

Text: Philippians 3:4b-11
Theme: What's It Worth?

October 8, 2017

The crowd at the fall machinery consignment auction gathered themselves in front of the next item up for sale. As the auctioneer was handed the information, he rolled his eyes and said to the crowd, "Well, folks, it says that we have here a 1949 International pickup with flare sides as you can see, and it also says, 'Please note that this pickup currently has no working brakes.'" The auctioneer looked at the old pickup, gazed out at the crowd and said, "Well, what will ya give me for this 1949 special? What's it worth to you? Who'll give me \$500 to start? All right, how about \$300? The pickup is here for sale so we need to start somewhere!"

A voice from the crowd said, "I'll give you \$50 bucks!" Fifty dollars; I've got 50 dollars who'll give me \$75? I've got \$75, now who'll give me \$100? It's only a \$100, surely it's worth that? Thank you. I've got \$100; now who'll give me \$125? \$125 anyone? Is that all she's worth? \$125 anyone? Suddenly a shabby looking gentleman stepped into sight and said, "I'll give you \$50,000 for this old pickup truck."

The auctioneer, stunned by the man's bid, paused for a moment and then said, "My dear man, I don't believe you have \$50,000 and, even if per chance you did, this old pickup isn't worth \$50,000. But if your bid is \$50,000, I'll take your bid and I'll say, 'Sold'."

The shabbily dressed man made his way to the front of the crowd as the crowd stood in absolute silence. The man asked for the mic and said, "I know you think I'm crazy and maybe I am, but three months ago, my father, who was a very wealthy man, died and left an inheritance to each of his three grandchildren. The other two received a cash gift, but my son, the restless, rebellious grandson who, although he had been raised in the church, had no time nor interest in God or anyone but himself for that matter, received this old pickup.

Disgusted and angry, he had this truck towed to the auction to get what he could out of it. Little did he know, because he never even bothered to look, his grandfather had placed a Bible in the glove box with two significant book markers placed at John 3:16 and Ephesians 2:8-9 hoping his grandson would, at the very least read the two verses he had circled. Had he done so, he would have discovered that those two bookmarks were actually checks made payable to the bearer. One for \$50,000 and the other for \$200,000. As the new owner of this pickup, yes, I now have \$50,000 and I can only hope that when my son receives his check, he will wonder how such an old pickup could ever be worth that kind of money."

1. Although priceless, many, beyond that rebellious son, still think knowing Christ is worthless. We might wonder why, but for them, it's simple. He doesn't provide instant gratification, doesn't magically fix anything and everything that's wrong by their estimation. It isn't all about them, and they're still unsatisfied with the answer to the question, "And what do I get out of it?" In our text, Paul makes it clear that he had it all, all that was needed to be somebody - status, power, credentials. Yet

Paul, because of his knowledge of Christ as Lord, declared that it was all garbage, a useless pile of rubbish compared to knowing Christ.

A. As we consider what it's worth to know Christ, we consider what He offers. 1. Knowing Christ offers us the assurance that God is in control. What's so great about knowing God is in control? Because God is in control, CNN, Fox News, and World News Tonight need not create panic or unrest. Disasters occur every day, but our good news is that we're not in control, that Someone greater than us has it all under control. Before we spend restless nighttime and day time hours fretting about what just happened or might happen next, knowing Christ gives us the opportunity to set the world in His hands and carry on with His plan for us.

2. Knowing Christ offers us the ability to cope with life's challenges. When life comes crashing in, what do people without Christ do? When their health or the health of a family member changes dramatically, what's their solution? When life comes crashing in for us, we have a place to run, a source of strength. We have One who says, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me." We have Christ who says, "Fear not, for I have redeemed you. Cast all your cares on Me because I care for you." Life isn't easy, but when we know Christ is lighting our way, we can do what others cannot do. We can put one foot in front of the other and press on.

3. Knowing Christ gives us a sense of hope. What's the number one cause of suicides among teenagers today? What's the number one cause among the second highest group, those over age 70? The answer in both cases is the same - hopelessness. In this hopeless world, our Christian faith stands boldly and says, "This is my hope. This is my confidence that I will spend eternity with my God in heaven." That's the hope that carries us through our worst moments and worst days here, the hope that gives us a reason to get out of bed and face the world. Jesus Christ, born for me, lived for me, died for me, rose for me - that's what makes enduring worthwhile.

4. Knowing Christ provides the confidence of forgiveness. What would life be like if forgiveness didn't exist, if our mistakes were heaped onto a pile that we had to move out of the way merely to survive? For those who don't know Christ, what's their solution to guilt and all its relatives? We sing it, "On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand." Forgiveness pulls us out of the raging flood waters. It rescues us from self-destruction. That forgiveness, offered only by Christ and only to those who believe, enables us to cling to the rock in the midst of life's ongoing flood, rescues us from eternal death, and rolls out the red carpet of eternal life.

5. Knowing Christ gives us a reason to face tomorrow. What's the point of tomorrow for those who don't know Christ? Isn't it merely survival, hoping the day after will be better? Some years ago, there was a popular Christian song that said, "Because He lives, I can face tomorrow; because He lives, all fear is gone. Because He lives, I know the future and life is worth the living just because He lives." For you and for me, as Christians, the point of tomorrow is to give honor and glory to God, to carry out His plan, His will for us in that day convinced that one day, there will be no tomorrow here because it will be today forever there in heaven.

6. That auctioneer who said, "What's this old pickup truck worth to you?" will never ask that question about Jesus Christ. So I leave you with this question for your heart to answer, "What's He worth to you?" Amen.