

Spiritual Value #1 - What Is Value? Principle

by Stephen Kaung

The sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual value, which is set by God and is more valuable than earthly value.

Duration: 1:11:18

Scripture: Genesis 12:1, Exodus 32:26, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 16:16-18, Matthew 16:21, Matthew 16:26

Topics: "Soul Value", "Spiritual Priorities"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of valuing our souls over worldly gains. He highlights that in this world, everything comes at a cost and we often exchange our souls for worldly possessions. The preacher refers to Matthew 16:26, where Jesus asks what profit it is to gain the whole world but lose one's soul. He explains that our sense of value is distorted, and we often prioritize things that we shouldn't and despise the things we should treasure. The preacher encourages the audience to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Jesus in order to truly value God above all things.

Transcript

Turn to the Gospel according to Matthew, Matthew chapter 16, just one verse, verse 26. Matthew chapter 16, verse 26, For what does a man profit, if he should gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Let's have a word of prayer. Dear Heavenly Father, we do rejoice in Thy presence.

We praise and thank Thee for Thy Beloved Son, our Lord Jesus. We thank Thee for revealing Thy Son in us. Lord, our prayer before Thee this morning is that He may be magnified in us.

We ask that Thou would throw Thy Word, open our eyes, that we may see what Thy Beloved Son sees, and we will be what Thy Beloved Son wants us to be. We just come to commit this time into Your hand, trusting Thee for Thy speaking and for Thy working in us. And to Thee we give Thy glory.

In Thy precious name, Amen. In the verse that we have just read, our Lord Jesus Himself tells us the importance of spiritual value. He says, What does a man profit, if he should gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul? Here you find our Lord put the whole world on one side, and that's probably more than anyone can imagine how much is the whole world.

Probably the world that we think we know, or we are seeking after, probably is a little bit of the world. But it is already the whole world to us. And yet here our Lord Jesus actually put the whole world on one side.

Everything that the world is, whatever you can think of, or even imagine, the Lord put it on one side. And then on the other side, He puts your soul. And He says, What will it profit you, if you gain the whole world and lose your soul? In other words, in the eyes of our Lord, a soul is of more value, much more valuable than the whole world.

Spiritual things are much more valuable than earthly things. But I think to our natural mind it's very difficult to accept it. Because to our natural mind, we will think the world is full of value, and the soul has little value.

We usually will despise things spiritual. To us they are vague, abstract, but the world seems to us very real, and very valuable. So our thinking usually is very different from the thinking of our Lord Jesus.

Now this morning we would like to consider together before the Lord, what is value? Where does value come from? Who decides what the value is? I personally believe that God determines value. God Himself is value. And out of Him, He created all things.

And everything that He creates has a value. Because it manifests something of God. When we look at His created things, we can see His divinity and His power.

And that expression of His divinity and of His power is the value. He created man. And why did man to Him is more valuable than the whole world? Because He created man in His own image.

In other words, because there is more of God in man, when created, than in the other things. Therefore, man is more valuable than the world. In other words, we need to understand the very concept of value.

Value is not something that we put on something. True value is set by God. God puts a value in a thing.

And that is its intrinsic value. Different things have different value. But there is no thing, nothing, that has no value of any kind.

Because it comes out of God. It is very true that spiritual things have more value than earthly things. Because God is spirit.

The closer it is to God, the more valuable that thing is. The more it manifests God, the more the true value is. I believe in the beginning, all things work together for good.

In other words, there is nothing, whether it is spiritual or whether it is physical, there is nothing that are really working against each other. I believe in the beginning, everything works together for the glory of God. Whether it is heavenly or whether it is earthly.

Whether it is spiritual or whether it is physical. They all work together for the glory of God. And that's what you see in the Garden of Eden.

Before seeing enter into the world. God painted a beautiful garden. A garden of pleasure.

And he put man in that garden. In that garden you have all kinds of fruit trees. Good to look at and good to eat.

God provided all these physical things for man to live and to enjoy. And in the midst of the garden, God put the tree of life. There is nothing better than the tree of life.

