The one who made you is the one who can assess your value. God made you. Say to someone sitting close by “God made you,” “you must be valuable.”

So here is the truth – As you came to worship today some of you, and you know who you are, came with insecurity, you were unsure, came beaten down, came hiding some of the truth, came angry and upset or sad at your circumstances, came with hopes that we really just wishes, came thinking you had little value or came thinking you had value because things are going well for you in life and you have placed your value in something perishable but Jesus is here to change your view of you. And these are just two sides of the same coin. It all points to us as broken people. Whether we are a mom or not, whether we had a great mom or not, whether we are a great mom or not, we are lobut Jesus came looking (came to seek and save the lost), we are lacking but Jesus came reconciling, - say

to someone you must be valuable. We were unforgiveable but Jesus came forgiving, we were unlovable but Jesus came loving us in anyway, - When we were captive to sin, death, Satan, and an empty way of life but Jesus came as the ransom price, 1 Peter 1:18,19 **you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors,** ¹⁹ **but with the precious blood of Christ,** Jesus gave the perfect sacrifice, the perfect service, the perfect life, perfect love for you. Say you must be valuable. Jesus is the king of human rights.

God values you too much to let you think that you can get your value in what we do, our accomplishments, money, all things that will perish, or fade away. You are so valuable to Jesus he doesn't want you to continue to lead your life valuing things that will end up leaving you empty, bankrupt, sad with memories of glory days long gone. And so, he gives you his Word so that you see your purpose is not to get your value out of things that lose their glory but that you get your value from the one who eternally glorious. You get to reflect God's glory that will never perish, spoil or fade away.

Think of it this way. Jon bought a new pick up. He let me ride in it. But not only did he let me ride in it. He let me drive it. There is a difference there right. Not only did Jesus show you your value by what he did for you on the cross, but he shows you your value by what he lets you do. Jesus has entrusted you with his love to love others. 1 Peter 4:10 **Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others.** So that when you see the weak in the community – maybe that is the homeless or the addict or the one who has his or her hope in things, so that when you see the sick, the downcast, the disheveled, or that what happened to your hair person – be nice, so that when you see those caught living in sin you get to demonstrate that they are valuable to God by expressing that they are valuable to you. Jesus has changed your view. So I just want to tell you no matter your circumstance, you are valuable. Say to someone next to you, you are valuable. Your value comes from God who made you, gifted you, and saved you. Jesus is not only the King of human rights he gives you divine privilege, the privilege to be loved and to love unconditionally.

Get close to Jesus because Jesus changes your view of others, Jesus changes your view of you, Jesus changes your view of what is important.