

A Dozen Precious Things

2 Peter 1:2-4

I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** The word “precious” occurs 77 times on the pages of the divine record.
 - A. In the Old Testament the Hebrew word translated “precious” (61 times) means “choice of excellent things” (Brown-Driver-Brigg’s Hebrew Lexicon).
 - B. In the New Testament (16 times) the Greek word translated “precious” (*timios*) means “costly, very expensive, of great value” (Vine).
2. We hold many tangible things “precious”: precious gems, precious metals, precious pets, precious children, precious mementos, etc.
3. We also hold intangible things “precious”: precious words, precious thoughts, etc.
4. So things that are “precious” are things which are costly and/or of great value; things we hold very dear and want to preserve and cherish.
5. **3** In this lesson we want to consider a dozen things God’s word tell us are “precious.”

II. DISCUSSION:

I. **4** The Word of the Lord:

- A. I Samuel 3:1 records, “...And the word of the Lord was precious in those days...”
 - (1) Samuel was born into a very difficult time of Israel’s history (the time of the judges).
 - (2) It was a time much like the times of today: **Judges 21:25**: “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”
- B. The New King James translates I Samuel 3:1: “And the word of the LORD was rare in those days...”; God had not spoken for some time; thus His word was precious in those days.
- C. God’s word is still precious! Although most today reject it (a recent Gallup poll only 28% believe the Bible is the word of God).
- D. God’s word is precious because of all the good that it does:
 - (1) It builds up (**Acts 20:32**: “So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”).
 - (2) It produces faith (**Rom. 10:17**: “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”).
 - (3) It reconciles (**2 Cor. 5:19**: “that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”).
 - (4) It sanctifies and cleanses (**Eph. 5:26**: “that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,”).
 - (5) It begets (**Jas. 1:18**: “Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.”).
 - (6) It saves (**Jas. 1:21**: “Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.”).
 - (7) It brings about growth (**1 Pet. 2:2**: “as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby”).
- E. Paul describes God’s word, the gospel, as “the power of God unto salvation.”
 - (1) These seven points showing the word’s “preciousness” also testifies to its great “power.”

- (2) But, the “power” and preciousness of God’s word is only “for everyone who believes”; do you believe?!

2. **5** Death:

- A. It’s difficult to think of death as being precious, yet the Psalmist said, “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints” (Psa. 116:15).
- B. Not all death is precious.
- (1) The only death described as precious in the Bible is the death of a saint.
- (2) To be a saint is to be sanctified as Paul penned, “... to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints...” (1 Cor. 1:2).
- C. Have you been “...baptized into Christ...”; that is have you “put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27).
- (1) If you have not been “...baptized into Christ”; then you have not “put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27).
- (2) If you are not “in Christ” then you cannot access “all spiritual blessing[s]” because they are found only “in Christ” (Eph. 1:3).
- (3) Paul said that “in Christ” is “the gift of God... eternal life” (Rom. 6:23).
- (4) Paul also said “salvation... is in Christ” (2 Tim. 2:10); one not “in Christ” is lost!
- (a) Outside of Christ is a dark, barren, and terrifying place!
- (b) If you are not “in Christ” you may think life is grand and wonderful.
- (c) But when death comes, which is inevitable (Heb. 9:27), you will be in for utter terror!
- (d) Jesus Himself said you will be bound “hand and foot... and cast... into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matt. 22:13); He will say to you, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt 25:41). Can you imagine the utter terror that you will feel in the pit of your stomach?!
- (e) This is not God’s desire! **1 Tim. 2:4**: “who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”; God takes “no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.” (Ezek. 33:11)
- (f) God has proven His love to you! **Rom 5:8**: “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
- D. Make your death precious by obeying the gospel now! Your life will be filled with blessings and joy and when death comes it will be truly precious.

3. **6** Seed:

- A. Again the Psalmist declares, “He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him” (Psa. 126:6).
- B. In the parable of the sower and the seed, “...The seed is the word of God” (Lk. 8:11).
- (1) There is no more precious seed than the word of God.
- (2) As we’ve already said, the word, the gospel “is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes” (Rom. 1:16).
- C. Many fail to obey God because they expect God to perform some grand and glorious miracle that will suddenly awaken them and stir spiritual feelings in their soul.
- (1) God doesn’t work that way!

- (2) Paul told the Thessalonians: **2 Thess. 2:13-14**: “But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, 14 to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- (3) Only the precious seed, the word of God is able to produce a Christian, a child of God! “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pet. 1:23).

D. Don't wait on God to wave a magic wand and make you into a Christian! “It ain't happenin!”

4. **7** Unity:

- A. The unity Psalm expresses this sentiment: “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard...” (Psa. 133:1-2).
- B. Unity is good, pleasant, and precious!
- (1) There is nothing good, pleasant, or precious about division! **Gal. 5:14-15**: “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ 15 But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!”
- (2) Not only did the Psalmist sing of unity, Jesus prayed for it (Jn. 17:20-21) and the apostles pleaded for it (1 Cor. 1:10).
- (3) Unity requires constant effort; don't all things precious require effort to attain and maintain?!
Eph. 4:1-3: “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring (NIV: “make every effort”) to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”
- (4) Unity requires our humility! **Phil. 2:1-8**

5. **8** God's Thoughts:

- A. The Psalmist exclaimed, “How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them!” (Psa. 139:17).
- B. God's thoughts are on a far higher plane than ours!
- C. Isaiah revealed, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts...saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are...my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:8-9).
- D. Most people claiming to be Christians really don't hold God's thoughts as precious!
- (1) They are always thinking they can read God's mind (e.g., “I think we should do this or that?” “I just feel the Spirit telling me that's the right thing to do?” “After all, as long as we're sincere that's all that matters.”).
- (2) Those that truly love God will adhere strictly to His word! **1 Cor. 2:9-11**: “However, as it is written: ‘No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him’— 10 but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. 11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.” (NIV)

6. **9** Wisdom:

- A. The what the wise man Solomon said of wisdom, “She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her” (Prov. 3:15).

