

“Devaluated or Invaluable”  
Genesis 17:1-5 and Luke 2: 36-38  
Sunday August 26, 2018

How many of you enjoy watching Antiques Road Show? Monday night after the news is over, I often like hearing how much something is appraised for? The art work surprises me the most. The value of the art work is astronomical in how it is valued.

Do you ever watch Antiques Road Show from several years ago when they tell whether the item being reviewed increased in value, stayed the same or decreased in value? I like guessing whether it is going up or down.

When it comes to things, this show teaches that value is based on what people are willing to pay for it or how much they really want that item. The same is true about gold, silver, and other precious metals. When I worked in Gallup, I from time to time would call a member of the church at his work. Before I could put in his extension, I had to listen to a series of quotes about the value of certain medals for that day. Some days it was up and some days it was down.

How we value things tells a lot about us as people. In Korea in the 1980's when I was serving there, Reebok Tennis shoes were selling for over \$100 a pair in the United States. In Korea you could buy them for \$10. However, if you wanted to rent an apartment or house, you had to put now key money. It could be as much as \$200. That was not the rent money. It was money no never got back. Land was such a premium that they could charge that much money to give you a key.

When it comes to us human beings, we seem to transfer this evaluation and devaluation towards people. When the Irish came to America during the Irish potato famine, many people put signs in the window that told Irish that they need not apply. When persons were brought from Africa to America, they were totally devalued and dehumanized. We can talk about a variety of people whether they are Asians, Middle

Easterners, Hispanic, or even Russians, we human beings can devalue and value people.

The same is true for people who have had a long life on this earth. We too often devalue people of significant age. They aren't young, beautiful, or strong. They depend on others for their well being. At least that is what people think at times. People are living longer now than ever. They are having opportunity to work later in life. Our Bishops can now hold off on retirement until they are 72. Dr Michael DeBakery who invented the artificial heart did surgery until he was 90. After that he concentrated his work doing research in the lab until he was 98 years old.

Even people who are well into retirement begin to question what value they are to family, society, and maybe even to the Lord. People sometimes will ask, "Why am I still here on earth?"

When we look at the Bible we see several illustration of how age does not matter to God. Age is not a deterrent to fulfilling God's purposes in this world. God call Abraham our Bible says at age 99. Sarah was only a little younger. God wanted both of them to fulfill God's purposes and bear a child that would lead to a massive amount of descendents that would be God's people. It would be the line that God would use to enter human history in Jesus Christ.

Then there was Moses. He was in his 80's when God called him to lead God's people out of Egypt. How Moses put up with the people in the wilderness for 40 years is beyond me? Yet, did patience come with age. There was Hanna who was 84 waiting for the Messiah to be born. After seven years of marriage she was widowed. She spent the next 77 years going to the Temple every day, praying and fasting. She probably ate one meal a day after dark. She was looking for God's promise of Jesus to be fulfilled. Talk about patience. She had patience and she had perspective. She looked at all those babies who were being presented to God. Finally, she saw the salvation that God had promised when Mary and Joseph brought their baby Jesus to the Temple.

There may be people in this world that devalue and even dehumanize elderly people, God does not. Sometimes people who are in their 90's and even younger begin to devalue themselves. God does not. Age is not an issue with God. God desires for all of us to seek His Kingdom. He desires that we live in His Kingdom. He has work for each of us. We are invaluable to Him.

As child growing up I heard a lot of World War Two stories. Many of you may have lived through those years. One such story was about a statue of Jesus. When the Allied forces came to this huge statue they noticed that bombing had cut off the hands of Jesus. The sermon I remember said that we are the hands and feet of Jesus. That stuck with me.

We are the hands and feet of Jesus. Psalms 73: 26 says "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. He is our strength and portion. He is our help in time of need. We are his help in time of need for others. It could be an encouraging word, a card written in the time of ill health, it could prayer on behalf of others. You could serve in various ministries of the church.

Doris Whiting has been the chair of SPRC this year. She organized things for coming pastor. Dorothy Thronbon greets each week and hands out bulletins and copies of sermons as people come in.

Three people in the 90's club come to weekly Bible study. They share their wisdom. They are Doris, Carol, and Dorothy Eachus. Men and woman who are in their 90's play golf and enjoy the out of doors. The imagine that we have of people who are "old" has changed so much that we need to readjust our thinking what it means to transverse those years of retirement.

My roommate from seminary has a father who is 89 driving for meals on wheels to those who are homebound. Due to an insurance rule he is unable to drive any more. That does not keep him from being on a delivery team to take out these meals.

There is another spiritual aspect to persons of considerable age. They begin to think about eternity more than when they were young. My

Grandfather was one such person. My grandparents eloped from south Pennsylvania to West Virginia to get married in June of 1929. In the 1935 he was commissioned into the military as the second lieutenant. He would stay 20 years and fight in World War Two. He found work in telecommunication. He would take him to Ethiopia several times. Eventually, he would work in Vietnam during the war. He made good money but often he times was lonely. He had a number of indiscreptions. Yet, he and grandma did not communicate much about these things. It was his secret including a son he fathered.

After grandpa retired for the final time and he and grandma settled into retirement, grandma had a stroke and eventually died. Grandpa grieved but he was also scarred. Grandpa had been raised in the Lutheran Church, sang in the children's choir, and went through confirmation. He was becoming very aware that he was going to meet Jesus one day and it wasn't going to be pretty.

So he went to see the chaplain at nearby military base. That chaplain helped my grandfather find forgiveness of his sins and to receive Christ in his heart. My grandfather would see his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday and make an announcement that he was getting married, to our shock. He would live until 98. That year he had a stroke.

Whether we are in our 90's, 80's, or facing significant health concerns, it can be a time when we want to get things right with God. It can be a time to come face to face with our relationship with our Lord. He stands ready to renew or to start a new relationship when it hasn't been there.

That is his desire no matter what one's age maybe. No matter what age one maybe, you are never devalued. You are highly valued to God.