

What God Thinks of You

Message for Sunday, May 24, 2020
by Bruce Fraser

Scripture: Romans 5:6-8

Today I want to talk to those among you who have ever done something that you wished you hadn't. Maybe it was simple forgetfulness, like the stories we hear about women coming out of a public washroom, who didn't realize the back of their dress was tucked into their pantyhose. Any of the women here willing to admit that you've done that?

Maybe it was something you said, trying to be funny, but instead the way it came out made you look stupid or, even worse, made someone else look stupid, or even hurt their feelings. I've sure done that, lots of times. Anyone else?

Maybe it happened years ago. Every now and then, I recall something that I did thirty years ago which was really dumb. I'll likely never see that person again, so it's no longer important. But seeing it in my mind again makes me cringe. Do any of you have memories that make you tremble?

It could be something just slightly embarrassing; or it could be a major catastrophe. Maybe someone got injured, or even died, because of what you did.

I'm going to give you something today which will help to heal the wound that event left in your life.

These are difficult times. So I'm beginning a series of messages to encourage you, and to you invite you to be an encourager to others.

But first a little exercise.

I'll hold up a \$10 bill. "Who would like this \$10 bill?" I expect some people will answer, particularly among younger people who know me as guileless and genuine. (That's supposed to be funny; you can laugh.) Some people who know me well will be wondering, "What's the catch?" and stay quiet..

I am going to give this \$10 to one of you but first, let me do this. *Crumple the bill into a ball. Who wants it now? Probably no change.*

What if I do this? *Put that clump on a block of wood and hammer it so that it's flat. Now who wants it? Probably still no change.*

How about this? *Tear it in half. Still want it? Probably still no change. Promise to give it to the first person who spoke, the next time we're together.*

My friends, you have all learned a very valuable lesson. No matter what I did to the money, you still wanted it because it did not decrease in value. It was still worth \$10. Many times in our lives, we are dropped, crumpled, crushed, and broken in two by the decisions we make and the circumstances that come our way. We feel as though we are worthless.

But no matter what has happened or what will happen, you will never lose your value in God's eyes. To God, dirty or clean, crumpled or finely creased, you are still priceless. We are part of God's wonderful creation, and a very special part at that:

Psalm 8:3-5, Today's English Version:

When I look at the sky, which you have made,
at the moon and the stars, which you set in their
places—
what are human beings, that you think of them;
mere mortals, that you care for them?
Yet you made them inferior only to yourself;
you crowned them with glory and honour.

Here's another place in the Bible which tells about how precious we are in God's eyes:

Romans 5:6-8, New Living Translation:

When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, no one is likely to die for a good person, though someone might be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

That passage tells not only how valuable we are to God; it also tells what God did for us as a result of that. "God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners."

What that says to me is that there is no one who is beyond hope. There is no one to whom God refuses to offer the gift of love, forgiveness and salvation.

Stop and ponder that for a moment. Think of the most vile, wicked and cruel person you can imagine. Jesus died for that person. Jesus didn't

come to save nice, perfect people; he came to be the Saviour to sinners. William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, told his people, “Go for souls, and go for the worst.”

I’m thinking of a husband and wife who are raising their family. One of their children is the ideal child, who goes on to live a good, wholesome life. One of their other children is the very opposite: rebellious, rude, lazy, who gets into alcohol and other drugs, who makes a waste of life.

Question: which child do the parents love the most?
Answer: they love them both the same. Of course, they are more pleased with one; and they certainly don’t like what the other one does. They may at times even throw up their hands in frustration and despair over the wayward child, and perhaps say things they later regret. But their love for both of their children never wavers.

That’s how God is with us. Of course, no one here is the ideal child. In fact, if we’re perfectly honest, we’re not even close. We don’t even live up to our own standards, much less God’s commandments!

But God still loves us. Just as we are. That means that when we do wrong things—when we sin—God still loves us. It grieves God to see the mess we make of our lives; it hurts God when we hurt others; but he still loves us. Nothing we do can make God stop loving us. Remember that verse from Romans 5:8: “God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.”

So we turn to Jesus and say “Yes” to him. We say “Yes” to him as Saviour, so that we are forgiven for our sins. We say “Yes” to him as Lord, so that he can work in our lives to change our very nature, that causes the problems in the first place. It’s a lifelong process, but it’s worth it.

I love the poem which tells this same truth in the form of a story. I hope you enjoy it, too.

The Touch of the Master’s Hand

’Twas battered and scarred, and the auctioneer
Thought it scarcely worth his while
To waste much time on the old violin,
But he held it up with a smile.
“What am I bidden, good folks,” he cried,

“Who will start bidding for me?
A dollar, a dollar”—then, “Two!” “Only two?
Two dollars, and who’ll make it three?
Three dollars, once; three dollars, twice;
Going for three—” But no,
From the room, far back, a gray-haired man
Came forward and picked up the bow;
Then, wiping the dust from the old violin,
And tightening the loose strings,
He played a melody pure and sweet
As sweet as a carolling angel sings.

The music ceased, and the auctioneer,
With a voice that was quiet and low,
Said, “What am I bidden for the old violin?”
And he held it up with the bow.
“A thousand dollars, and who’ll make it two?
Two thousand! And who’ll make it three?
Three thousand, once; three thousand, twice;
And going, and gone!” said he.
The people cheered, but some of them cried,
“We do not quite understand;
What changed its worth?” Swift came the reply:
“The touch of the master’s hand.”

And many a man with life out of tune,
And battered and scattered with sin,
Is auctioned cheap to the thoughtless crowd,
Much like the old violin.
A “mess of pottage,” a glass of wine;
A game — and he travels on.
He’s “going” once, and “going” twice,
He’s “going” and “almost gone.”
But the Master comes, and the foolish crowd
Never can quite understand
The worth of a soul, and the change that’s wrought
By the touch of the Master’s hand.

By Myra Brooks Welch.

Next Steps:

- Pray: Thank God for his unconditional love, his amazing grace. Thank God that he loves you and believes in you even when you feel like giving up.
- With that solid Rock underneath you as a foundation, commit yourself to being a person of courage and encouragement.
- This week keep your ears open for opportunities to be an encourager to others.