

## REVIEW

We are in a sermon series called “The Heart of the Father.” In this series, we are looking at how God the Father expressed His heart for us through the Christmas story.

## THIS VERSE SUMS UP SO WELL THE HEART OF GOD FOR US...

**John 3:16** (NIV) For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

## LOVE ISN'T JUST SOMETHING GOD DOES, IT'S WHO GOD IS.

**1 John 4:7-8** (NLT) <sup>7</sup>Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup>But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

**Last Week:** Jim kicked off the series talking about how God pursues us.

**This Week:** We are looking at how God values us.

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## THE EMOTIONS I FEEL, THE LOVE I HAVE, THE VALUE I SEE IN MY CHILDREN IS A FRACTION OF HOW GOD SEES YOU AND ME.

**Ephesians 2:1-10** (NLT) <sup>1</sup>Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. <sup>2</sup>You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. <sup>3</sup>All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else. <sup>4</sup>But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, <sup>5</sup>that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) <sup>6</sup>For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. <sup>7</sup>So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup>God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. <sup>9</sup>Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. <sup>10</sup>For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

## YOU ARE GOD'S MASTERPIECE!

- You are the most amazing, incredible, intricate, detailed, and valuable thing He created, which is pretty amazing considering all the beautiful things around us...
  - God looked at all of these things He created and said, “It is good, it is good, it is good...”
  - Then He created you, and me, and God said, “It is very good.”

## WE ARE GOD'S MASTERPIECE!

- What do you think is worth more: a masterpiece painting of God made by man, or the masterpiece creation of man made by God?

## HOW MUCH DO YOU THINK GOD VALUES YOU?

**Matthew 10:29-31** (NLT) <sup>29</sup>What is the price of two sparrows—one copper coin? But not a single sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it. <sup>30</sup>And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. <sup>31</sup>So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows.

**Psalms 139:13-14,17-18** (NLT) <sup>13</sup>You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. <sup>14</sup>Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. ... <sup>17</sup>How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! <sup>18</sup>I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me!

## YOU ARE VALUABLE TO GOD. YOU ARE HIS MASTERPIECE. HE PURSUES YOU BECAUSE HE VALUES YOU.

- Last week, Jim talked about how the Father pursues us, how God, the Light, stepped into darkness and made a way out for us.
  - Even though salvation that comes from Jesus is free to us, it wasn't free for Him. It cost His life.
  - The heart of the Father is that of love.
  - Because He loves us, He pursues us into the darkness. He pursues us because we are valuable to Him, we are worth it, we are worthy, we are not worthless...
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## GOD LOVES YOU ENOUGH TO TAKE YOU RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE, BUT HE ALSO LOVES YOU ENOUGH TO NOT LET YOU STAY THERE.

### IF YOU ARE A FOLLOWER OF JESUS, YOU ARE STILL BEING MADE MORE AND MORE INTO THE IMAGE OF CHRIST.

**Philippians 1:6** (NLT) And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.

### WHEN WE HAVE THE RIGHT VIEW OF CHRISTMAS, WE BEGIN TO SEE WHAT THIS HOLY DAY IS ALL ABOUT.

**John 3:16** (NIV) For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

#### Listen to the lyrics to the beginning of O Holy Night:

"O holy night the stars are brightly shining / It is the night of our dear Savior's birth / Long lay the world in sin and error pining / Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth"

Why did Jesus leave the splendor of heaven and step into darkness, into a world of sin? Why did He pursue us to the degree He did? Because you are valuable, you are worth it, you are not worthless... you are His masterpiece.

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## QUESTIONS TO REFLECT AND DISCUSS

**Passages to consider:** Luke 2; Psalms 139; Ephesians 2:1-10

- Share something that was meaningful to you from the sermon.
1. What gift have you received that you know cost the giver something to give? (*The cost does not necessarily mean money.*) A) What gift have you given that has cost you something significant to give?
  2. Read Luke 2:26-38 and Matthew 1:18-22. What do you see about the Father's heart in these passages? Bonus passage: Isaiah 43:1-7 What do these tell you about how God values us?
  3. Value is tricky here in America. When do you feel valued? A) How do you communicate value to others? B) How does that fit with what God says?
  4. Take a look at Matthew 10:29-31 and Ephesians 2:1-10. Read them twice. What does this communicate about God's love and value of us? A) What would change in your thinking if this was more of how you saw the world?
  5. How will you, humbly, embrace the value God has for you? A) How will you, actively, communicate the value God has for others?
  6. Intentionally use the Christmas season to embrace this part of God's heart. *Ideas: Listen to "O Holy Night." Demonstrate value to others through acts of service or extravagant kindness.*

**Passages to prepare for next week,** The Heart of the Father (Week 2) God Sacrifices for You: Luke 2:8-13; John 3:16-20; Romans 5:6-8; and John 15:12-13