

THE CRUCIAL POINTS OF THE MAJOR ITEMS OF THE LORD'S RECOVERY TODAY

(Thursday—Evening Session)

Message Three

The Supreme Preciousness of the All-inclusive Christ

AL Hymns: 541, 542

Scripture Reading: 1 Pet. 1:7, 19; 2:4, 6-7; 3:4; 2 Pet. 1:1, 4; Phil. 3:8-9

- 1 Pet 1:7 So that the proving of your faith, much more precious than of gold which perishes though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;
- 1 Pet 1:19 But with precious blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, the blood of Christ;
- 1 Pet 2:4 Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious,
- 1 Pet 2:6 For it is contained in Scripture: "Behold, I lay in Zion a cornerstone, chosen and precious; and he who believes on Him shall by no means be put to shame."
- 1 Pet 2:7 To you therefore who believe is the preciousness; but to the unbelieving, "The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner,"
- 1 Pet 3:4 But the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptible adornment of a meek and quiet spirit, which is very costly in the sight of God.
- 2 Pet 1:1 Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have been allotted faith equally precious as ours in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:
- 2 Pet 1:4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.
- Phil 3:8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ
- Phil 3:9 And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith,

I. The believers in Christ should have a change in their concept of value—Matt. 23:16-26; 1 Sam. 16:7; Luke 16:15; 9:54-56; 1 Pet. 3:4:

- Matt 23:16 Woe to you, blind guides, who say, Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound.
- Matt 23:17 Fools and blind men, which is greater, the gold or the temple which sanctifies the gold?
- Matt 23:18 And, Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift which is upon it, he is bound.
- Matt 23:19 Blind men, which is greater, the gift or the altar which sanctifies the gift?
- Matt 23:20 Therefore he who swears by the altar swears by it and by all the things upon it;
- Matt 23:21 And he who swears by the temple swears by it and by Him who dwells in it;
- Matt 23:22 And he who swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it.
- Matt 23:23 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you give a tenth of the mint and the anise and the cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law—justice and mercy and faithfulness. But these you should have done and not neglected the others.
- Matt 23:24 Blind guides, who strain out the gnat but swallow the camel!
- Matt 23:25 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, but inwardly they are full of extortion and self-indulgence.
- Matt 23:26 Blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup and the dish so that their outside also may become clean.
- 1 Sam 16:7 But Jehovah said to Samuel, Do not regard his appearance and the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For it is not how man sees that matters; for man looks on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looks on the heart.
- Luke 16:15 And He said to them, You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.
- Luke 9:54 And seeing this, the disciples James and John said, Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?

- Luke 9:55 But turning, He rebuked them and said, You do not know of what kind of spirit you are.
- Luke 9:56 The Son of Man has not come to destroy men's lives but to save them. And they went into another village.
- 1 Pet 3:4 But the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptible adornment of a meek and quiet spirit, which is very costly in the sight of God.
- A. The proper concept of value for the believers can be seen in their estimation and assessment of the following aspects of Christ and His full salvation:
1. Their valuation of the Lord Jesus—Psa. 118:22; 1 Pet. 2:7.

Psa 118:22 The stone which the builders rejected / Has become the head of the corner.

1 Pet 2:7 To you therefore who believe is the preciousness; but to the unbelieving, "The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner,"
 2. Their valuation of the word of the cross—1 Cor. 1:18; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18.

1 Cor 1:18 For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

1 Pet 2:24 Who Himself bore up our sins in His body on the tree, in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose bruise you were healed.

1 Pet 3:18 For Christ also has suffered once for sins, the Righteous on behalf of the unrighteous, that He might bring you to God, on the one hand being put to death in the flesh, but on the other, made alive in the spirit;
 3. Their valuation of God's kingdom and righteousness in comparison to a man's daily necessities—Matt. 6:32-33; 2 Pet. 1:1, 11; 2:5; 3:13.

Matt 6:32 For all these things the Gentiles are anxiously seeking. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

Matt 6:33 But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

2 Pet 1:1 Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have been allotted faith equally precious as ours in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

2 Pet 1:11 For in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly and bountifully supplied to you.

2 Pet 2:5 And did not spare the ancient world but guarded Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;

2 Pet 3:13 But according to His promise we are expecting new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.
 4. Their valuation of the Lord Jesus in comparison to their relatives—Matt. 10:37-38; Luke 18:26-30; 1 Pet. 1:1, 17; 2:11a.

Matt 10:37 He who loves father or mother above Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter above Me is not worthy of Me;

Matt 10:38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

Luke 18:26 And those who heard said, Then who can be saved?

Luke 18:27 But He said, The things that are impossible with men are possible with God.

Luke 18:28 And Peter said, Behold, we have left our own things and have followed You.

Luke 18:29 And He said to them, Truly I say to you that there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God, Who shall not by all means receive back many times as much in this time, and in the coming age, eternal life.

1 Pet 1:1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the sojourners of the dispersion of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

1 Pet 1:17 And if you call as Father the One who without respect of persons judges according to each one's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear,

1 Pet 2:11a Beloved, I entreat you as strangers and sojourners to abstain from fleshly lusts, ...
 5. Their valuation of a man's soul in comparison to the whole world—Matt. 16:26; 4:8-11; Rev. 18:13; 1 Pet. 4:19.

Matt 16:26 For what shall a man be profited if he gains the whole world, but forfeits his soul-life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul-life?

