

What Matters-Week One Sermon Outline “Is It Worth It?”

Texts: Isaiah 43:1-7, Ephesians 1:3-4, Luke 5:1-11, Revelation 13:8

- Is this worth it? Or was this worth it? Ever ask yourself that question? In what contexts?
 - Athletic endeavors
 - Is all the hard work worth it when at the end of the Superbowl you are holding the Lombardi Trophy? How about if you were the 0-16 Detroit Lions of a few years ago.
 - Work/Business
 - Do you ever ask yourself if the long hours, stress, hassles, and time away from your family, are worth the paycheck at the end of the month?
 - Family
 - Many of us have children, parents, spouses, or simply close friends. Are the struggles, stresses, trials that we endure with the people closest to us worth it? I know many of you would say yes. The chance to grow closer to someone through suffering, to become more one with a spouse, to learn to love a parent or child more always seem to be worth it. *It seems sacrificial love is always worth it.* I have yet to hear a parent, one who has lost a child, say it was not worth it. Or say the time spent with the child, however short, isn't worth the pain they may now feel.
 - Illustration from my own life: A family with a child born to them with severe disabilities. The child was never able to talk, walk, had to be cared for all the time, was often ill and in and out of the hospital. The child finally died at the age of 8. Never once did they say it wasn't worth it. Nor would they have ever accepted anyone who dared to ask, “Is all that work worth it.” That child was worth it to them. Sacrificial love always seems to be worth it to us.
 - That is a bright spot in humanity. Though we have fallen so far from God, we do recognize the value, the beauty, of sacrificial love.
- [Segue to God.] What does God say about us? Are we worth it to Him? Does He look down at the creation we have cursed in our sin, completely ruined, brought the tragedy of relationships, disease, natural disaster upon, and say it was worth it?
 - Is all of this worth it? The answer from Scripture: It is worth it to God. More importantly, we are worth it to God. I am worth it to God. You are worth it to God.
- Ephesians 1:3-4
 - God had you in mind and chose you to be His child, for eternity, even before He formed the world.
- Revelation 13:8
 - Christ was slain from/before the foundation of the world
 - When you take these passages together you realize that the hands that were forming creation, that formed Adam from the dust and made Eve from His rib, had nail scars in His hands (or had the plan-I'm not sure there is a huge difference

when we speak from God's perspective). As He formed us, even as He realized what would occur, He still made us. Because we, you, I, are worth it to Him.

- Think about that for a moment. Is all that struggle worth it to you? Yet His own heartache, suffering, torture, even death, were worth it to Him in order to bring us into His kingdom for eternity. [Make sure to develop this concept for your hearers]
- [Warning: You may or may not want to use the following illustration-do so with great care]
- Contrast this to our own culture, our own society's value of what is worth it. I recognize in sharing this I may lose some of you, but we have to realize how our culture is often times so counter to the nature of God.
 - Prenatal medicine in our nation is amazing. The things we can do to insure the health of mother and developing baby are amazing. Yet there are tests done that can "determine" if a child will be born with a disability, such as Downs Syndrome.
 - Some, but praise God not all, doctors or other medical professionals will report a positive test to you and even suggest you should terminate the pregnancy if there is a potential problem. There are parents in this church who have heard that suggestion, and are now proud parents of beautiful and healthy children.
 - The brokenness of our culture and medical establishment in thinking raising a child with disabilities is not worth it, compared to the incomprehensible sacrificial love God demonstrated when He created us even as He knew how he would redeem us, is overwhelming. My friends, sacrificial love is always worth it.
 - Recognize in saying this some of you have probably, in a moment of fear, confusion, panic, or whatever chosen to terminate/abort a child. I have two things to say about that;
 - One: You were wrong, you sinned in doing so. You know that, I'll bet your heart has told you that every day since you did it. I won't judge you for that, nor will God, for . . .
 - Two: He will Forgive you. Don't think Christ gave His life just for our little white lies, our occasional road rage, the "little" sins we can cover up so well. No, Christ died for the worst things we have ever done, the worse we could ever do. He gave His life for the absolute broken, depraved, wretched sin of humanity. He can and does forgive anything we have done and brings healing, reconciliation, and hope to our broken selves. Let Him forgive you. Let Him heal you. Be restored to hope once again.
- I brought this up to reveal to us the great chasm between our God, whose premeditated sacrificial love gives us the promise of eternity in His kingdom, with our culture, which too often desires to choose the easy way out and, while we are capable of sacrificial love when it is forced on us, rarely would choose, and too often avoid, the situations that would bring us to it.
- Thanks be to God in Jesus Christ that the sacrificial love He purposed to give to us brings us to eternal life. . . because We Matter. You matter. I matter.
- We struggle with this amazing word of grace because we too often believe the lie, first believed by Adam and Eve, that doubts the clear words and promises of God. Satan told them, "Did God really say. . ." and today there are many areas that we struggle with this

- Did God really say. . . He died for all (even many Christians have trouble with this, as even a line of thought in Christianity, Calvinism, doubts this clear statement in Scripture.) And then we begin to wonder if His sacrifice is for me, and for all the people I meet.
- Did God really say. . . nothing can separate us from His love, a clear promise of Romans 8. (You may say to yourself: But not what I did, or not what was done to me. Not if He really knew what I was like.) Nonsense, nothing, nothing, nothing can separate us from His love.
- Did God really say. . . all things can be worked for God, another clear promise of Romans 8 (but not what I am going through, not in this economy, not when I lose my home, not with the disease I or a loved one was just diagnosed with). No, my friends, even the worst of all things, the death of God's Son, can be made into the greatest of all things. It is actually how God chooses to work.
- You can add more or less.
- We doubt God's words because we doubt whether we are worth it, whether we truly matter. Yet we do matter.
 - Isaiah 43:1. We are called by name, We are His, He has redeemed us. This combined with Revelation 21 where God tells us He will give us a new name. God has a special name for each of us, a special relationship with each of us.
 - Shared a personal illustration on a special name I have for one of my children and how that name reflects her character and my deep love and respect for her. It is like this with God, who we matter to so much He powerfully chooses us, names us, redeems us, and Has made us His.
- The irony in this whole thing is that God is the only thing that truly matters. It is His glory, His love, His hope, His victory, His redemption, His creation and recreation that makes this universe function. He is the only one truly worthy of honor, praise, glory, and love. Yet from the source of His glory, love, grace, mercy, and compassion He pours these things out toward us and has told us that we matter. That I matter. That you matter.
 - The hands that formed you in your mothers womb had nail scars on them. They were planning your redemption. The mind that brought this universe into being, focuses its love, grace, mercy, and compassion on you.
 - My hope for you today is that you know how much you matter to our God. How He has demonstrated you are worth it to Him. I pray you would rejoice in that. Be transformed by that. And I pray you would begin to see all people with that same value you know He has placed on you. May you see that value, how worth it, all people are to God, and treat them accordingly.
 - You matter my friends. You are worth it. Give Him thanks and praise for that great grace. Amen.