

Spiritual Value #2 - What Is Value? Practice

by Stephen Kaung

The sermon explores the concept of spiritual value through the life of Paul, highlighting the contrast between earthly pursuits and the true worth found in Christ.

Duration: 1:15:00

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 9:1-7, John 9:35-41, Acts 9:4-6, Ephesians 1:4

Topics: "Gods Purpose", "Spiritual Freedom"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Saul, who later became the apostle Paul. Saul initially thought he was his own master and could do as he pleased. However, when Jesus appeared to him and spoke to him, Saul's perception completely changed. He realized that he had a master and that he had been chosen by God for a specific purpose. The preacher emphasizes that we are not born free, but rather God has a purpose for each of us even before we are born.

Transcript

will you please turn to the letter to the Philippians. Philippians chapter 3 we'll read verses 7 and 8. Philippians chapter 3 verses 7 and 8. But what things were gained to me, these I counted on account of Christ, loss. But surely I count also all things to be lost, on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all, and count them to be filled, that I may gain Christ.

I'll repeat. But what things were gained to me, these I counted on account of Christ, loss. But surely I count also all things to be lost, on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all, and count them to be filled, that I may gain Christ.

Let's have a word of prayer. Dear Lord, our hearts do bow in worship, we praise and thank Thee for Thy amazing love towards us. Lord we do desire to be so constrained by Thy love that we will not live again for ourselves, but only for Thee, The One who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Lord as we continue in Thy presence, we ask that Thou will by Thy Holy Spirit, once again open our eyes, that we may see the value of Thyself. Lord Thou art more valuable, much more incomparable to anything in this world. Lord give us the desire to gain even to the loss of all things.

We commit this time into Thy hands and trust Thy Holy Spirit to guide our thoughts. We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus. Yesterday morning we read that verse in Matthew chapter 16, where our Lord Jesus Himself teaches us about this matter of spiritual value.

He tells us what profit is there, if you gain the whole world and lose your soul. What are you going to exchange for that soul? In other words, in the eyes of our Lord, a soul is worth much more than the whole world. I think it is very difficult for us to accept that.

How can a soul be more valuable than the whole world? But this is how the Lord look at things. This is the way that God will value things. His valuation is very different from ours.

We mentioned yesterday morning that the one who decides, determines value is not ourselves, but it is God. You know strangely, the way we look at value actually from our own experience, value varies with different people. One may look at one thing as very valuable and is willing to pay a high price for it, but the very same thing to the other person may not be that valuable, or even of no value.

It is as if value is determined by the beholder. And because of this you find that things on this earth, so far as value is concerned, it is all relative. There is no absolute thing in this world.

With human beings, with our eyes, everything is relative. But we know that the one who determines value is not in us. It is in God.

God himself is the supreme value. And in the things that he created, he invests certain values to his creation. As a matter of fact, value is that measure of God in a thing or in a person.

If there is more of God, more manifestation of God, manifestation of his glory, of his wisdom, of his character, then that thing or that person has more value. But if a thing that does not manifest God, of his glory, wisdom, power, or character, then no matter what that thing or who that person is, spiritually speaking, there is no value there. Brothers and sisters, when God created things, he puts value in everything.

Because it comes out of his hand. The created things show us the divinity and the power of God. And that's their value.

And our human beings, we were created in the image of God. Therefore, human beings are more valuable than other created things. But today, because of sin, sin has entered into this world.

Therefore, this whole matter of value, so far as we are concerned, is all distorted, upside down. The Bible says the natural man does not receive the things of God, because they are folly to him. And he cannot know them, because they are spiritually deserted.

So brothers and sisters, we find that so far as human beings are concerned, so far as our natural man is concerned, we are not really able to see clearly what value really is. Where is value? What is more valuable? Sin has blinded our eyes. You remember in John chapter 9, our Lord Jesus, he healed a man born blind.

And because he did it on Sabbath. Therefore, we find that the Pharisees, the Jews, they were angry about it. And they even cast that blind man who was healed out of synagogue.

Ascommunicated him, because he was healed by the Lord on Sabbath. And the Bible says the Lord found him. The Lord knew he was ascommunicated, so the Lord went to find him.