- Matt 4:8 Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.
- Matt 4:9 And he said to Him, All these will I give You if You will fall down and worship me.
- Matt 4:10 Then Jesus said to him, Go away, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve."
- Matt 4:11 Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.
- Rev 18:13 And cinnamon and amomum and incense and ointment and frankincense and wine and oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, and cargo of horses and chariots and slaves and souls of men.
- 1 Pet 4:19 So then let those also who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing to a faithful Creator.
6. Their valuation of their body in comparison to the seriousness and consequence of sin—Matt. 18:8-9; 2 Pet. 3:10-13.
- Matt 18:8 If your hand or your foot stumbles you, cut it off and cast it from you; it is better for you to enter into life maimed or lame than to have two hands or two feet and be cast into the eternal fire.
- Matt 18:9 And if your eye stumbles you, pluck it out and cast it from you; it is better for you to enter into life with one eye than to have two eyes and be cast into the Gehenna of fire.
- 2 Pet 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the elements, burning with intense heat, will be dissolved, and the earth and the works in it will be burned up.
- 2 Pet 3:11 Since all these things are to be thus dissolved, what kind of persons ought you to be in holy manner of life and godliness,
- 2 Pet 3:12 Expecting and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens, being on fire, will be dissolved, and the elements, burning with intense heat, are to be melted away?
- 2 Pet 3:13 But according to His promise we are expecting new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.
7. Their valuation of hierarchical position in comparison to being slaves of the Lord and to one another—Matt. 20:25-27; 1 Pet. 2:16; 2 Pet. 1:1.
- Matt 20:25 But Jesus called them to Him and said, You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great exercise authority over them.
- Matt 20:26 It shall not be so among you; but whoever wants to become great among you shall be your servant,
- Matt 20:27 And whoever wants to be first among you shall be your slave;
- 1 Pet 2:16 As free, and yet not having freedom as a covering for evil, but as slaves of God.
- 2 Pet 1:1 Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have been allotted faith equally precious as ours in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:
8. Their valuation of Christ as the treasure of justice in comparison to earthly treasure—Job 22:23-28; Matt. 12:18-21; Isa. 42:1-4; 1 Pet. 1:18-20.
- Job 22:23 If you return to the Almighty, you will be built up. / If you put injustice far away from your tents,
- Job 22:24 And place your gold nuggets in the dust / And your gold of Ophir in the stones of the brooks,
- Job 22:25 Then the Almighty will be your gold nuggets / And precious silver to you.
- Job 22:26 For then you will delight yourself in the Almighty, / And you will lift up your countenance to God.
- Job 22:27 You will pray to Him, and He will hear you; / And you will repay your vows.
- Job 22:28 You will also decree something, and it will be established for you; / And light will shine on your ways.
- Matt 12:18 "Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul has found delight. I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He will announce justice to the Gentiles.
- Matt 12:19 He will not strive nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.
- Matt 12:20 A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench until He brings forth justice unto victory.

- Matt 12:21 And in His name will the Gentiles hope."
- Isa 42:1 Here is My Servant, whom I uphold, / My chosen One in whom My soul delights; / I have put My Spirit upon Him, / And He will bring forth justice to the nations.
- Isa 42:2 He will not cry out, nor lift up His voice, / Nor make His voice heard in the street.
- Isa 42:3 A bruised reed He will not break; / And a dimly burning flax He will not extinguish; / He will bring forth justice in truth.
- Isa 42:4 He will not faint, nor will He be discouraged, / Until He has established justice in the earth; / And the coastlands will wait for His instruction.
- 1 Pet 1:18 Knowing that it was not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, that you were redeemed from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers,
- 1 Pet 1:19 But with precious blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, the blood of Christ;
- 1 Pet 1:20 Who was foreknown before the foundation of the world but has been manifested in the last of times for your sake,
9. Their valuation of the enjoyment of sin in comparison to the unseen reward—Heb. 11:24-27; 1 Pet. 1:8-12; 2 Pet. 1:8-11; 2:20-22.
- Heb 11:24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,
- Heb 11:25 Choosing rather to be ill-treated with the people of God than to have the temporary enjoyment of sin,
- Heb 11:26 Considering the reproach of the Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he looked away to the reward.
- Heb 11:27 By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he persevered as one seeing the unseen One.
- 1 Pet 1:8 Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,
- 1 Pet 1:9 Receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.
- 1 Pet 1:10 Concerning this salvation the prophets, who prophesied concerning the grace that was to come unto you, sought and searched diligently,
- 1 Pet 1:11 Searching into what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ in them was making clear, testifying beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glories after these.
- 1 Pet 1:12 To them it was revealed that not to themselves but to you they ministered these things, which have now been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, which things angels long to look into.
- 2 Pet 1:8 For these things, existing in you and abounding, constitute you neither idle nor unfruitful unto the full knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2 Pet 1:9 For he in whom these things are not present is blind, being shortsighted, having forgotten the cleansing of his past sins.
- 2 Pet 1:10 Therefore, brothers, be the more diligent to make your calling and selection firm, for doing these things you shall by no means ever stumble.
- 2 Pet 1:11 For in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly and bountifully supplied to you.
- 2 Pet 2:20 For if, having escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ but having again been entangled in these, they are defeated, the last state has become worse for them than the first.
- 2 Pet 2:21 For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them.
- 2 Pet 2:22 It has happened to them according to the true proverb: The dog has turned to its own vomit, and the washed sow to wallowing in the mud.
10. Their valuation of the knowledge of Christ in comparison to all things—Phil. 3:7-8; 1 Pet. 1:8; 2 Pet. 1:2-3, 8; 2:20; 3:18.
- Phil 3:7 But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ.
- Phil 3:8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ

