

Bedford Bulletin

Columbus Street church of Christ

512 Columbus Street Bedford, Ohio 44146

----- Building Phone: 440-232-2231 -----

Website: www.bedfordcoc.com

E-Mail: dave.evangelistcoc@gmail.com

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**“GOD
Made us
Alive...”**

**Together
with Christ**
Ephesians 2:5

Precious Things

Recently I preached a funeral in West Virginia for a brother in Christ and lifelong friend. The family members all met on the top of a hill at an old cemetery. Afterwards, we all went to the old family farm where one family member told of the 150 year history of their West Virginia family. He gave us a great tour, showing us many old photos and items around the house that were very precious to the family. Along with many household items and photographs, one item in particular was a small anvil which was carried at the battle of Gettysburg by one of his relatives. There are many things that are precious to us such as, mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers. For some there are precious items, keepsakes such as family heirlooms, a necklace, a ring, a platter that belonged to great grandma. I have a few things on display at home that are precious to me, in that they remind me of good things.

Out of all these things, I couldn't help but remember the words of Peter concerning genuine faith, that it is, *“much more precious than gold that perishes”*, (1 Peter 1:7). As you study your Bibles you will eventually come across some things that indeed are precious, read on for some examples. Unity is a Precious thing: Recently we studied the prayer of Jesus and in that prayer, Jesus prayed concerning His disciples, *“that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me”* (John 17:21). To the church at Corinth Paul pled, *“brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all ^[a]speak the same thing, and that there be no ^[b]divisions among you...”* (1 Cor. 1:10), and to the Ephesians, *“...keep the unity of the Spirit...”* (Eph. 4:3). David wrote, *“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”* (Psa. 133:1).

Jesus Christ is Precious: Prophesied by Isaiah as a *“precious corner stone”*, and identified as Jesus Christ by Peter who quoted Isaiah 28:16 and said, *“⁴ Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God*

Knowing & Doing God's Will

Proverbs 11:14

through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 2:4-5). Remember Christ is not precious to everyone, only to those who believe. Is Jesus precious to you?

Your Faith is Precious: Peter by inspiration wrote, “*To those who have^[a] obtained like^[b] precious faith...*” Why is your faith so precious? Well, Peter said God purifies our “*hearts by faith*” (Acts 15:9), Jesus says we are “*sanctified by faith*” and “*justified by faith*”, in Him (Acts 26:18). We are “*saved through faith*” (Eph. 2:8), and “*sons of God through faith*” (Gal. 3:26). Christ dwells in our hearts, “*through faith*” (Eph. 3:17). It is by the shield of faith that we “*quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one*” (Eph. 6:16). Remember, “*...without faith it is impossible to please Him...*” (Heb. 11:6). Do you have faith? Since faith is so precious, we must possess “*faith and a good conscience*” to avoid being spiritually “*shipwrecked*” (1 Tim. 1:19). Therefore, do not let your faith be overthrown by false teaching (2 Tim. 2:18). And always remember that your faith must work (Gal. 5:6; Jas. 2:17) and be coupled with obedience (Heb. 5:9), to be of any value!

Even the Trying of your Faith is Precious: It is written, “*That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold...*” (1 Pet. 1:7 KJV) this is because, “*...the testing of your faith produces patience...*” (James 1:3). Peter’s first letter was written to “*the pilgrims of the Dispersion...*” (1:1) who were, “*grieved by various trials*” (1:6). To these saints he wrote, “¹²*Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you...¹³ but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy*” (1 Pet. 4:12-13). Peter was speaking of current events, not future. “The original expression, εν υμιν πυρωσει, is literally, the burning which is among you; denoting the grievous persecution which the Christians in Pontus, &c., were suffering for their faith; including

both martyrdom itself, which frequently was by fire, and all the other sufferings joined with or



*“How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God!
Therefore the children of men put their trust
under the shadow of Your wings”*

previous to it.” [Benson]. You might ask then, how can furious and bitter trials of faith be much more precious than gold? The answer is that Gold is temporary and will one day perish; but faith endures forever! When we live through all the trials, we will have something that no one outside the faith can have, that is “*...a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*” (1:3), and an “*inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away...*” (1:4). That is why, unlike those without Christ, we can face the trials, even death and still “*...rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls*” (1:8-9).

