

# What's It Worth?

03 April 2022

Call to Worship    Psalm 126

When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,  
    **we were like those who dream.**

Then our mouth was filled with laughter,  
    **and our tongue with shouts of joy;**

then it was said among the nations,

**“The LORD has done great things for them.”**

The LORD has done great things for us,  
    **and we rejoiced.**

May those who sow in tears  
    **reap with shouts of joy.**

Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing,  
    **shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.**

My hope is built

*Edward Mole*

My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus Christ, my righteousness  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name

    On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand  
    All other ground is sinking sand  
    All other ground is sinking sand

When darkness veils His lovely face  
I rest on His unchanging grace  
In every high and stormy gale  
My anchor holds within the veil

His oath, His covenant, His blood  
Support me in the whelming flood  
When all around my soul gives way  
He then is all my hope and stay

When He shall come with trumpet sound  
Oh, may I then in Him be found  
In Him, my righteousness, alone  
Faultless to stand before the throne

[Prayer of adoration and confession](#) Catherine Harvey

“O Lord, my God. When I in awesome wonder consider all the works thy hands  
hath made”

When we hear these words, our souls do sing, How great thou art!

And then Lord, we proceed to destroy this wonderful world, which you have  
created for our enjoyment and use.

Please forgive us for not treasuring the amazing world around us and the  
uniqueness of each being upon this earth.

So Lord, as we join in focussing on your greatness, we pause, so that each one  
of us can think of three things that truly remind us that you are our Creator  
God, our Loving saviour and our guiding and inspiring Spirit.....

We confess that we don't very often stop and concentrate on your greatness.  
Our minds may wander off on a tangent somewhere, when really we should be  
wondering at all you have done for us.

We give thanks for all that you have done, we give thanks for who you are and  
we give thanks for all you are yet to reveal.

We pray that instead of criticising what others do or questioning why they act  
or react in certain ways, we become more appreciative of who they are and of  
their good points.

Lord, help us to remember the example that Jesus set in his time on this earth.

To love others as we would like to be loved, to accept that people may view  
things differently from us, and that's okay, to forgive any hurts or perceived  
hurts. To live our lives reflecting Jesus grace.

We ask this in Jesus name.

Amen.

## Notices

### The Peace

#### Reading 1                      John 12:1-8

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. <sup>2</sup> There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. <sup>3</sup> Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. <sup>4</sup> But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, <sup>5</sup> "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" <sup>6</sup> (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) <sup>7</sup> Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. <sup>8</sup> You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

#### Reflection 1

What a waste! I cannot believe you just spent good money on that. We don't need it and can't use it anyway. What were you thinking? I confess to hearing words to that effect fired in my direction on occasion. That whimsical purchase that seemed like a good idea at the time but in the bright light of day was really just silly. Which raises the question of value and how we value things in our lives. I well remember my school physics teacher lecturing the class on how asking how much something was worth was very different to asking how much it cost. A white stick with the knob on the end of it probably costs very little. It's not worth anything to me. But to a person whose sight is not good it can mean the difference between independence and being stuck, unable to go anywhere without help.

A brand new tractor can be a brilliant investment for a farmer and worth every cent they pay. And it is worth nothing to me because I have no way of putting it to use. Let's play a little game. I will name something and I want you to ask yourself the question, 'How much would it be worth to me?' You can think in terms of money, or emotional or intellectual attachment. Decide whether it would be worth a lot or a little. Here goes.

A brand new EV car

Lunch with your best friend

A trip to a remote island in Vanuatu or Tonga

A new bathroom

Quality time with your family

A haircut

It would be interesting to see your answers. I know that it really depends on time and circumstances just which of those might rise to the top of the pile in a given moment. 12 weeks of lockdown and that haircut can be looking pretty enticing.

Hopefully you can see my point that working out what something is worth is not anywhere near as simple as just counting up the dollars it cost. True value is a combination of a whole variety of different things. Cost is one part, effort is another, emotional investment, intellectual investment, time, energy, payback. All these things make a difference to what a thing is worth.

So the three hundred denarii for the perfume is only one part of its value. Why had it been purchased? What opportunities, aside from feeding the poor were given up when it was poured out? What value is given to Mary's emotions? To her effort? To Jesus' emotions? To the impact on the other people in the room? And of course, what values did Judas attach to the perfume, the money, the poor, etc.?

Notice that all of the valuing is held by people. Without people nothing has any innate value. A fantastically expensive car sitting forgotten in a paddock has no value unless a person takes an interest in it. So what of the people in this story? What value did they attach to the perfume?