- 1 Pet 1:8 Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,
- 2 Pet 1:2 Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the full knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;
- 2 Pet 1:3 Seeing that His divine power has granted to us all things which relate to life and godliness, through the full knowledge of Him who has called us by His own glory and virtue,
- 2 Pet 1:8 For these things, existing in you and abounding, constitute you neither idle nor unfruitful unto the full knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2 Pet 2:20 For if, having escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ but having again been entangled in these, they are defeated, the last state has become worse for them than the first.
- 2 Pet 3:18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and unto the day of eternity. Amen.
- B. We need to ask the Lord to grant us the light to have a thorough change in our concept of value so that we will continually choose Christ and all that He is as our super-excelling portion—Mark 9:7-8; 2 Cor. 2:10; 4:7; 1 Pet. 1:8.
- Mark 9:7 And a cloud appeared, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud: This is My Son, the Beloved. Hear Him!
- Mark 9:8 And suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone, but Jesus only with them.
- 2 Cor 2:10 But whom you forgive anything, I also forgive; for also what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, it is for your sake in the person of Christ;
- 2 Cor 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us.
- 1 Pet 1:8 Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,
- C. “If you bring out the precious from the worthless, / You will be as My mouth”—Jer. 15:19; cf. v. 16:
- Jer 15:19 Therefore thus says Jehovah, / If you return, I will restore you; / You will stand before Me; / And if you bring out the precious from the worthless, / You will be as My mouth; / They will turn to you, / But you will not turn to them.
- Jer 15:16 Your words were found and I ate them, / And Your word became to me / The gladness and joy of my heart, / For I am called by Your name, / O Jehovah, God of hosts.
1. We must treasure the Lord’s words more than our apportioned food, tasting the Lord in His word as the reality of the good land flowing with nourishing milk and fresh honey for us to dispense to God’s people for their full salvation—Job 23:12; 1 Pet. 2:2-5; Psa. 119:103; Exo. 3:8; Deut. 8:8; S. S. 4:11a.
- Job 23:12 As for the commandment of His lips, I have not turned back from it; / I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my apportioned food.
- 1 Pet 2:2 As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it you may grow unto salvation,
- 1 Pet 2:3 If you have tasted that the Lord is good.
- 1 Pet 2:4 Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious,
- 1 Pet 2:5 You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
- Psa 119:103 How sweet are Your words to my taste! / Sweeter than honey to my mouth!
- Exo 3:8 And I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.
- Deut 8:8 A land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of olive trees with oil and of honey;
- S.S. 4:11a Your lips drip fresh honey, my bride; / Honey and milk are under your tongue; ...

2. We must treasure the Lord's words more than all earthly riches so that we can speak oracles of God to dispense the unsearchable riches of Christ as the varied grace of God—Psa. 119:72, 9-16; Eph. 3:8; 2 Cor. 6:10; 1 Pet. 4:10-11.
- Psa 119:72 The law of Your mouth is better to me / Than thousands of pieces of gold and silver.
- Psa 119:9 With what should a young man keep his way pure? / By guarding it according to Your word.
- Psa 119:10 With all my heart I have sought You; / Do not let me wander from Your commandments.
- Psa 119:11 In my heart I have treasured up Your word / That I might not sin against You.
- Psa 119:12 Blessed are You, O Jehovah; / Teach me Your statutes.
- Psa 119:13 With my lips I have declared / All the ordinances of Your mouth.
- Psa 119:14 I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies / As much as in all riches.
- Psa 119:15 I will muse upon Your precepts / And regard Your ways.
- Psa 119:16 I will take delight in Your statutes; / I will not forget Your word.
- Eph 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel
- 2 Cor 6:10 As made sorrowful yet always rejoicing; as poor yet enriching many; as having nothing and yet possessing all things.
- 1 Pet 4:10 Each one, as he has received a gift, ministering it among yourselves as good stewards of the varied grace of God.
- 1 Pet 4:11 If anyone speaks, as speaking oracles of God; if anyone ministers, as ministering out of the strength which God supplies; that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom is the glory and the might forever and ever. Amen.

II. Christ Himself is the preciousness to His believers—2:7; Phil. 3:8-9:

- 1 Pet 2:7 To you therefore who believe is the preciousness; but to the unbelieving, "The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner,"
- Phil 3:8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ
- Phil 3:9 And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith,
- A. Peter was charmed (attracted and captivated) by the Lord to such an extent that even though he was rebuked by the Lord many times and failed miserably, he still followed the Lord as his Shepherd unto his martyrdom—Luke 5:8-11; Mark 14:67-72; 16:7; John 21:15-22; 2 Pet. 1:14-15.
- Luke 5:8 And when Simon Peter saw this, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord.
- Luke 5:9 For amazement had taken possession of him and all who were with him, because of the catch of the fish which they took;
- Luke 5:10 And likewise also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, Do not be afraid. From now on you will be catching men alive.
- Luke 5:11 And when they had brought the boats to the land, they left all and followed Him.
- Mark 14:67 And seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus.
- Mark 14:68 But he denied it, saying, I neither know nor understand what you are talking about. And he went outside into the forecourt, and a rooster crowed.
- Mark 14:69 And the servant girl, seeing him, began again to say to those standing by, This man is one of them!
- Mark 14:70 But again he denied it. And after a little while, those standing by again said to Peter, Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean as well.
- Mark 14:71 But he began to curse and to swear, I do not know this man of whom you speak!
- Mark 14:72 And immediately a rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered the word, how Jesus had said to him, Before a rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times. And thinking upon it, he wept.