Because the tree of life actually is a tree in which the life of God dwells. And if you eat the tree of life, you receive the very divine life of God. What can be more excellent than that tree? And also by the side of it, you have the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Now we often think that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is a bad tree. Do you think God will put anything bad in the Garden of Eden? As a matter of fact, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is better than all the other trees except the tree of life. Because all the other trees, they are all for your physical needs.

God created us with a body, so he provides us with the means of sustaining this physical body. He is love. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil actually is the food of the soul.

The soul is more important than the body. We need that knowledge. Knowledge of good and evil, which is rational, ethical knowledge.

As a matter of fact, this kind of knowledge is the highest knowledge in the world. It is higher than scientific knowledge or speculative knowledge. It is moral knowledge.

That's the highest kind of knowledge. It is the food for the soul. But of course, the Lord said, of all the trees in the garden, you can freely eat.

But this tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you should not eat. Because on the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die. Now why is it so? I think the tree itself is not a bad tree, but God puts it there for two reasons.

Number one, God puts the tree of the knowledge of good and evil there in order that man may choose what they want to be. In order man can decide for themselves what is more valuable to him. God sets a value there, but whether man will agree with God of his value.

God gives man a choice, an exercise of free will, to show whether he wants the best or whether he wants the better. But the better becomes the enemy of the best. Without the life of God, knowledge will kill.

Because you know what is right, you cannot do it. You know what is wrong, you do it. Now how much better if you don't have that kind of knowledge.

I think the babies are more fortunate, because when they are doing things, they don't have that knowledge of good and evil. They are not responsible. God doesn't hold them responsible.

But with us, growing up, that's different. God holds us responsible, and in our experience we know that knowledge really kills. It condemns us, it brings us to death.

Very true. Sometimes I think of course it's speculative. If Adam will eat the tree of life first, will God continue to forbid him to eat the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? I don't know.

But I will say all things will work together for good. And in our experience, we find it out. Without the life of God, this knowledge of good and evil is killing.

But with the life of God, this knowledge of good and evil will bring glory to God. So you see God put that tree in the garden to give man an opportunity to decide for himself what is most valuable. God or himself.

Now I think that's the first reason. The second reason is, the reason why God gives such a commandment, a prohibition, every tree you can eat, how wide that liberty is. But with only one limitation.

And God puts that limitation upon man in order to show man that even though he is over all things, but he is under God. God gave man the dominion over the flowers of the air, the animals on the earth, the creeping things, and the fishes in the sea. Man is above all God's created things on earth.

But God wants to remind man, he is above all, but under one. You know when you are above all, you tend to forget that you are below one. That's a great temptation.

And probably that's the reason why Lucifer fell. Because in a sense, he was created the most beautiful archangel above all, but he forgot he was below one. And maybe for that reason God used it to remind man, now remember this, you are below one.

That's your place. And if you remain in your place, you will be above all. But if you do not remain in your place, you will lose everything.

So brothers and sisters, before sin entered into this world, everything that God created has its invested value. And all work together for the glory of God. Everything will be in its proper place, its proper order.

But unfortunately, our forefathers made their wrong choice. In other words, to our forefathers, Adam and Eve, they saw these two trees there, but they chose their own lives instead of choosing God. To them, their own life soul is more important, more valuable, than God to be their life.

They wanted to develop their own soul life, to make them feel great. They do not need to depend upon God, but they will be as Gods themselves. They were tempted by the enemy.

They fell into his trap. And in trying to gain their soul, they lost their soul. They not only lost their soul, but they lost their world too.

And since then you find the enemy. He took hold of the world, the created things, that God had entrusted to man, to have dominion over, to rule for God, to bring everything to the feet of God for His glory. Not because man fell and surrendered himself to the enemy.

So Satan, not by right, but by a devious way, he took the world from man, and he became the ruler of this world. He took God's created things, organized them together, made them a system, a cosmos, over which he ruled, and he used the world, the things of this world that God has created, he used these things to oppose God. In other words, under his control, the world has a negative value instead of a positive.

The value has changed. There is nothing wrong with eating and drinking. We have to eat, we have to drink.

That's legitimate. But the enemy has made eating and drinking the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. In other words, you find the world is now against our spiritual life, instead of supporting our spiritual life.

The nature has changed. The value has changed. It doesn't have a positive value anymore.

