

Let The Bible Speak Series

The Greatest Things

1Corinthians 13:13

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What is the most important thing to you today? What do you consider valuable? We all need to learn how to discover true value and worth. As someone has said "the art to discover worth, is an art worth discovering.

There is the story of a couple going through the country hunting antiques. They stop at a farmhouse and ask the farmer if he has any that he would sell. He replied that "he had none, but did recall that he found some old paintings by two artists named Currier and Ives, but had thrown them away." In horror they asked if they had been destroyed "yes," he said, "but I was no fool, I saved the frames and they kept us in kindling wood for nearly two months." Here was a man who was interested in the frames but not what was inside. He had overlooked the real value. Often we do the same thing. We overlook the greatest things for something that really is not important. Our lesson today involves the greatest things. Paul wrote: "And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love" 1Corinthians 13:13.

The greatest being is the soul of man. Greater than all the animals, plants, fish, birds, yes greater than them all. The soul is from God. God created man and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and "man became a living soul" Genesis 1:26-27 and 2:17. The soul of man is eternal. Our spirit will survive death, to stand before God in judgment. We will spend eternity somewhere Matthew 25:46. The grave is not the goal. For this reason, we must properly evaluate the soul. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul..." Mt.16:24-27. What will you give in exchange for your soul? It is your greatest possession. Guard it carefully.

The greatest curse is sin. Yes, greater than cancer, the plague or leprosy. Sin costs one half of all national income in peace and even more in war. Sin is the cause of all evil, crime, war, and ills that plague humanity. The wages of sin is death according to Romans 6:17-23. It is a blight on the human family. It destroys our health, homes, and happiness. It curses our dreams, hopes, plans, and future. Surely we can see the misery, heartache, and trouble that sin brings into the world.

The greatest principle is love. Love is a powerful force. For this reason, it must be directed properly. We cannot love the world according to 1John 2:15-17. When we do the powerful force of love drives us away from God and all that is righteous. We are to love God with all our heart, mind and body. God loved us with a powerful love. He gave his only begotten Son, John 3:16. We in return are to love him and keep his word. "Jesus answered and said unto him, if a man love me he will keep my words and my father will

love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him" John 14:23. Love is more than just a feeling. It is a driving force that impels us to do the will of God in our lives.

The greatest remedy is the blood of Christ. Today we are blessed in many way with the wonder drugs that modern medicine provides for us. Great remedies for diseases of all kinds. There is, however, no remedy like the blood of Christ. As bad as cancer is, there is a disease of the soul much worse, the disease of sin. The only remedy is our Lord's blood. We used to sing the song "there is power in the blood." Indeed there is. Power to save, power to change, power to make us new and wash our sins away. In Hebrews 9:10-12 we read "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place having obtained eternal redemption for us." The blood of Christ covers us when we obey the gospel. We believe in him, Hebrews 11:6, then we repent of our sins Luke 13:3, next we confess his name Acts 8:37 and finally we are baptized in water for the remission of our sins Acts 2:38. When we are baptized we contact the blood of Christ. We are buried with him in baptism according to Romans 6:3-4. Christ shed his blood in his death, and we are baptized into his death. We then rise to walk a new life. Thank God for the blood of Christ.

The greatest power is the gospel. Greater than atomic bombs, jet airplanes, or rockets. Dynamite is powerful, it can move mountains, but not as powerful as the gospel. The gospel can save a sinner. It is the power of God unto salvation Romans 1:16. Powerful enough to change the behavior of an ungodly man. To reform the lifestyle of an evil person. Over and over again the gospel has caused men and women whose lives were tainted with evil to change and become someone respectable. Drunkards, liars, those who cheat and steal, those who are immoral have all been changed by the power of the gospel. The gospel contains a power capable of penetrating the heart of a hardened individual one who has feared neither God nor man, causing him to melt in the presence of the Lord and become a follower of the Master. Have you been touched by the gospel power? Would you be willing obey its commands and let it change you into the kind of person you should be?

The greatest institution is the church of Christ. Great because of the price paid for it. In Acts 20:28, we learn that it was "purchased with the blood of Christ." What a price. We usually value things based on their cost. Greater love hath no man, that he lay down his life for his friends. Jesus died for us and in so doing, through his shed blood, made it possible for us to be saved. The church is great because of its head, foundation, and mission. Jesus is its head, the apostles and prophets, with Christ the chief cornerstone its foundation. Its mission is to seek and save the lost of the world. The church is great because it contains all the saved in the world. Acts 2:47 "the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." Everyone being saved was being added to the church. Everyone in the church had been saved. Anyone who has been saved through obedience to the gospel is added to the church by the Lord. We don't join the church, the Lord adds us to the church. You may belong to a number of organizations or hold membership in a

number of clubs. None, however, can compare with the church. It is greater than any or all combined. There is no institution that can compare with it.

The greatest book or guide is the bible. It is a perfect guide. 2Timothy 3:16-17 tells us that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God..." God's word is inspired, unlike the books written by men. Because of this it is infallible, without fault or contradiction. It contains "all things that pertain unto life and godliness..." 2Peter 1:3. It is in the bible that we find the answers to the puzzling questions of life. It supplies us with the information that will take us safely home to heaven. What a wonderful book.

Last eve I passed a blacksmiths door
and heard the anvil ring with vesper chime
When looking in I saw upon the floor
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.
How many anvils have you had,
to wear and batter all those hammers so, said I?
Just one, said he, then said with twinkling eye
"the anvil wears the hammers out you know."
And so I thought the avil of God's word
For ages skeptics blows have beat upon,
The avil is unharmed, the hammers gone.