- Mark 16:7 But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He is going before you into Galilee. There you will see Him, even as He told you.
- John 21:15 Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs.
- John 21:16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.
- John 21:17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.
- John 21:18 Truly, truly, I say to you, When you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go.
- John 21:19 Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had said this, He said to him, Follow Me.
- John 21:20 Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also reclined on His breast at the supper and said, Lord, who is the one betraying You?
- John 21:21 Peter therefore, seeing him, said to Jesus, Lord, and what about this man?
- John 21:22 Jesus said to him, If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me.
- 2 Pet 1:14 Knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle is imminent, even as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.
- 2 Pet 1:15 Moreover I will also be diligent that you may be able, after my exodus, to bring these things to mind at all times.
- B. Peter realized that he, James, and John had been admitted into the highest degree of initiation at the Lord's transfiguration, admitted to be the initiated spectators of His majesty—vv. 16-18; cf. 1 Pet. 5:1.
- 2 Pet 1:16 For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we became eyewitnesses of that One's majesty.
- 2 Pet 1:17 For He received from God the Father honor and glory, a voice such as this being borne to Him by the magnificent glory: This is My Son, My Beloved, in whom I delight.
- 2 Pet 1:18 And this voice we heard being borne out of heaven while we were with Him in the holy mountain.
- 1 Pet 5:1 Therefore the elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory to be revealed:
- C. In His ascension Christ is "the Majestic" (Isa. 33:21)—He is our God and Savior (2 Pet. 1:1) and the Lord of all (1 Pet. 3:22; Acts 2:36) as our Judge, our Lawmaker, and our King in God's government (Isa. 33:22) in order to dispense Himself into us to be our enjoyment for our full salvation (Rev. 22:1).
- Isa 33:21 But there the Majestic, Jehovah, will be for us / A place of rivers and broad streams, / On which no boat with oars will go / And no majestic ship will pass.
- 2 Pet 1:1 Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have been allotted faith equally precious as ours in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:
- 1 Pet 3:22 Who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, angels and authorities and powers being subjected to Him.
- Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you have crucified.
- Isa 33:22 For Jehovah is our Judge, / Jehovah is our Lawmaker, / Jehovah is our King; He will save us.
- Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

III. The precious stone for God's building is Christ Himself—1 Pet. 2:4, 6-8:

- 1 Pet 2:4 Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious,
- 1 Pet 2:6 For it is contained in Scripture: "Behold, I lay in Zion a cornerstone, chosen and precious; and he who believes on Him shall by no means be put to shame."

- 1 Pet 2:7 To you therefore who believe is the preciousness; but to the unbelieving, "The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner,"
- 1 Pet 2:8 And, "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense"; who stumble at the word, being disobedient, to which also they were appointed.
- A. In God's New Testament economy, Christ as God's chosen and precious cornerstone saves us to make us living stones and transforms us for the building up of God's spiritual house, His dwelling place—Acts 4:11-12; Eph. 2:20-22.
- Acts 4:11 This is the stone which was considered as nothing by you, the builders, which has become the head of the corner.
- Acts 4:12 And there is salvation in no other, for neither is there another name under heaven given among men in which we must be saved.
- Eph 2:20 Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone;
- Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;
- Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.
- B. As the all-inclusive living and precious stone, Christ is the centrality and universality of God's move for the building up of His eternal habitation—Matt. 21:42, 44; Acts 4:10-12; Isa. 28:16; Eph. 2:19-22; Zech. 3:9; 4:6-7; Dan. 2:34-35.
- Matt 21:42 Jesus said to them, Have you never read in the Scriptures, "The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner. This was from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes"?
- Matt 21:44 And he who falls on this stone shall be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it shall crush him to powder and scatter him like chaff.
- Acts 4:10 Let it be known to you all and to all the people of Israel that in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified and whom God has raised from the dead, in this name this man stands before you in good health.
- Acts 4:11 This is the stone which was considered as nothing by you, the builders, which has become the head of the corner.
- Acts 4:12 And there is salvation in no other, for neither is there another name under heaven given among men in which we must be saved.
- Isa 28:16 Therefore thus says / The Lord Jehovah: / Indeed I lay a stone in Zion as a foundation, / A tested stone, / A precious cornerstone as a foundation firmly established; / He who believes will not hasten away.
- Eph 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,
- Eph 2:20 Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone;
- Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;
- Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.
- Zech 3:9 For here is the stone that I have set before Joshua-upon one stone are seven eyes. I will engrave its engraving, declares Jehovah of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.
- Zech 4:6 And he answered and spoke to me, saying, This is the word of Jehovah to Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says Jehovah of hosts.
- Zech 4:7 Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain, and he will bring forth the topstone with shouts of Grace, grace to it.
- Dan 2:34 You were watching until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the image at its feet of iron and clay and crushed them.
- Dan 2:35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed all at once, and they became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

IV. The precious blood of Christ has redeemed us from our vain manner of life—1

Pet. 1:15, 18-19:

- 1 Pet 1:15 But according to the Holy One who called you, you yourselves also be holy in all your manner of life;
- 1 Pet 1:18 Knowing that it was not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, that you were redeemed from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers,
- 1 Pet 1:19 But with precious blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, the blood of Christ;
- A. Christ's redeeming blood is the blood of the covenant that ushers us into God's presence, into God Himself, and into the full of enjoyment of God in His holy nature so that we might be holy in all our manner of life to become His holy priesthood and holy city—vv. 2, 15-17; Eph. 1:4; Rev. 21:2, 16.
- 1 Pet 1:2 Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father in the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.
- 1 Pet 1:15 But according to the Holy One who called you, you yourselves also be holy in all your manner of life;
- 1 Pet 1:16 Because it is written, "You shall be holy because I am holy."
- 1 Pet 1:17 And if you call as Father the One who without respect of persons judges according to each one's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear,
- Eph 1:4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,
- Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
- Rev 21:16 And the city lies square, and its length is as great as the breadth. And he measured the city with the reed to a length of twelve thousand stadia; the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.
- B. If we see that we have been redeemed, bought, purchased, with the high price of Christ's precious blood, this realization will cause us to have a holy manner of life with a holy fear—1 Pet. 1:15-19; Acts 20:28; cf. Isa. 11:2.
- 1 Pet 1:15 But according to the Holy One who called you, you yourselves also be holy in all your manner of life;
- 1 Pet 1:16 Because it is written, "You shall be holy because I am holy."
- 1 Pet 1:17 And if you call as Father the One who without respect of persons judges according to each one's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear,
- 1 Pet 1:18 Knowing that it was not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, that you were redeemed from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers,
- 1 Pet 1:19 But with precious blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, the blood of Christ;
- Acts 20:28 Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood.
- Isa 11:2 And the Spirit of Jehovah will rest upon Him, / The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, / The Spirit of counsel and might, / The Spirit of the knowledge and fear of Jehovah.

V. The precious and exceedingly great promises have been granted to us by our God and Savior, Jesus Christ—2 Pet. 1:1, 4; cf. Isa. 42:6; Heb. 8:8-12:

- 2 Pet 1:1 Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have been allotted faith equally precious as ours in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:
- 2 Pet 1:4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.
- Isa 42:6 I am Jehovah; I have called You in righteousness; / I have held You by the hand; / I have kept You and I have given You / As a covenant for the people, as a light for the nations;
- Heb 8:8 For finding fault with them He says, "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, and I will consummate a new covenant upon the house of Israel and upon the house of Judah,
- Heb 8:9 Not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by their hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the Lord.

- Heb 8:10 For this is the covenant which I will covenant with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will impart My laws into their mind, and on their hearts I will inscribe them; and I will be God to them, and they will be a people to Me.
- Heb 8:11 And they shall by no means each teach his fellow citizen and each his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all will know Me from the little one to the great one among them.
- Heb 8:12 For I will be propitious to their unrighteousnesses, and their sins I shall by no means remember anymore."
- A. By calling on the precious name of the Lord, we drink of Him as the cup of salvation, enjoying Him as the reality of all the precious and exceedingly great promises of God for the goal of God's building—Acts 4:10-12; Psa. 116:12-13.
- Acts 4:10 Let it be known to you all and to all the people of Israel that in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified and whom God has raised from the dead, in this name this man stands before you in good health.
- Acts 4:11 This is the stone which was considered as nothing by you, the builders, which has become the head of the corner.
- Acts 4:12 And there is salvation in no other, for neither is there another name under heaven given among men in which we must be saved.
- Psa 116:12 What shall I return to Jehovah / For all His benefits toward me?
- Psa 116:13 I will take up the cup of salvation / And call upon the name of Jehovah.
- B. These precious promises are embodied in the word of God; by pray-reading the promises, we partake of and enjoy the divine nature so that we may grow and develop in life unto the maturity of life to enjoy a rich entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—2 Pet. 1:4-11.
- 2 Pet 1:4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.
- 2 Pet 1:5 And for this very reason also, adding all diligence, supply bountifully in your faith virtue; and in virtue, knowledge;
- 2 Pet 1:6 And in knowledge, self-control; and in self-control, endurance; and in endurance, godliness;
- 2 Pet 1:7 And in godliness, brotherly love; and in brotherly love, love.
- 2 Pet 1:8 For these things, existing in you and abounding, constitute you neither idle nor unfruitful unto the full knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2 Pet 1:9 For he in whom these things are not present is blind, being shortsighted, having forgotten the cleansing of his past sins.
- 2 Pet 1:10 Therefore, brothers, be the more diligent to make your calling and selection firm, for doing these things you shall by no means ever stumble.
- 2 Pet 1:11 For in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly and bountifully supplied to you.

VI. God has allotted to all the believers equally precious faith—v. 1:

- 2 Pet 1:1 Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have been allotted faith equally precious as ours in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:
- A. Just as the children of Israel were allotted a piece of the good land, God has allotted Christ as faith to us, making our regenerated spirit, the hidden man of our heart, a spirit of faith—Josh. 13:6; Col. 1:12; 1 Pet. 3:4; 2 Cor. 4:13.
- Josh 13:6 All the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon to Misrephoth-maim, all the Sidonians. I Myself will drive them out before the children of Israel; nevertheless allot it to Israel as an inheritance as I have commanded you.
- Col 1:12 Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light;
- 1 Pet 3:4 But the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptible adornment of a meek and quiet spirit, which is very costly in the sight of God.
- 2 Cor 4:13 And having the same spirit of faith according to that which is written, "I believed, therefore I spoke," we also believe, therefore we also speak,
- B. We all have the same precious faith in quality, but the quantity of faith we have depends upon how much we contact the living God so that we may have Him increased in us—Rom.

12:3; Heb. 11:1, 5-6, 27; Col. 2:19.

Rom 12:3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but to think so as to be sober-minded, as God has apportioned to each a measure of faith.

Heb 11:1 Now faith is the substantiation of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Heb 11:5 By faith Enoch was translated so that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had translated him. For before his translation he obtained the testimony that he had been well pleasing to God.