Its value is negative. And the same thing happened to our soul. Instead of using our soul to love God with all our soul, to will God's will, and to think of the things above, now this soul has fallen.

It becomes self-centered, trying to enrich his soul life by seeking the things of the world. But in doing that, he not only will not have the world, he even will lose his soul life. So you remember our Lord Jesus said, he said to his disciples, very rarely I say unto you, if you lose your soul life for my sake, and for the gospel's sake, you shall gain your soul life.

But if you should gain your soul life, you will lose it. Value has changed. Brothers and sisters, this whole concept of value is not what it ought to be.

Our value, our sense of value has lost its direction. We value the things that are hurtful to our spiritual life, and we despise the things that are helpful to our spiritual life. So far as we are concerned, brothers and sisters, I think even though we may sometimes mentally agree which is more valuable, but for us to be really valuing what should be valued, we cannot do it.

And also you know, because there is value, therefore there is a cost. Anything that has a value demands a price, a cost. So here our Lord Jesus said, what profit do you really get if you gain the whole world and lose your soul? In other words, if you want the world, your soul will be the price for it.

You do not gain the world free. God gave the world to us free, but the enemy, he will not give you the world free. If you want to have the world, he said, give me your soul.

And what profit is that? Even if you gain the whole world, how long will you have it? But your soul will continue. It's an exchange. In this world today, you do not have anything free.

It's an exchange. You exchange your soul for the world. And the Lord said, that's a loss, not a gain.

And that is the reason why our Lord Jesus came into this world. Brothers and sisters, so far as we human beings are concerned, we are fallen. Our sense of value is totally distorted, upside down.

We value the things that we shouldn't, and we despise the things that we should treasure. That's the way we were. It's not just a matter of a little knowledge, a little teaching.

There must be a drastic change. And that's the reason why our Lord Jesus, he came into this world. He came into this world to show us what real value is.

His whole life is a demonstration of spiritual value. We find that his whole life, he was not seeking for earthly gains. He had opportunities, even when he was in the wilderness, being tempted by Satan.

Satan showed him the whole world, all the riches of the whole world. And Satan said, just bow to me, it's all yours. Give me your soul, and all this will be yours.

Our forefather, Adam, fell. He did it. But thank God for the second man.

He had the whole world given to him. And he said, it is written, you shall worship the Lord your God, and serve him. In other words, he chose God, the supreme value of the universe.

He rejected the world, and saving his soul. And when our Lord Jesus was on earth, beginning to preach, in the beginning you'll find people flock to him. They love to hear him.

They say he spoke differently from the Pharisees and the scribes. Because he spoke with authority. He healed the sick.

He was a friend of the sinners. They, in the beginning, they had the idea that he probably was the Messiah. And especially when he used the five loaves and two fishes to feed five thousand, they said, well, he must be the Messiah.

And they wanted to force him to be king. Now, people, you don't need to force anyone to be king. They will force their way through to be king.

But here you'll find, they try to force the Lord to be king. And the Lord sent them away. He even sent his disciples away, because his disciples would like it very much that he be king.

And he went to the mountain. Brothers and sisters, he is demonstrating to the world what true value is. God is the value.

Anything outside of God, no matter how good it may look, has no value. Negative value. Only when things are in God, the value is preserved.

So you'll find the whole life of our Lord Jesus, his whole principle of living is, my Father's will. He will not lift his finger to do a thing for himself. During the temptation he was, he had fasted forty days and forty nights, and he was hungry.

Because he was human. And the enemy said, if you are the son of God, turn the stone into bread. You can do it.

Of course he can. But then our Lord said, it is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth. He would rather be hungry than to do something against the will of God.

Why? Because he valued God's will more than his own life. You remember, when the children of Israel saw that he was different, that he didn't want to be king, he had no ambition on this world, and he was only trying to bring people to God for their spiritual good, they were tired of him. They rejected him.

So our Lord retreated to the border of Caesarea Philippi, which is a Gentile city. And during his rejection, he asked his disciples, what do men say that I, the Son of Man, and of course they gave him all the good reports. Some say you are John the Baptist coming into life.

Now we know Herod did have that thought. After he murdered John the Baptist, his conscience bothered him. And when he heard about Jesus, he said, John the Baptist has come back to life.