And asked him, do you believe the Son of God? And he said, who is he that I may believe? And the Lord said, the one who is talking with you. And he bowed down and worshipped. Then you remember the Lord said something.

He said, they who see, continue in sin. But the blind is healed. And Pharisees, when the Pharisees heard about it, they said, now are you saying that we are blind? And the Lord said, if you are blind, then you can see.

But now because you say you can see, so your sin remains with you. Brothers and sisters, if we think we see, if we think we know what spiritual value, what value really is, we continue in sin. But if we come to the point to realize that we are blind.

We have been blinded by the God of this world. Then we have the chance to really see. To know what real value is.

Now yesterday we mentioned that our Lord Jesus came into this world. Not only just to teach us what real value is. He also demonstrates in his own life.

Throughout his life, his sense of valuation is totally different from that of the world. And that's the reason why people just couldn't understand him. Not even his disciples could understand him.

Because his way of valuating things are so different from everybody. But thank God, not only he comes to teach and to demonstrate true value. He also comes to restore us to true value.

So it is by the cross that he restored us. And through the cross he brings us into true spiritual value. Now that's what we have shared together yesterday morning.

Now this morning we would like to use a person's life to illustrate that principle. Now yesterday morning we talked about spiritual value in principle. But this morning we would like to share together on spiritual value in practice.

We see how a person in his life, this matter of spiritual value is solved. And of course immediately you know we are talking about Paul. So this morning we would like to review about Paul.

This man Saul, because formerly his name was Saul. He was named after the first king in Israel. Now Saul, he was born in Tarsus.

It was a Gentile city. But he was born a Roman. He was a free man.

And you know during his days, it is the Roman Empire. The Romans conquered the world. And they had more slaves than free men.

Those who were conquered by the Romans, they were slaves. And only the Romans, they were free men. But there were certain cities or certain people that were given the privilege of Roman citizenship.

And Paul, Saul, he was born free. He was born a Roman. With privileges of a Roman citizen.

And in that time this was a tremendous thing. In other words, he was politically correct. Now he was born with Roman citizenship.

And he was born in Tarsus. And during that time, even politically it belonged to Romans. But culturally it belongs to Greeks.

In other words, the Greek culture was the culture of those days. So Paul Saul, when he grew up, he received Greek culture. He knew Greek philosophy.

He was brought up in that kind of environment. And it was a thing to boast of. So we may say he was culturally correct.

Not a barbarian. And probably when he was twelve. You know because he said he is of the race of Israel.

Of the tribe of Benjamin. On the eighth day he was circumcised. In other words, he was a typical Jew.

He was not like Ishmael. You know, Ishmael was circumcised at sixteen. But God's ordained time for circumcision to the children of Abraham is the eighth day.

On the eighth day a male child has to be circumcised. And Saul was circumcised on the eighth day. And he was of the tribe of Benjamin.

Now probably is because when Israel was divided into two parts. The northern ten tribes become the nation of Israel. And the southern tribe of Judah together with the tribe of Benjamin became the nation of Judah.

So in other words, he belonged to that nation that had never been divided out from the original one. And he was a Hebrew of Hebrews. Now what does that mean? We are told that a Hebrew of Hebrews means that he is not only born in a Hebrew family.

But in that family their spoken language was Hebrew. In other words, many were born in the Hebrew families. Living in outside of the promised land.

And because they are surrounded by Greek culture. So they did not speak Hebrew in the family. They spoke Greek or other dialects.

But Saul belonged to a family that spoke Hebrews in the family. So is very kosher. Very very correct.

So you will find that racially correct. And probably at the age of twelve. Because during those days at the age of twelve a boy will go through a ceremony and bat mitzvah.

And that boy became a son of the Lord. So in other words, he was considered as grown up. And he was now responsible for his actions.

And he became a member of the synagogues. And he had the right to ask questions and also to answer questions. And probably it was because he went to Jerusalem to receive education.

Religious education. So maybe when he was twelve he was brought to Jerusalem. And there he was to learn the law.

Under a famous rabbi Gamaliel. And he sat under the feet of Gamaliel. And he learned all about the law.