Heb 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to Him, for he who comes forward to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Heb 11:27 By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he persevered as one seeing the unseen One.

Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

VII. The precious proving of our faith is by various trials that come through sufferings—1 Pet. 1:7:

1 Pet 1:7 So that the proving of your faith, much more precious than of gold which perishes though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

A. We need to pay the price to gain more of Christ as the golden faith through the fiery trials so that the proving of our faith may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of the Lord—v. 7; Rev. 3:18a.

1 Pet 1:7 So that the proving of your faith, much more precious than of gold which perishes though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

Rev 3:18a I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire that you may be rich, ...

B. The believers who live an overcoming life by faith will be found by Christ at His return as the treasures ready to receive the salvation of their souls as the end (result) of their faith—1 Pet. 1:8-9.

1 Pet 1:8 Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,

1 Pet 1:9 Receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

VIII. We must redeem the time to enjoy the all-inclusive Christ as the supreme preciousness of God so that we can be constituted with Him to be men of preciousness as His personal treasure; as we live in His precious presence, enjoying Him as our portion, even as He enjoys us as His treasure, He builds Himself into us to make us His spiritual house and His holy and royal priesthood for the accomplishment of His heart's desire—2:7; 3:4; Dan. 9:23; 10:11, 19; 2 Cor. 2:10; Psa. 16:5; Exo. 19:4-6; 1 Pet. 2:1-9; 2 Pet. 3:8, 11-12.

1 Pet 2:7 To you therefore who believe is the preciousness; but to the unbelieving, "The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner,"

1 Pet 3:4 But the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptible adornment of a meek and quiet spirit, which is very costly in the sight of God.

Dan 9:23 At the beginning of your supplications the command went forth, and I have come to tell you, for you are preciousness itself. Therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

Dan 10:11 And he said to me, Daniel, man of preciousness, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand in your place, for I have now been sent to you. And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling.

Dan 10:19 And he said, Do not be afraid, man of preciousness. Peace to you. Be strong, yes, be strong. And when he spoke to me, I received strength and said, Speak, sir, for you have strengthened me.

2 Cor 2:10 But whom you forgive anything, I also forgive; for also what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, it is for your sake in the person of Christ;

- Psa 16:5 Jehovah is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup; / You maintain my lot.
- Exo 19:4 You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.
- Exo 19:5 Now therefore if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My personal treasure from among all peoples, for all the earth is Mine.
- Exo 19:6 And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel.
- 1 Pet 2:1 Therefore putting away all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envyings and all evil speakings,
- 1 Pet 2:2 As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it you may grow unto salvation,
- 1 Pet 2:3 If you have tasted that the Lord is good.
- 1 Pet 2:4 Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious,
- 1 Pet 2:5 You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
- 1 Pet 2:6 For it is contained in Scripture: "Behold, I lay in Zion a cornerstone, chosen and precious; and he who believes on Him shall by no means be put to shame."
- 1 Pet 2:7 To you therefore who believe is the preciousness; but to the unbelieving, "The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner,"
- 1 Pet 2:8 And, "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense"; who stumble at the word, being disobedient, to which also they were appointed.
- 1 Pet 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people acquired for a possession, so that you may tell out the virtues of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;
- 2 Pet 3:8 But do not let this one thing escape you, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day.
- 2 Pet 3:11 Since all these things are to be thus dissolved, what kind of persons ought you to be in holy manner of life and godliness,
- 2 Pet 3:12 Expecting and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens, being on fire, will be dissolved, and the elements, burning with intense heat, are to be melted away?

Excerpts from the Ministry:

A CHANGE OF CONCEPT CONCERNING VALUE

A person often measures the value of something according to the amount of knowledge he has of it. In Matthew 23:16-26 we find some people whose eyes were on the splendor of the temple and how it was built mostly with gold. They considered the temple to be most valuable. Some saw the altar and compared it with the oxen, lambs, and turtle doves offered on it. They reckoned the altar to be of little value but the oxen and lambs and turtle doves to be of much value. Some offered a tenth of the mint, anise, and cummin, yet they neglected the weightier matters of the law—justice, mercy, and faithfulness. Some were very careful about everything. They strained out the gnat, but they swallowed the camel. Some were in a hurry to use the cup and the dish. They cleansed the outside of them, but inwardly there was filth. We can ask a new believer, "How would you evaluate these different kinds of people if you met them? What do you think of their concept of value?" In Matthew 23:16-26 the Lord Jesus called these people fools, blind men, and hypocrites because they did not know the true concept of value. Their concept of value was all wrong.

A GENUINE BELIEVER HAVING A CHANGE IN HIS CONCEPT OF VALUE

Before a person believes in the Lord, his concept of value is perverted. But once a person is saved, his concept of value changes. He no longer cherishes what he once cherished, and he treasures what he once despised. This is a change in his concept of value. Anyone who has not witnessed such a change in concept is not a genuine Christian.

THE CHANGE IN CONCEPT OF VALUE IN A BELIEVER

The Bible has much to say concerning a change in one's concept of value. Such passages on this change can shed light to the new believers. These passages show us the *proper* concept of value for a Christian. Let us consider a few examples to prove our point.

The Valuation of the Lord Jesus

Psalms 118:22 says, "The stone which the builders rejected / Has become the head of the corner." This is a change in valuation. In the eyes of the builders, they rejected what they considered to be a useless stone. In the eyes of the Jewish leaders, Christ was something redundant, and they wanted to get rid of Him. Yet this rejected stone was chosen to be the cornerstone of the newly enacted salvation. A cornerstone must be flat on at least two or three sides. Actually it should be flat on all six sides. God treasured the cornerstone that was rejected by the Jewish builders and used it for the building of His salvation. How different are these two kinds of valuation! We have to bring new believers to such a change in valuation. We have to ask how they viewed Christ before and how they view Christ now. We have to show them that what was once worthless is now priceless. What was once untrustworthy is now trustworthy. Others have rejected Christ, but we treasure Him.