It is likely that the perfume was a part of Mary's dowry. Her family would have been saving for a long time to purchase it and it would have had a huge impact on who she might marry. \$50 000 is not a bad starting point for negotiating marriage. The perfume held a particular value in this respect, for her and her family. Pouring it out on Jesus' feet would not have been its expected end.

BUT, in an act of deep devotion and love, she took the perfume and poured it out. Her heart placed that act at the pinnacle of value. She reflected her love and gratitude to Jesus through her actions.

And notice this. Her sister Martha and her brother Lazarus, both directly affected by what was happening make no complaint. None of the other disciples make a complaint. They all understand that what is happening has a value far beyond the cost of the perfume. This is a relationship of love being acted out by one for the many in much the same way Jesus would give his one life for the many.

What is it worth? More than you or I could ever imagine.

## Way Maker

*Sinach*

You are here, moving in our midst  
I worship You, I worship You  
You are here, working in this place  
I worship You, I worship You  
You are here, moving in our midst  
I worship You, I worship You  
You are here, working in this place  
I worship You, I worship You

You are  
Way maker, miracle worker, promise keeper  
Light in the darkness, my God  
That is who You are

You are here, touching every heart  
I worship You, I worship You  
You are here, healing every heart  
I worship You, I worship You  
You are here, turning lives around  
I worship You, I worship You  
You are here, mending every heart  
I worship You, I worship You

You are here, touching every life  
I worship You, I worship You  
You are here, meeting every need  
I worship You, I worship You

That is who You are

Even when I don't see it, You're working  
Even when I don't feel it, You're working  
You never stop, You never stop working  
You never stop, You never stop working

## Reading 2

### Philippians 3:4-14

If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more:

<sup>5</sup> circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup> as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

<sup>7</sup> Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. <sup>8</sup> More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. <sup>10</sup> I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup> if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

#### *Pressing toward the Goal*

<sup>12</sup> Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

<sup>13</sup> Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

## Reflection 2

Sometimes I can relate very well to Peter when he says that Paul can be difficult to understand. He seems to take words and wrap them together in a way that tortures the ear and confuses the mind. I think if I was to put the first part of what he says here in Philippians more simply I would say, 'I have worked out the most valuable thing in life. It is Christ and I want everything I do to be measured by my relationship with Christ.' He has met Jesus and on being asked, 'What's it worth,' the answer is, 'Everything.'

If Paul had been in the room when Mary anointed Jesus feet he would have been on his knees beside her, helping in any way he could.

This is the same Paul, then Saul who had grown up as a strong believer in God. He had studied hard and applied his razor-sharp mind to understanding what it meant to be a good and righteous Jew. That is no small thing. He had invested everything he had into being the best possible church person he could be. He even went to the extent of hunting down people who didn't fit within his system and imprisoning and killing them because they threatened his world view. He was a fine, upstanding member of the church. One who everyone else

looked up to. When he stood up, everyone else sat down to listen because what he had to say was likely to be important. He was recognised by his community. He was lauded by his community. And forgive me for the jarring here as I make a point. He was a good, strong Christian (actually Jew, but I hope you get my point)

And then everything changed. He met Jesus. Suddenly all those things that had seemed important, that had seemed to be of value lost their lustre. It no longer mattered to be the smartest in the room, or a part of the decision-making team, or even respected by his peers and associates. What mattered was to know Christ. I was trying to think how to illustrate this change and it occurred to me that it could be like moving from black and white to full colour. Everything is still there, but you see it completely differently. Apologies to the colourblind among us who can't see the colour image correctly. Paul had been seeing the world in grey scale and while that is all he knew it was magnificent. Then colour came in Jesus and that grey world changed radically. Those things that had seemed so simple and straightforward in black and white took on all new distinctions. What had seemed so important changed in comparison to this relationship with Christ. Where once there had been immense value, now those things paled in comparison to Christ.

Now don't misunderstand what Paul says here. He still believes many of the things of his past hold some value – being a Hebrew, being well educated – these things were not simply cast to the side. I suspect he probably held less enthusiasm for the persecuting side of things. The difference is that now he sees that these are of much less worth than knowing Jesus.

Which raises an interesting point. He hasn't made it yet. This knowing Christ is a life-long project. None of us will cross the finish line in this life. And as a sidenote, your finish line is different to mine. I cannot look over at you and think, 'I'm doing better than you, look, I'm much faster.' The race I am running is not yours, nor is it Paul's. It is mine and only mine.

To bring all this together, remember Mary's act of sacrificial love in anointing Jesus' feet. An act of the one for the many. An act of valuing Jesus above all else. Can I encourage you to ask yourself, 'How do I value Jesus above all else? How do I run the race with heart and passion?' And, 'In what way can my life be an act of one for the many?' They are not easy questions to ask of ourselves and the answers will be many and varied. Perhaps the work of a lifetime.

