

“What’s So Important?”

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**First Presbyterian Church
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Matthew 13:44-46**

Every once in a while, it’s beneficial to take stock of one’s life. That’s important!

I have three questions for you to ponder this morning.

1. What is important in your life?
2. Is what’s important to you, worthy of your commitment?
3. If it is, what level of commitment are you involved in?

In many ways - It is all too easy to just “get by.” Isn’t it? You do just what you have to do, and that’s enough! Too often we cloud our days, our lives with “things to do” to keep us from actually focusing on what’s important—really important.

Not to imply, or say that many of the things we do, and must be done, are not of some importance, but think of it this way: at some point in your life you stop, and take stock of your life, what you’ve done, what you’ve not done, what you wish you had done. You take a panoramic view of life.

This morning, give it a try. Perhaps, just perhaps, there are some changes that could (should) be made.

What’s so important? Really.

If I were to ask you about what you value, what would make you respond with “THAT’S IMPORTANT!”?

That special someone.

Your spouse.

Your children.

Your job.

Your career.

Reputation.

Truth telling.

Trust.

Your house.

Your car.

Your dog, cat, ferret.

NFL football?

These are all worthy (Well, most of them). But underlying these or other important things, what's there? What vision, meaning, hope, under-grounds your list of important things? Do you have any sense that you have grasped hold of something lasting, of prime importance in your life? Do you have a purpose that gives meaning to your life? Have you taken time to discuss this with yourself? Or have you been "too busy," out of fear, to quiet yourself and inspect who you are? That's important!

At one point Isaiah cries out (Isaiah 49:4), "I have labored to no purpose, I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing." Don't let that happen.

Job 7:6 "My life drags by—day after hopeless day. (Job 7:16) I give up: I am tired of living. Leave me alone. My life makes no sense."

Friends, this is no way to live. It's not really living, is it? You see, we are not the first generation to feel alienated, hopeless, confused, lost. But, life can be filled with energy, vision, and purpose! That's what Jesus was declaring throughout his ministry. He was convinced that life has a purpose, a meaning and he devoted his life to that proclamation! The Gospels are filled with this important belief. Jesus called it the Kingdom of God. We can also describe it as the Reign of God. Here is a belief, a position on life itself. This Kingdom of God is what we all desperately need!

It is the fulfillment of life. The Kingdom of God is precious! It encapsulates one's drive, one's focus for how to live! It's religious terminology for living a purposeful life!!

Over and over and over; again and again and again, Jesus declares that to live is to live toward the God of love, justice, peace, forgiveness, compassion, and hope! Again this is important stuff!! (If you really believe it) And many of us do! It's a way of life. No, it's the way of life!

Your daily routine, your daily "must dos," need a foundation, a vision, a purpose to give spirit, life to your existence. Paul put it this way, "I am focusing all my energies on this one thing: forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead." You see, Paul finally was caught by Christ's Kingdom, Christ's vision for life. He was never a tepid sort! No way! Once he got a glimpse of this Kingdom of God, there was no turning back, lamenting the past, wallowing in past mistakes. No! Instead Paul got his focus. All of his energies were now devoted to this one thing, Christ's reign of love and purpose, and all that entailed. Everything else in his life was controlled, guided by this commitment. Family, friends, profession, work, play, all were immersed in this most important vision for life. And it made all the difference!! Jesus gets explicit in Matthew's Gospel about this most important of life's concerns. Jesus is proclaiming, declaring – **THAT'S IMPORTANT!**

He shares two brief Kingdom parables. This Kingdom, this Reign, this purpose of God (of Heaven) is like a treasure hidden in a field. A fellow is walking by, minding his own business not looking for anything, when to his amazement THERE IT IS! What he has been looking for all his life, (but not actually knowing he was doing so) a great treasure! He is overjoyed! He sells everything he has to purchase that field where the treasure is hidden. He risks all to get this most important of treasures. (Please, don't get ethically irate over him not informing the owner of the field about the treasure. That's not the point. Although, that ethical concern does run through one's mind.) The parable's point is - the prime importance of the treasure, God's Kingdom, God's way of life for God's children and the total devotion, the risk involved when setting out to live within this kingdom (This Way of Life).

It takes your ALL, but it gives even more; it bestows a wonderful, challenging way of life, devoted to more than just yourself. Today we certainly need a larger vision, purpose than ourselves accumulating things. Thank God for the myriad gadgets that have made our lives so much easier! But, we are beings created to seek deeper into this existence, this LIFE!

Some find this treasure when not searching for it, like Paul on the road to Damascus. Like this man, just taking a walk. Then there is the merchant that is actually searching for fine pearls. That's his profession. When lo and behold he finds the most magnificent pearl he has ever seen. There is none to compare! This merchant too, sells, invests everything he owns to purchase this "pearl of great value."

Jesus is declaring that living according to God's Kingdom is the important way to live. THAT'S IMPORTANT! And choosing to live in this kingdom of great value will cost you everything. In other words, living Kingdom values will change your life—totally if you will allow it. Relationships. Business. Profession. All will come under the reign of Christ's call to love, justice, openness, and a wealth of other Kingdom values. You will see the world with different eyes. Probably most of you know what I mean. It's just good to be reminded. The Christian life has great potential. All you need to do is take that risk, give it your all, it's a treasure, it's a pearl of great value.

Again.

1. What is important in your life?
2. Is what's important to you, worthy of your commitment?
3. If it is, what level of commitment are you involved in?

NOW THAT'S IMPORTANT!!!

Amen.