Concerning the Word of the Cross

First Corinthians 1:18 says, "For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." The cross is despised by those who are perishing; it is considered foolishness by them. Yet it is held precious by the saved ones and received by them as the power of God. This speaks of the great change in valuation of the cross, from the time before a person is saved to the time after he is saved. Before a person is saved, he considers the cross useless. After he is saved, he sees it as the power of God, something precious and valuable. Once a person believes in the Lord, his concept of value changes immediately. The salvation of the cross becomes something very precious.

The Contrast between God's Kingdom and Righteousness and a Man's Daily Necessities

Matthew 6:32-33 says, "For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." Before a person believes in the Lord (this is especially true with poor people), the daily thoughts that plague him are for his daily necessities. Things pertaining to food and clothing are the greatest concerns of the human life. No unbeliever is an exception to this. But as soon as a person believes in the Lord, he turns to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. As believers, we have to realize that nothing in this life is more precious than the kingdom of God. Matthew 13:44 says that the kingdom of the heavens is like a treasure hidden in the field. When a man finds it, he hides it and in his joy sells all that he has to buy that field. This refers to the Lord's discovering the treasure of the kingdom of the heavens and giving up Himself and all He has to buy the treasure. The Lord considers the kingdom of the heavens as something precious. Yet man does not treasure it. Only a believer with the Lord's view knows the preciousness of the kingdom of the heavens.

Before a man believes in the Lord, he may not find it too hard to take care of his daily physical needs even though he may be poor. Since his life has nothing to do with the kingdom of God, he can lie or resort to other unrighteous means to meet the needs of his livelihood. After he believes in the Lord, he enters a new realm. If he still lies to secure his daily needs, he may find his job secured, but he will lose the kingdom of God and His righteousness. If he refuses to lie, he may gain God's kingdom and righteousness at the expense of his job. Which way should he choose? An unbeliever has little scruples about lying because clothing and goods are the most important things to him. But a believer is different. He should first seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Under such circumstances the workers should help the new believers in a definite way to make the right choice for that which is truly precious. We have to make it clear to them that food and clothing are for the body, but the body exists for the kingdom of God and His righteousness. As believers, we must first seek

God's kingdom and His righteousness.

Between the Lord and One's Relatives

Matthew 10:37-38 says, "He who loves father or mother above Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter above Me is not worthy of Me; and he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me." A father, mother, wife, and children are the most precious things to a man. They are the most important things a man has in this life. When these are not compared with the Lord, there is nothing wrong in loving them. But when a situation arises where we have to choose between the two, which one will we choose? A man always chooses what is more precious to him, but which of the two is more precious? We have to help the brothers and sisters know the real precious thing. We can ask new believers, "Whom will you choose?" If they are not clear about this, they will be lost when they face temptations in the future. The responsibility of providing proper guidance is on our shoulders. We have to tell the new believers, "If, for the Lord's sake, you have to draw a separation line between yourself and your parents, wife, and children, will you choose Him? For His sake, that is, for the sake of the Lord who died for us, we should choose to be His disciples and follow Him." Our own kin are precious, but they are no comparison to the Lord. Our Lord is more precious than any of our kin.

Between Man's Soul and the World

Matthew 16:26 says, "For what shall a man be profited if he gains the whole world, but forfeits his soul-life?" Here a comparison is made between man's soul and the whole world. Is the soul more precious or the world more precious? Many people see the preciousness of the world, but they do not see the preciousness of the soul. Today Satan is trying to buy man's soul, but many people are giving away their soul for free. This is because they do not believe their soul is worth anything. The prodigal son in Luke 15 did not leave his father's house because of the enticement of a grand feast; he succumbed to mere carob pods. How worthless is the soul in the eyes of an unbeliever! Yet the Lord says that the whole world put together cannot be exchanged for a soul. Satan offered a high price when he took the Lord to a high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. In exchange for His worship, the Lord would have been given all these things by Satan. This is the only instance in the Bible where Satan offered a high price for man's soul. Of course, he did not succeed. Suppose Satan did the same thing again and offered the whole world to any man who would worship him. What would anyone choose? This is altogether a matter of valuation. Should a man give up his soul to gain the world, or should he give up the world to gain his soul? Today Satan is not offering to exchange the whole world for our soul. He does not think that our life is worth that much. He is enticing us with small benefits and small gains. Many children of God would lie for the sake of five catties of rice. They would forsake the Lord's way for just a little gain. This is like Balaam who degraded himself for profit to curse God's people. We have to show the new ones that honesty is worth more than gold, rice, or the whole world. In order to preserve the purity of our soul, we should be willing to forsake anything. We should teach the new ones properly at the very beginning of their Christian walk. We should help them to have a change in their concept of value. We should bring them to the proper pathway. This is very important, and the responsibility is on us.