About Judaism. Received all the traditions of the fathers. All the teachings of the rabbis through the centuries.

Well educated. So he was religiously correct. So everything with that person was correct.

And even though he was rather young. But he sought after what he considered as things of more value. Now a young man you know, with that kind of background, probably will seek after earthly, worldly things.

Because he had every opportunity before him. But this young man was different. Somehow he felt that spiritual things, well to him he thought it was spiritual things.

That is religious things. He thought that religious things are more valuable than earthly things. And that was most unusual.

While other young people were seeking after positions, fame, wealth. And all these earthly, worldly things. Now this young man he sought after things religious.

Because he considered this matter of the soul is more important than physical, material things. And he really pursued with determination. He was a young man of strong will.

And he was determined that he will become someone in Judaism. Now this is something we do not know. Some people said even at that young age he already became a member of the Sanhedrin.

Why? Because he said when the believers of the Lord Jesus, the followers of the Lord were sentenced he gave his vote. But then some other people said it cannot be because he was too young for that. And he was not married.

To be a member of the Sanhedrin you have to be married. So there are different opinions about it. But anyway we find he himself told us he was more advanced in Judaism than his contemporaries.

He was seeking for the top place in Judaism. He could be very well, he could be the rabbi of his time. And he thought that these things are important.

These things are valuable. And he was very moral. Because he said I am a Pharisee of the Pharisees.

A true Pharisee. You remember when our Lord was on earth. The one class of person that he proclaimed his rules.

He said rule to you Pharisees and scribes. Why? Because they were hypocrites. Outwardly they kept all the minute things of the law.

And yet inwardly they violated every bit of it. They were hypocrites. When they pray they will stand at the corner of the street and pray long prayers.

So everybody will say how godly that person must be. Hypocrites. But not this young man.

He was a true Pharisee. Why? Because he can even boast it and said according to the law I am righteous. In other words he tried to keep every letter of the law.

With sincerity. We will say this young man is unusual. He must have found the secret of value.

And because of that he persecuted the followers of Jesus. Because to him according to the tradition of the fathers they considered Jesus as an imposter of Judaism. Jesus did not conform to the traditions of the fathers.

They considered Jesus as a rebel and must be ridden. So you find this young man. He was so zealous for Judaism.

So zealous for the tradition of the fathers. And as a matter of fact the traditions of the fathers in Judaism we can say at that time was the best tradition in the world. So he persecuted the followers of the Lord Jesus with zeal.

He will enter into houses and seize men and women and children and condemn them. And when Stephen the first martyr was martyred. He was there watching the clothes of those who stoned Stephen to death.

And that zeal blinded him so much. That usually a moral person probably will not do anything to the women or the children. And yet you find he will go into houses and seize not only men but women and children.

And he even received documents from the high priest going to the Gentile cities outside of Palestine proper. And try to seize believers of Jesus and to bring them to Jerusalem in order to condemn them. He persecuted them even to Gentile cities.

Now that was so. Now why? Why did he do all these things? It is because value determines your life. What you value you will seek after.

And because this young man his sense of value is such. He value very highly his pedigree. He value very much that he was a Jew and an orthodox Jew.

He value that. He value his upbringing. He value his knowledge of the law.

He value his own moral achievements. And he value religious success. He value these things.

He want to be someone in Judaism. Because he thought that is valuable. And brothers and sisters whatever you value that will determine what kind of life you will live.

And also it will decide how much you are willing to pay for it. Now this young man paid a lot for what he valued. Probably when other young man was seeking the pleasure of this world he was there diligently studying the law and the interpreting of the law and so forth.

He paid a great cost for the things that he valued. And he was nearly successful in what he was seeking. Now that was so.

So far as the world is concerned I think the whole world will admire such a person. The whole world will say now this young man is right. But thank God.

One day on the way to Damascus. He had the documents from the high priest. Going to Damascus a gentile city in Syria to seize upon the people of the way.

Those that believe in the Lord Jesus. And to bring them to Jerusalem. To sentence them.

But as he was approaching the city of Damascus. It was at noon time. But the Bible tells us.