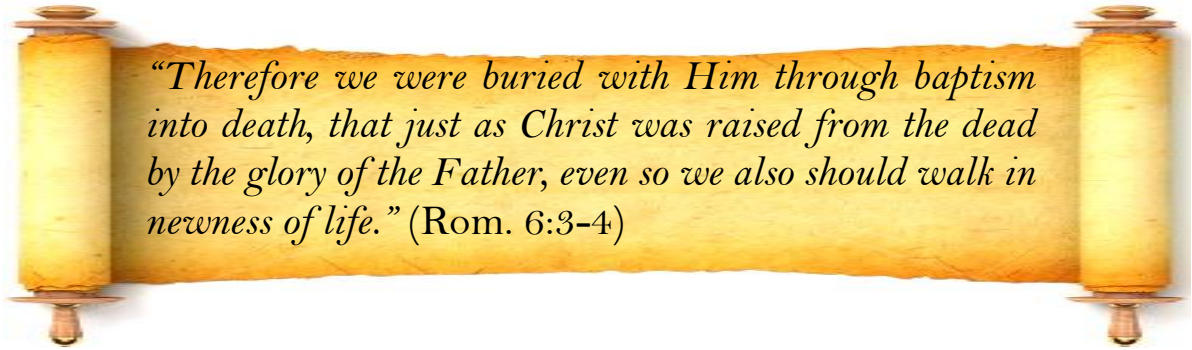
God's Promises are Precious: *"by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature"* (2 Pet. 1:4). That fact is that God cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18) and that mean He keeps all His promises (Acts 13:23). The promises God made to Abraham were great (Gen. 12:1-7), and He kept them all. Precious then because it means the exceedingly great and precious promise of life in Christ (2 Tim. 1:1; 1 Jn. 2:25) will be kept. The exceedingly great and precious promise of eternal inheritance (Heb. 9:15) will be kept. Because of His exceedingly great and precious promises, we look with confidence for a new heaven and a new earth (2 Pet. 3:13). So then, what should we be doing in light of God's precious promises? As Paul said it, *"Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God"* (2 Cor. 7:1).

The Law, Testimony, Statutes, Commandment, Fear, and Judgments of the Lord the Psalmist declares is, *"More to be desired are they than gold..."* (Psa. 19:7-10). The word of the Lord is precious seed (Lk. 8:11). Therefore, read it (Eph. 3:4), study it and rightly divide it (2 Tim. 2:15), meditate upon it (Psa. 1:2, 119:97), love it or die (2 Th. 2:9-12), believe it (1 Th. 2:13), purify your soul by obeying it (1 Pet. 1:22), and teach it to others (2 Tim. 2:2; Matt. 28:20).

Precious is the Blood of Christ: *"knowing that you were not redeemed with ^[a]corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot"* (1 Pet. 1:18-19). How precious? This precious blood the Lord shed in death (John 19:33-34) and can only be reached through the baptism of Christ, where you die to sin (Repent: Luke 13:3), and are buried with Christ, contacting the blood then raised up *"in newness of life"* (Rom. 6:3-4). *"redemption"* and *"forgiveness of sins"* (Eph. 1:7). Shed for *"Remission of sins"* (Matt. 26:28). By it we are *"justified"* and *"saved from wrath"* (Rom. 5:9). We are *"brought near by the blood"* (Eph. 2:13), Jesus *"made peace through the blood of His cross"* (Col. 1:20). By His blood He will *"cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God"* (Heb. 9:14). His blood sanctifies (Heb. 13:12), cleanses our sins (1 John 1:7).

As always,
in Love

dave scarpino



"Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Rom. 6:3-4)

Welcome One and All!

Our faithful Creator is worthy to be praised in this assembly. All praise to Him who reigns above in majesty supreme! He gave His Son to die, for all mankind, that He might redeem all. Our blessed Redeemer suffered and died for our sins and is now risen and sitting at the right hand of God as Head of the church. Let us offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, knowing that He is the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him. (Hebrews 5:8-9) *“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!”* (Isaiah 6:3)

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