Between the Body and Sin

Matthew 18:8-9 says, "If your hand or your foot stumbles you, cut it off and cast it from you; it is better for you to enter into life maimed or lame than to have two hands or two feet and be cast into the eternal fire. And if your eye stumbles you, pluck it out and cast it from you; it is better for you to enter into life with one eye than to have two eyes and be cast into the Gehenna of fire." Here we see another contrast in valuation. A man can relinquish the love for the world, but he may not be able to relinquish the love for his body. Job 2:3 and 10 show how Job was able to maintain his integrity when he was first tempted by Satan. When Satan came to him the second time, he attacked Job's body, and Job began to curse the day he was born. He failed. This shows us that a man loves his body very much. In

Matthew 18 the Lord shows us a solution with regard to the body. If preserving the body means preserving sin, we have to realize that it is better to give up the body than to sin. This means it is more serious to stumble than to sacrifice the body. A believer must have a change in his concept of value. He must see the seriousness of stumbling. Before a person believes in the Lord, he can commit many sins and set his eyes on many filthy things. After he believes in the Lord, his hands and eyes must be restricted. He must be shown the grave consequence of sin from the first day. Cutting off the hand and plucking out the eyes are only illustrations. The real significance is that one should sever sin even if this means enduring as much pain as the severing of hands, feet, or eyes. A Christian has to realize the seriousness of sin. He should deal with sin as drastically as severing the parts of his body. This preserves his own sanctity and purity.

Concerning Position

Matthew 20:25-27 says, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever wants to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you shall be your slave.” The rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great exercise authority over them. This is something that is practiced among the unbelievers. Among believers, however, this practice should not be allowed. Whoever wants to become great should be a servant, and whoever wants to be first should be a slave. This is a change in valuation, a change in one’s view concerning position. Before a person believes in the Lord, he has high esteem for rulers, and he considers the great ones the heroes. But after he believes in the Lord, he has to consider a servant as a great one, and a slave as a preeminent one. He should despise the position of lords and masters. We should have a change in our concept of position. We should treasure servants and slaves. The concept of value that the Lord put in us is one that exalts and magnifies those who serve the most. The reason there are squabbles for recognition in the church is that worldly concepts have crept in. If everyone in the church regards servants and slaves as great and noble, many of the problems in the church will go away, and the church will be blessed. This does not mean that we want all the new believers to become servants and slaves, but it does mean that a man’s concept of value must change when he is saved. He must be willing to be a servant and a slave. He has to be shown clearly that only servants and slaves are great and prominent. The central theme of the Christian faith involves a change in valuation. If every new believer can experience this change in concept, the church will have a free way to go on.

Concerning the Value of Justice

Job 22:23-28 says, “If you return to the Almighty, you will be built up. / If you put injustice far away from your tents, / And place your gold nuggets in the dust / And your gold of Ophir in the stones of the brooks, / Then the Almighty will be your gold nuggets / And precious silver to you. / For then you will delight yourself in the Almighty, / And you will lift up your countenance to God. / You will pray to Him, and He will hear you; / And you will repay your vows. / You will also decree something, and it will be established for you; / And light will shine on your ways.” Everything from verse 24 on is based on verse 23. The gold nuggets, the gold of Ophir, and the precious silver are all related to the injustice spoken of in verse 23. A man places gold nuggets, the gold of Ophir, and precious silver in the dust and in the stones of the brooks for the sake of dealing with injustice and for the sake of delighting oneself in the Almighty. Here again we have a change in valuation. If we are tested at such a critical juncture, and we are asked to choose between gold nuggets, the gold of Ophir, the precious silver, and Jehovah, which one will we choose? Such a choice will separate those who are God’s from those who are not His. All those who belong to God will surely choose Jehovah as their delight. They will be able to lift up their countenance to God and will be blessed by God in three things. First, their prayers will be heard. Those who prefer gold nuggets, gold of Ophir, and precious silver will find that their prayers are not heard. Second, whatever they decree will be established for them because the Lord Jehovah will delight in their choice and decisions. Third, light will shine on their ways. Every step of

their way will be filled with light. This is the result of a change in the concept of value with those who turn to God. Sooner or later we have to help a new believer get out of his old realm; we have to rescue him out of his own concepts. When a situation arises, we have to ask him, "What would you choose?" We have to help him to choose God's justice and to reject the gold nuggets, the gold of Ophir, and the precious silver. The value of justice is more than any treasure.

Between the Enjoyment of Sin and the Unseen Reward

Hebrews 11:24-26 speaks of a change in concept of enjoyment and suffering. Moses saw the difference. He saw that all the enjoyment of Egypt was but enjoyment of sin. He considered it great riches to suffer together with the people of God. He was well qualified to have the enjoyment of sin because he was the son of Pharaoh's daughter, the richest and most powerful person on earth. Yet he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, considering the reproach of the Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. Moses was very clear about this change in valuation. He was willing to suffer all reproaches and hardships because he saw the significance of that unseen, great reward.

Between the Knowledge of Christ and All Things

Philippians 3:7-8 says, "But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ. But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ." Here we see that Paul also had a change in his concept of value. What things were gains to him, these he counted as loss on account of Christ. Why was Paul able to reject the things that were gains to him? He was able to consider them as loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. Paul reckoned the Christ whom God had anointed as Lord, as King, and as the most excellent One. For His sake he suffered the loss of all things and counted them as refuse. This is the kind of change in valuation that happens to a Christian.

BRINGING OUT THE PRECIOUS FROM THE WORTHLESS TO BE AS GOD'S MOUTH

Finally, we want to conclude with the words of Jeremiah 15:19 which tell us that if we bring out the precious from the worthless, we will be as God's mouth. If we cannot tell the proper value of things, God will reject us and cast us aside. He requires that we bring out the precious from the worthless so that we can be His mouth. We have to see the importance of such a change in concept of value. May the Lord grant us the light to have a thorough change in our concept of value so that we will know to choose the most excellent portion. (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 60, pp. 387-395)