And this is recorded his experience is recorded three times in the book of Acts. As he was approaching Damascus. On noon day suddenly a light brighter than the sun shone upon him and upon his followers.

And they all fell on the ground. That light was so powerful. It struck them to the ground.

And then he heard a voice. Saul, Saul. Why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goats.

And he was in Hebrew. Saul, Saul. Why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goats.

Now brothers and sisters. We think that we are three persons. We are free.

We can do anything that we want to. We are not born slaves. We are born free men.

We can live our own life. We can seek what we think is valuable for us. But according to the word of God.

This is not the case. You know God has a purpose on each one of us. Even before the foundation of the world.

He has chosen us in Christ Jesus. When we were in our mother's womb. He had already separated us for that purpose.

We do not know it. Saul did not know it. But the Lord said it is hard for you to kick against the goats.

Now we know what the goats is. During the old days when they do farming. They will have an ox and a yoke.

And of course the farmer will put his hand on the plow. And will plow the field with the ox. But the ox sometimes has his own will.

And will not follow the will of his master. So sometimes when during the plowing. Maybe the ox sees something nice to eat.

So the ox begin to turn. You know. And if that is the case then the Pharaoh will not be straight.

So what the farmer will do. On his other hand he has a sharp thing called goats. And he will just use that stick with a sharp end.

Just touch the leg of the ox. Now of course the farmer has no intention of hurting the ox. Because he wants to use it.

So he just touch it lightly. Just to remind the ox that you have a master. Don't forget that.

But the ox is so stubborn. When that goats touch him. He kicks back.

And when he kicks back it hurts. And because it hurts. He learns.

Now he knows he has to listen to his master. Otherwise he will be hurt more. Now brothers and sisters.

The Lord is saying to this young man Saul. You are not free. Even before the foundation of the world I have chosen you.

In your mother's womb I have separated you. But you don't know it. You are created with a purpose.

You are to do my will. To plow my field. Do my work.

Not your work. My work. You have a master.

But you forgot. You thought that you could do anything you like. You thought that you can determine what value was.

I will let you go just so far. But I have taught you with the goats. But you don't understand.

Brothers and sisters. I believe this young man. While he was persecuting the followers of Jesus.

While he was seizing upon these people. He must be a moral being. A good man.

So far as the world is concerned. He must from time to time saw the way these believers reacted. It must touch his conscience.

Especially in the case of Stephen. You know when Stephen gave his testimony. People look at him and saw his face shone like angel.

And Saul was there. He heard what Stephen said. And he was with the people that pushed Stephen out of the city.

And when Stephen was done. He said I saw the heaven open. And the Son of Man standing there.

Waiting. Welcoming him. And when he was dying.

He said Lord. Do not put the sin upon them. Now being a Pharisee.

A true Pharisee. A moral person. He cannot but be deeply.

The death of Stephen is like a goat touching his leg. His conscience must be bothered. But he kicked back.

And according to the book of Acts. After the death of Stephen. You will find Saul became mad.

He was furious. He persecuted the Father's Lord even more than before. Now why is it? Try to silence his conscience.

So the Lord reminded him. It is hard for you to kick against the God. How long are you going to kick against the Gods? You only hurt yourself.

For the first time. Saul realized. That he was not his own master.

That he had. There is one who is stronger than he. For the first time.

His eyes. Inner eyes were open. He said Lord.

Who are you? I do not know you. But I acknowledge you Lord. Because you are my dear.

I cannot fight against you. Now who are you? And the voice said. I am Jesus whom you persecuted.

