

## JCI #148 Precious Indeed May 2014

“What’s it worth?” Have you asked the question lately? Perhaps you’ve been checking out Blue Book values looking for a used car, or thinking about the asking price for your own. Or perhaps you’ve been thinking about buying a house or selling yours. Or maybe it’s something smaller, like a pair of shoes. If you’ve lived long enough, you can’t help of thinking back to the day when they only cost half or a quarter of what they cost now. That brings me to my questions about cost, value and worth. Are they all the same? Not! Let me suggest that the “*cost*” of something is its price tag. The “*value*” of something is what it means to you. And the “*worth*” of something is all about how necessary it is.

I remember the story of the kid who spent an hour going around a store and changing all the price tags, and creating chaos as customers saw socks listed at \$100.00 and new suits for \$2.98. In this day it seems life’s price tags have been switched and the world has just accepted it as normal. As believers, we should know the real worth of things. We are told today that real worth is measured by money, beauty, status, fame, power, pleasure and possessions. But the ultimate reality is that none of these things possess real worth since they are neither necessary nor lasting. And the supposed “*life*” they promise is hollow, temporary, and completely unsatisfying.

There is a word in the New Testament that speaks to this discussion. It is the word most commonly translated “precious.” (1) We use the word “precious” in different ways. A grandmother may pick up her little grandbaby and hugging the child exclaims, “She’s so precious.” In this case we mean special, wonderful, desired and blessed. But the root meaning of this word “precious” mean of great worth and value. So, what makes something valuable and of great worth. In addition to other things, that which makes something precious is, on the one hand, its rarity and on the other, its irreplaceable necessity.

The first aspect of “precious” is found in the use of the word describing jewels as “precious stones.” 1Corinthians 3:12 Revelation 18:12, 18:16, 21:11, 21:19 What makes precious metal precious? Why do gold and silver cost more than iron and copper? What makes precious jewels precious? Rarity! As the old farmer said: “That’s why diamonds cost more than dirt. Less of ‘em!”

The second and more significant aspect of “precious” is irreplaceable necessity. Air and water may not be rare, but there is no substitute for them. Remove air or water and we die. There is nothing to replace them. They are absolutely essential for life, and therefore precious. We may be willing to pay more for gold than copper. But we would give everything we possess for air and water, as thoughts of trapped miners after a collapsed shaft quickly remind of what is truly precious.

To make our brief study more manageable, I will confine my thoughts to 1 & 2 Peter. The apostle Peter uses a number of words repeatedly in his letters. But the word “precious” is one of his all-time favorites. He speaks of four different things using the terms precious, more precious, and exceedingly precious. Let’s do a biblical audit with Peter and discover that is of infinite value to you and me.

(1) (“Timios” transliterated from Greek and its related forms “time” and the intensive “entimios”)

- 1) **Your Faith** 1 Peter 1:7 ...that the genuineness of **your faith, being much more precious than gold** that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ...  
     2 Peter 1:1 Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained **like precious faith** with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:
- 2) **God's Promises** 2 Peter 1:4 ...by which have been given to us **exceedingly great and precious promises**, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.
- 3) **Christ's Blood** 1 Peter 1:18-19 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with **the precious blood of Christ**, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.
- 4) **Christ Himself** 1 Peter 2:4, 7 Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but **chosen by God and precious...** Therefore, to you who believe, **He is precious...**

## **RARE AND THEREFORE PRECIOUS**

First, these four precious things are precious because they are rare.

### **Saving Faith is Rare.**

Many profess, few possess. Let us examine ourselves.

Matthew 7:13-14 "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it." Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and **there are few who find it."**

Matthew 7:22-23 **Many** will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Matthew 24:37-39 But **as the days of Noah were**, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Luke 18:8 "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, **will He really find faith on the earth?"**

2 Corinthians 13:5 **Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith.** Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? ...unless indeed you are disqualified.