And some say he is Elijah, that great prophet. He is Jeremiah, because our Lord wept. Now isn't it strange in the Bible, you cannot find a place where the Lord laughed, but a number of times he wept, he groaned.

Now that doesn't mean that our Lord lived a very happy life, because joy and laughing are two different things. Joy is something within. Our Lord is full of joy.

Even when he was rejected by Capernaum, and all these places, and he could turn his heart to the Lord and say, Lord I praise you. Because this is your will, hidden from the prudent and the wise, but revealed to the babes. He was full of joy.

And some people said he is the prophet that Moses prophesied in Deuteronomy. One day there will be one among you, raising up by God. And that prophet, whatever he says, if you rebel against that, disobey it, you shall perish.

Some say he is the prophet. But the Lord was not satisfied. He asked his disciples, whom do you say, you are with me for three years, whom do you say that I am? And you remember Peter said, you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

And the Lord said, blessed are you Simon Bar-Jonah. This is not something shown you by flesh and blood. It is my Heavenly Father who reveals it to you.

You are Peter. You have become a stone. And I will build my church upon this rock.

And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. What a revelation. And then after that revelation, the Lord began to reveal to his disciples for the first time.

He said, I am going to Jerusalem. I will be rejected, I will be scourged, and I will be put to death. But on the third day, I will rise again.

And brothers and sisters, you remember what Peter did? Our brother already mentioned last night. Peter took hold of the Lord and said, Lord, don't do it. Never.

This is not necessary. You can have the world without giving up your soul. And the Lord turned around and said, Satan, get behind me.

This is not Peter. This is Satan. Because you do not mind the things of God, you only mind the things of God.

Brothers and sisters, you see man's concept of value. Our brother already mentioned last night the value of the cross. It is very true.

Because of the sin of the world. Because of our fallen soul. The only way that our Lord can redeem us back to true value, it has to be the cross.

He will not be the Christ if he does not go to the cross. You cannot have a cross-less Christ. Because without the cross, he cannot fulfill his mission that our Father sent him into this world.

The Father sent him into this world not just to demonstrate to the world what a true man really is. A man at God's heart. A man of God's original design.

A man that knows true value and expresses true value. Not just a demonstration. Because if it is only a demonstration, then on the Mount of Figuration, as our brother mentioned last night, he could exit from this world.

Because he has the right to go to the Father. But then there will be only one man in Heaven. So you find our Lord Jesus, in order to deliver our soul, in order to bring us back to true value, he has to go to the cross.

Because there on the cross, not only our sins were being borne by our Lord on the cross, and because of his shed blood, our sins are forgiven. Thank God for that. But it is on the cross that his soul was poured

out.

He gave up his soul on the cross. Our old man was crucified. This soul of man that has been fallen, that has every value distorted, it has to go through the cross.

And out of that comes resurrection. The glory of the risen Lord. Brothers and sisters, so you find the Lord has already accomplished the work of salvation.

In other words, it is finished. So when we come to the Lord, not only our sins are forgiven, but our old man was crucified with him. And that is the reason why the Apostle Paul can say, I am crucified with Christ.

I am crucified with Christ. No longer live I, but it is Christ who lives in me. And I now live in the flesh.

I live by faith. Not my faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loves me and gave himself for me. Now brothers and sisters, we who have believed in the Lord Jesus, we who have his blood sprinkled clean our conscience, we who have been saved, we who have his life in us, who have his spirit in us, our problem now is, if we still continue to live by our old, which is possible, then our whole sense of value will be upside down.

You know, I sometimes think, to us Christians, mentally we all understand, spiritual value is more important than physical things. We all know that. But the problem is, how will it work? We know it, but it doesn't work.

It seems as if we are knowingly going the wrong direction. The world still has some such attraction, such power upon us. And the world is working against us, spiritually.

And is still demanding our soul. And we are still giving in. It's a strange situation.

Now how can we be fully restored to the value that God has set? Or to put it this way, how can we really value God above all things? The secret is, the Lord said, he that loses his life for my sake, shall gain it. He that shall gain his soul life, shall lose it. Deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me.