## We Pray

God, who values us above all else, who places our worth alongside your Son, help us to find the colour amidst the greys. Help us to see all things pale in comparison to Jesus. We know that we get our values upside down and inside out, enticed by the call of everything we see around us. Gift us strength and courage through your Holy Spirit so we can value Jesus above all else. Amen.

## God of Wonders

*Chris Tomlin*

Lord of all creation  
Of water, earth, and sky  
The heavens are Your tabernacle  
Glory to the Lord on High  
  
God of wonders beyond our galaxy  
You are holy, holy  
The universe declares Your majesty  
You are holy, holy  
  
Lord of heaven and earth  
Lord of heaven and earth  
  
Early in the morning  
I will celebrate the light  
And as I stumble through the darkness  
I will call Your name by night  
  
Hallelujah to the Lord of heaven and earth

## Offering

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning>

Loving God, you give and give, and didn't think the life of your son was too high a price to pay for our salvation. Jesus' life was an example of sacrificial giving, all the way to the cross. As we give this day, we want our gifts to impact the world, but even more, we want them to bring glory to Christ, who lived and died for all your children. Help us to not hold back anything. We pray in the name of your son, our saviour and redeemer, Amen.



Prayer for ourselves and others Colin Harvey

*The Lord is my light*

Response is **Help us to walk in your light**

Gracious Father, as events in Ukraine continue to spiral out of control and millions of people needing shelter, need to be rescued and given hope, having had to flee from their homes or even country, we pray for their rescuer's.

In the absence of safety and home, when refugees flee to the borders in the pauses between shelling, when a humanitarian crisis is building and families are torn apart and we fear the fresh horrors of the news: God of our hope, we place our trust in you

In all areas of unresolved conflict in our troubled world, where deep-seated grievances and complex history collide, where shattered lives and destroyed cities are the evidence for our wars and we feel helpless at so much brokenness:

God of our hope, we place our trust in you.

*The Lord is our light*

**Help us to walk in your light.**

In political decision making on energy, security, aid and sanctions, where true leadership and wisdom really matter, when governments should meet the needs (and not the wants) of the people, when costly decisions are needed, and self-interest needs to be set aside for the good of others: God of our hope, we place our trust in you.

*The Lord is our light*

**Help us to walk in your light.**

In freezing temperatures, as snow falls, when the homeless, refugees and frightened families shiver in distress, when our visa policy is too complex and bureaucratic, to save the desperate, when, in our relatively affluent country, some go hungry and many with homes are struggling to stay warm and feed amid rising energy and food costs, we know that change is needed:

God of our hope, we place our trust in you.

*The Lord is our light*

**Help us to walk in your light.**

In the mountains of our possessions, when we spend, acquire and accumulate things that do not lead to life,

and are obsessed with more, bigger and better, we easily forget the needs of others:

God of our hope, we place our trust in you.

*The Lord is our light*

**Help us to walk in your light.**

Save us, O Lord,

from the darkness all around us.

We pray for all Muslims suffering from Anti-Islamic hate crimes.

Let your light shine through the darkness of all their pain and their suffering. and the shadows of the night.

Be strong, and let your heart take courage,  
all you who wait for the Lord.

God of life, we ask for your healing power  
on those who are enduring pain and illness.

We especially think of those we name quietly in our hearts.....

We share the grief of people close to us, who've recently lost loved ones.

We especially think of the Elliott family .....

We know your everlasting light shines with us,  
in moments of great sadness and great joy.

Within our darkest night,

Give us strength and courage to reflect that love and light in the world.

*The Lord is our light*

**Help us to walk in your light.**

**Amen.**

### [The Lord's Prayer](#)

Our Father in Heaven, holy be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen

## The King of Love

The King of love my Shepherd is,  
Whose goodness faileth never;  
I nothing lack if I am his  
And he is mine for ever.

Where streams of living water flow  
My ransomed soul he leadeth,  
And where the verdant pastures grow  
With food celestial feedeth.

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,  
But yet in love he sought me,  
And on his shoulder gently laid,  
And home, rejoicing, brought me.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill  
With thee, dear Lord, beside me;  
Thy rod and staff my comfort still,  
Thy cross before to guide me.

Thou spread'st a table in my sight;  
Thy unction, grace bestoweth:  
And O what transport of delight  
From thy pure chalice floweth!

And so through all the length of days  
Thy goodness faileth never;  
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise  
Within thy house for ever.

## Benediction and Grace

As we go from here may we be a people who place Jesus first in all we do and make our lives an act of one for the many.

May the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Love of God,  
and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be with us all, now and forevermore. Amen.