How many had saving faith in the days of Noah? In the whole earth, only 8 people had saving faith. Rare indeed is true saving faith. If you possess saving faith in Christ, you have a rare treasure

### **God's Promises are Rare**

We have all heard the phrase: "Promises, promises..." accompanied by the rolling of the eyes! By which we mean that while promises are many, the keeping of them are rare indeed. Most of us would be quite contented if even 50% of the promises we make or receive were actually kept and fulfilled. Promises are left unfulfilled because of insincerity, or insufficient time, or lack of money, or change of weather, or unexpected

obstacles, or other unanticipated and more pressing priorities, or our simple inability to control the circumstances necessary to fulfill them. Promises are not rare. It's the keeping of them that is rare. And rarer still are God's precious promises since every single one of them is kept to full completion, and forever, for every single person who receives them. They are precious promises indeed.

Joshua 21:45 Not one of all the LORD's good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.

1 Kings 8:56 Praise be to the LORD, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses.

Psalms 145:13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made.

2 Corinthians 1:20 For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

James 1:12 Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

**Christ's Blood is Rare** The blood of Jesus is the only sinless blood that flowed through human veins since Adam and Eve were first created. Their blood was corrupted by their sin. The blood of Jesus is exceedingly rare as it is the only blood that can atone for sin and take it away forever. This rare and priceless blood accomplishes what no other blood ever could.

Purchased the church Acts 20:28 ...the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

Justifies the believer Rom 5:9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood...

Redeems the believer Eph 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood

Redeems forever Heb 9:12 with His own blood... (He) obtained eternal redemption

Reconciles the believer Eph 2:13 ...you been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Makes peace with God Col 1:20 ...having made peace through the blood of His cross.

Cleanses from sin 1 John 1:7 the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Cleanses the conscience Heb 9:14 the blood of Christ cleanse(s) your conscience

Sanctifies the believer Heb 13:12 He... sanctified the people with His own blood

### **Christ Himself is Absolutely Rare**

#### **He is the One and Only Begotten Son**

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:18 No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

John 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.

John 3:18 "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

#### **He is the One and Only Mediator**

1Tim 2:5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,

#### **He is the One and Only Door into Heaven**

John 10:9 "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

### **He is the One and Only Life Giving Bread**

John 6:48 "I am the bread of life."

### **He is the One and Only Way, Truth and Life**

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

## **ESSENTIAL AND THEREFORE PRECIOUS**

These four are also precious not only because they are absolutely rare and one of a kind, but also because they are essential and irreplaceable. For if any one of these four precious things is missing, hell is our only portion, and vain is any hope for eternal life. There is simply no substitute for God's promises, your faith, Christ Himself or His blood.

### **Saving Faith is Essential and Irreplaceable**

You cannot please God without it Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

You are not justified without it Romans 5:1a Therefore, having been justified by faith,

You have no peace without it Romans 5:1b we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ

You have no access into God's grace without it Romans 5:2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

### **God's Promises are Essential and Irreplaceable**

Titus 1:2 in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,

1 John 2:24-25 See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is what he promised us-even eternal life.

### **Christ's Blood is Essential and Irreplaceable**

No forgiveness without it Hebrews 9:22 ... without shedding of blood there is no remission.

His blood removes sin Hebrews 9:26 ... He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

His blood finished salvation's plan Hebrews 10:12 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,

His blood makes us perfect in God's sight Hebrews 10:14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

His blood gives us access to heaven itself Hebrews 10:19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus...

### **Christ Himself is Essential and Irreplaceable**

No forgiveness without Him Acts 13:38-39 "Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.

No other Name but His to Be Saved by Acts 4:11-12 "This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

No other Savior Isaiah 45:21 "There is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me."

Now that we see clearly what is truly precious (rare and essential) how much more do we rejoice to know that all of them are fully our possession by God's sovereign grace. He has given to us His Son, His blood, His promises, and the very faith we possess in claiming those blood bought promises in Christ alone. To know what is precious is only exceeded by possessing that which is precious. Rejoice, O Believer, that you possess the precious things of life everlasting!