Now brothers and sisters. At that moment. His evaluation of Jesus.
Completely changed. Before he saw the Lord. Before the Lord spoke to him.
He thought he was. He could see. He thought he saw clearly.
His way. His future. He knew what value was.
And he looked at Jesus as the Nazarene. The one to be despised. The one to be away of.
The one to be crucified. To be wiped out. Annihilated.
Destroyed. He looked down upon Jesus. He stumbled upon Jesus.
That is his evaluation of Jesus. But at that moment. His whole evaluation of Jesus.
He saw that Jesus is Lord. He is his master. That he is God.
That he has chosen him. Even before the foundation of the world. That he knew him.
Even when he was in the mother's womb. That he was so patient. Waiting for him.
Working on him. Until one day. His inner eyes were opened.
And he began to see the risen Lord. The Lord. What a change in his estimation of the person of Jesus.
And that vision transformed his sense of value. So here you find he himself testified. In Philippians chapter 3. In the past he boasted of his birth.
His privilege. His achievement. His moral status.
And his zeal. In other words. He boasted of himself.
Of his flesh. He thought highly of himself. He thought he was a man above others.
He was on the right track. That he has seized the true value of life. But when he met Jesus.
Or when Jesus met him. His whole sense of value changed. Downside up.
He said. What I considered as gain. Now.
On account of Christ Jesus. I now look at this as loss. My pedigree.
My education. My achievement. My zeal.
All these things were gain to me. In the past. But now I see clearly.
They are actually. Why? Because they blinded my eyes to see real value. I wasted my energy.
My pursuit. My time. My life.
On something. That doesn't worth a thing. And all the time.
I thought these were gain. But they were actually. And he went a step further.

He said. I not only count these former things. That I had.

As loss now. I count all things as loss. Why? For the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Brothers and sisters. Once he saw the Lord Jesus. He saw the glory of the Lord Jesus.

It changed his whole mentality. The whole world to him is filthy. It's like filth.

Now who wants the filth? The quicker you get rid of it. The better. But the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

To know Jesus Christ. That is the most valuable thing in the whole world. Dear brothers and sisters.

Has our sense of value changed? You know when we are saved. Our sense of value should change. And I believe that there must be some change.

May not be as drastic. But there ought to be some change. Because there is no change in your sense of value.

I wonder whether you are really saved. But unfortunately. Even though when we are saved.

There was some change in our sense of value. But the change is not drastic enough. And because of that.

You find the things of old continue to cling upon us. Continue to have its influence upon us. And unfortunately even will overwhelm that new sense of value.

And lead us to walk in the old way of life. We do not see the value of our Lord Jesus as we should. So you find in the case of Paul.

Because he saw the glory of the Lord. That glory make everything dim. He would rather lose everything.

If he can gain Christ. Brothers and sisters. He began to see how God sees.

He began to value the way that God values. God values His Son. More than anything else.

And when you begin to value Christ. More than anything else. You want to know Him.

And in order to know Him. You are willing to pay any price. You are willing to look everything as dross.

Brothers and sisters. You are on the right track. You got the true value.

So here he said. I want to know Him. In the past.

He was building up his own righteousness. According to the righteousness of the Lord. So he said.

I am perfect. I am blameless. But our righteousnesses before God are as filthy rags.

No one can be justified by keeping the law. And Saul was included. So he was blinded.

He thought that he could build up his own righteousness. To face God. But there on the road to Damascus.

His own righteousnesses appeared as filthy rags. And then God took off his filthy rags. And put upon him the basherel.

So he said. Now it is the righteousness of God. Through Christ Jesus.

By faith. Paul realized. He has no righteousness of his own.

He was naked before God. And Christ is his robe. He was close with Christ.

That made him. Gave him standing before the righteous God. And brothers and sisters.

Thank God. This is what the cross of our Lord Jesus has done for us. He bore our sins in his own body on the tree.

He who knew no sin was made sin for us. That we may be the righteousness of God. Thank God we are justified.

The blood has cleansed us. And we can stand before God. But Paul said.

It is not just this work of our Lord Jesus on the cross. That gives me righteousness. A righteous standing before God.

That I treasure. He said. I want to know him.

I want to know the person who did so much for me. Brothers and sisters. We know some of the works of our Lord Jesus.

We know his finished work on the cross. And because we know the finished work of Christ on the cross. We know our sins are forgiven.

We know that we are now have the righteousness of God upon us. We know now we have a standing before God. Thank God we know this.

We know the work of our Lord Jesus. But we treasure his work. We should.

But more than we treasure the person. Paul said. Because I have received his work in my life.

And I want to know the person who gave me such grace. I want to know him. Brothers and sisters.

Do we have such a desire in us to know him? Not just to know his work. Of course we must know his work. But we need to know him.

Person. Know his character. Know his mind.