- B. A good place to gain wisdom is by reading and applying the book of Proverbs which has as its keynote: Wisdom. “*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom...*” (Prov. 9:10).
- C. Unfortunately what is promoted as wisdom by the world is not wisdom at all (e.g., Donald Trump philosophy: how to maneuver and scheme to get the best deal possible. Always seeking to take advantage of others or of the situation.).
- D. The Trump philosophy on wisdom is condemned in Scripture:

Jas. 3:13-17: “*Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom . 14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. 16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.*”

7. **10** A Good Name:

- A. The Preacher said, “A good name is better than precious ointment...” (Eccl. 7:1).
- B. Many will trade a good name for things of much lesser value. But Proverbs 22:1 says, “A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches...”
- C. The prevailing philosophy of the world is that you have no right to judge me (i.e., “You have no right to evaluate whether I have a good name or not. It’s none of your business.”).

(1) Such an attitude is the polar opposite of what is taught in the Scriptures:

Matt. 5:13-16: “*You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. 14 ‘You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*”

- (2) We are the only Bible most people of the world will ever read (**2 Cor. 3:2:** “*You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men*”).
- (3) We must treat our name as precious and guard it zealously because we wear God’s name!
- (4) Also, young people...guard your family’s name...it’s precious too!

8. **11** Trial of Faith:

- A. Peter penned, “...*the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth...*” (1 Pet. 1:7).
- B. This was written at a time when the faith of Christians was really being put to the test.
- C. Paul said, “*Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*” (2 Tim. 3:12)
- D. Therefore, our faith is also going to be tried sooner or later.

(1) Will you welcome such a trial? **Jas. 1:2-3:** “*My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.*”

(2) When your faith is tried, will it prove to be genuine? (e.g., 1 Cor. 3:12 compares people to “*gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw*”; what does fire do to each?!)

9. **12** The Blood of Christ:

- A. Peter taught, “...*ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold,...But with the precious blood of Christ...*” (1 Pet. 1:18-19).

B. The crucifixion scene reveals, "...one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water" (Jn. 19:34).

C. Have you thought about all that His blood does?

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| ✓ It purchased the church (Acts 20:28) | ✓ Brings peace (Col. 1:20) |
| ✓ Remits sins (Matt. 26:28) | ✓ Purges (Heb. 9:14) |
| ✓ Justifies (Rom. 5:9) | ✓ Sanctifies (Heb. 13:12) |
| ✓ Redeems (Eph. 1:7) | ✓ Cleanses (1 Jn. 1:7) |
| ✓ Makes nigh (Eph. 2:13) | ✓ Washes (Rev. 1:5) |

D. Many do not consider the blood of Christ as something precious, something of great value:

(1) The world certainly doesn't!

(2) Sadly many claiming to be Christians don't either: **Heb. 10:29:** "Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?"

E. Is His blood precious to you?

10. **13** Christ:

A. It was prophesied, "...Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation..." (Isa. 28:16).

B. Peter quoted this and applied it to Christ: "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious... Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner" (1 Pet. 2:4-7).

C. Christ is not precious to everyone! e.g., Christopher Hitchens (*God Is Not Great*), Richard Dawkins (*The God Delusion*)

(1) The world doesn't hold Christ as precious; to them He is contemptible, of no value! **1 Cor. 1:18-25**

(2) He is precious to those who believe, and to believe is to obey as this text (1 Pet. 2:4-7) joins belief with obedience. Is Christ precious to you?

11. **14** Faith:

A. Peter began his second epistle with: "...to them that have obtained like precious faith..." (2 Pet. 1:1).

B. Have you thought about the preciousness of your faith?

C. It is precious because God said so, because of its source (Rom. 10:17), and what it does:

✓ Purifies (Acts 15:9: hearts of Gentiles purified "by faith" just like the Jews on Pentecost, etc.),

✓ Justifies (**Rom. 5:1:** "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,"),

✓ Saves (**Eph. 2:8:** "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,").

12. **15** God's Promises:

A. Finally, it is written:

2 Pet. 1:2-4: “Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 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.”

- B. God is a promise-making, promise-keeping God! That passage gives me a thrill when I read it!
- C. God’s promises are “exceeding great and precious” in that, as Paul said, “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began” (Titus 1:2).
- D. Do you spend time contemplating eternal life; living in the very presence of Almighty God?!

III. CONCLUSION: 16

I. We’ve considered a dozen precious things:

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|------------------------|-----------------------|
| ✓ The Word of the Lord | ✓ A Good Name |
| ✓ Death | ✓ Trial of Faith |
| ✓ Seed | ✓ The Blood of Christ |
| ✓ Unity | ✓ Christ |
| ✓ God’s Thoughts | ✓ Faith |
| ✓ Wisdom | ✓ God’s Promises |

2. ** Are these precious to you? **Matt. 16:26:** “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”

3. Invitation

Adapted from an article (“These Are Precious”) by John Isaac Edwards,
The Terre Haute Speaker, Vol. 4, No. 28; July 12, 2015