Paul said that even his own life was not "precious" (literally) compared to the value of that which is truly precious. Ac 20:22-24 "And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear (precious) to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

### **Self-Check**

- 1) What has captured your eyes and heart in the recent days that is not precious? What has caused you stress, frustration, envy or anger that has nothing to do with what truly matters - the precious things of eternity?
- 2) What can you do to remind yourself and others of what is truly precious?
- 3) Which Bible verse are you going to memorize this week to help you keep your priorities on that which is precious?

### **For Further Study**

- 1) Read through 1 and 2 Peter and make a list of what really matters and what doesn't
- 2) Read Matt 16:24-27 and consider the comparative value of the things Jesus sets before us
- 3) Do a phrase study through the Bible on that which is "more valuable" or "better" or "more precious" or "not to be compared" and "rather than" and make a list of what is truly "precious"

### **OLD HYMNS ON THE TRULY PRECIOUS**

#### **John Newton**

Precious Bible! What a treasure  
does the Word of God afford?  
All I want for life or pleasure,  
Food and med'cine, shield and sword:  
Let the world account me poor,  
Having this I need no more.

**McCloud Wylie**

The blood has always precious been,  
'Tis precious now to me;  
Through it alone my soul has rest,  
From fear and doubt set free.

*Oh, wondrous is the crimson tide  
Which from my Savior flowed,  
And still in Heav'n my song shall be,  
The precious, precious, blood.*

"I will remember now no more,"  
God's faithful Word has said,  
"The follies and the sins of him  
For whom My Son has bled."

Not all my well-remembered sins  
Can startle or dismay;  
The precious blood atones for all  
And bears my guilt away.

**Tommy Dorsey**

Precious Lord, take my hand,  
Lead me on, let me stand,  
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;  
Through the storm, through the night,  
Lead me on to the light:  
*Take my hand, precious Lord,  
Lead me home.*

**Lydia Baxter**

Take the name of Jesus with you,  
Child of sorrow and of woe,  
It will joy and comfort give you;  
Take it then, where'er you go.  
*Precious name, O how sweet!  
Hope of earth and joy of Heav'n.  
Precious name, O how sweet!  
Hope of earth and joy of Heav'n.*

**Nathaniel Niles**

Precious promise God has given  
To the weary passerby,  
On the way from earth to Heaven,

"I will guide thee with Mine eye."

*I will guide thee, I will guide thee,  
I will guide thee with Mine eye  
On the way from earth to Heaven,  
I will guide thee with Mine eye.*

**William Doane**

Take the name of Jesus with you,  
Child of sorrow and of woe;  
It will joy and comfort give you,  
Take it then where'er you go.

*Precious name! Oh, how sweet!  
Hope of earth and joy of heav'n;  
Precious name! Oh, how sweet!  
Hope of earth and joy of heav'n*

*"Precious Lord, Your precious blood has bought me. Your precious promise stays my soul. And this precious faith begotten in my heart by Your word and Your Spirit removes my dread and fills me with joy as the days pass and my home going draws ever nearer. Have Your way with me. Do with me what You choose. Life is less than worthless apart from your will, Your praise, Your glory. What have I to ask, now that I have Thee? Forgive me for a wandering eye and a straying heart that can so easily be deceived by the changing price-tags of this world, and awaken me to the lasting treasure of You and you alone! In your Precious Name I pray, Amen and Amen."*

**Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you.**

**Living with leaving in view.... Jn 9:4**

**Ron & Val**

Seeing The Invisible, embracing The Unapproachable, declaring The Unexplainable,  
changed by The Immutable, running after The Irresistible  
with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows,  
spending our time on eternity,  
owning nothing yet possessing everything  
that matters and lasts.  
We are Pilgrims in Paradox.  
Welcome to THE JOURNEY