Know his will. Know what does he really love. What does he want? To please him.

You know the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 he said. I have an ambition. And my ambition is that in all things I may be agreeable to him.

Or to put it in another way. I may please him in all things. That is my ambition.

I want to know him. Do we have such a strong desire to know him? And of course to know him you have to be close to him. To have a living relationship.

Daily relationship with him. In all that you may know him. To know the power of his resurrection.

Brothers and sisters. When we begin to know him. We know that he is not only our saviour.

We know he is our life. His life is more than he comes to save us. Out of sin.

Out of death. Into eternal life. But Christ in you.

The hope of glory. Christ is your life. When you begin to know him.

You begin to know his life. His life in you. But his life is resurrection life.

And unless you are willing to accept your death on the cross with him. When Christ was crucified. He took the old man with him.

And in him. In other words. Unless we are willing to see that there is no good in our flesh.

We have no confidence in our old life. We will not again live by our old life. We will by the Holy Spirit deliver it unto death on the cross.

Unless we come to that point. We will not really know Christ our life. In other words.

We will not live by his life. We are still living by our old life. How many believers are still living by their old life? And the reason why they are not able to live by the Christ life in them is because they are not willing to let go their old life.

They still have confidence in their flesh. They still feel that they can live a Christian life by themselves. Not until you come to the point that you realize in you that is in your flesh there is no good.

You let go. You accept the sentence of death from the Lord. Then you begin to experience Christ your life.

The life is there. And it gives opportunity for Christ to live in you. And when he lives it is resurrection life.

It is the power of his resurrection. You are all living on a different realm. And being conformed to have fellowship with his suffering.

You know the sufferings of our Lord on the cross. There are two kinds. One kind we call vicarious or atoning suffering.

Now that kind of suffering he suffered alone. In other words he alone bore our sins in his body and trod the winepress. He atoned for our sins.

That suffering you and I cannot participate. We only receive the benefit of that suffering. But there is another kind of suffering of our Lord Jesus that we are called to have fellowship with his suffering.

In other words to share with him in that kind of suffering. It is to suffer for righteousness sake. It is to suffer for the will of God.

It is to suffer for following the Lord. And in this area or to suffer for the lost soul. To suffer for the house of God, the church.

Like Paul said he travailed in suffering in order to complete that which is behind of the sufferings, tribulations, afflictions of Christ for his body. Brothers and sisters in that area we are called to share with him. But it is only when we begin to know the power of his resurrection we are able to fellowship.

Otherwise we won't be able to fellowship with his sufferings. And then conform to his death. And that goes deeper.

Because we know the death of our Lord Jesus is all conclusive, all inclusive. Death to everything that is of the old creation. Everything that is not of God.

And we are to be conformed to that death. Whatever in our life that is not of God. No matter how good it may look we are to be conformed.

So that Christ may be all and all. And this is something that the apostle Paul is pursuing after. He considered this as the supreme value.

And he said I do not say I have already arrived, no. I am still pressing on. Forgetting the things behind and pursuing the goal.

I want to apprehend all that Christ has apprehended me. He want to gain that prize. And that prize is Christ to gain him in his fullness.

So brothers and sisters, here you will find a person, his whole sense of value is corrected. And they change his whole course of life. And to the very end he can say I have finished my course.

I have kept the faith. I have fought the good fight. And now there is a crown of righteousness.

Not only for me but for all who love his superior. Brothers and sisters, is this what we are seeking today? Has our sense of value been completely changed? How we need continually to see the glory. And if we have his glory before us, that will enable us to forget everything and just follow him, seeking after him.

And brothers and sisters, this is all things will pass away but Jesus. So may the Lord. Dear Heavenly Father, we do thank thee that thou has shown us it is possible and thou has made it possible to change the sense of value in a person so completely that he may see exactly the way that you see.

Lord, because of this we are encouraged. We are here. We do acknowledge that once we were blind but now I see.

But Lord, sometimes we see dimly. We need a further touch that we may see clearly the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. That we may count all things but few.

Heavenly Father, we want to gain thee. Thou art the only one worthy to seek after. O Lord, have mercy upon us.

We ask in thy precious name.

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