Otherwise you cannot be my disciples. Brothers and sisters, the work is done, the possibility is there, the power is there, but we need to respond by faith. But again, unless the Lord opens our eyes and gives us a glimpse of his glory, if only we can see him in his glory, then we will be able to let go of ourselves.

Otherwise, if we do not see the unseen, for us to deny ourselves is impossible. Now this is true in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament time. You know, like Abraham.

It is because the Lord of Glory appeared to him that enabled him to leave his native place and his kindred and go to the place where God has called him to. As a matter of fact, the New Testament explains to us what Abraham did. You know, in Hebrews 11.

In Genesis, all we can see is, he left out of Chaldea, because the glory of the Lord attracted him. And he obeyed the Lord and he went to Canaan, the promised land. Even though throughout his life he was just a sojourner there.

And yet he believed that God has promised and God will fulfill it and give him the land and also the seed. But in the New Testament, we find that his faith actually goes further than that. Because our Lord Jesus said, Abraham sees my days and he is glad.

In other words, Abraham sees in his seed Isaac even the days of Christ. And Abraham, he was not seeking for an earthly piece of land. He was waiting for that city with foundation, whose builder is God.

But he is already looking forward to the New Jerusalem. Now, how can he do that? Because the glory of the Lord, that enables him to despise the temporally earthly things and to seek that which is spiritual and eternal, the true value. And the same thing with Moses.

The Bible said Moses, he would rather suffer shame, reproach with God's people, than to enjoy all the riches of Egypt. Why? Because he has seen the unseen. Brothers and sisters, we need to ask the Lord to really give us a sight.

If we see him, then the things of this world will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory. So it is not something that we Christians try not to love the world, or try to be ascetic. No.

It is because we have seen the Lord. And seeing him, we cannot. And then you discover, when you really seek the Lord as your true value, then everything will return to its normal order.

Even in eating and drinking. Now, do not think that because you are spiritual and seeking spiritual things, therefore you don't eat and you don't drink. Our Lord Jesus was on earth.

He ate and drank. And even with the sinners and tax gatherers, the Pharisees said, now you, the holy man, how do you do that? And even you find that the disciple of John had arguments and come to the Lord and said, now why is it that your disciples do not trust? Now brothers and sisters, it is true. If your value is not corrected, that is, if you do not see the value of the spiritual, the value of God, then you will find all these physical earthly things will work against you.

They become lusts. They become something deadening your life. But if you really let the Lord be your true value, your true treasure, you will find you will eat and drink to the glory.

Even all these earthly things will fall into it. They will not be against you, but they will be supporting you. Value will be restored to its order.

Now finally, value is according to purpose. God has a purpose. And it is out of that purpose that he created all things.

And he created us, man, according to that purpose. And that purpose is that all things will be summed up in his Son. That is the purpose.

So whenever it is something that is in line with his purpose, there is value, true value. If there is anything that is out of that line, no matter how good it may look, it has no value. No eternal value.

On the contrary, it may have negative value. So it is important in our lives to see this purpose. Brothers and sisters, we are not created for ourselves.

We are created for him. God has created us for our Lord Jesus. We are to be his bride.

It is not good for man to be alone. God said, I will make him a helpmate, his like. And brothers and sisters, we are to be his like.

We are to be like him, so that we can be joined to him and be his satisfaction, his fulfillment. Brothers and sisters, that is purpose. That is the purpose of our life.

Every day we live, we live for that purpose. Everything we do, we do it with that purpose in view. Why do I eat? Why do I drink? That I may live for him.

The way we use our time. The way we do our job. The way we live in our family.

The way we live in the church. The way we live in this world. Brothers and sisters, everything that will add to that purpose, there is value.

Your days are not wasted. But if a day that is not adding to that purpose, it is a waste. The Lord is coming soon.

We do not have much time to waste. It is time for us to wake up. It is time for us to seize upon true value, spiritual value.

Lord, we do acknowledge that words are useless, unless thou speaks. Lord, pray that thou will speak to each of our heart. That we may not only know mentally, but Lord, that experientially, we will really seek only thee, because all spiritual values are in thee.

May our every day count for eternity, and may thou be glorified with us in the name of our Lord Jesus.

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