

DETERMINING THE VALUE OF THE CHURCH (Matthew 13:44-46)

I. Value is determined by workmanship.

- A. When looking at a house, many people want to know the builder.
- B. When appraising the value of a painting, the artist who created needs to be known.
 - 1. If I painted something, and some the artwork I have seen that is praised looks like something I could do, it would not be worth anything.
 - 2. If Picasso or Renoit painted it, it is most definitely worth something because of who they were and what they did.
- C. When it comes to the church, our Lord built it (Matthew 16:18).
 - 1. He is the only begotten Son of God (Matthew 3:17).
 - 2. He is God in the flesh (John 1:1).
- D. If our Lord built something then the workmanship is perfect because it was created by the Divine.
- E. This shows that denominations do not have the value of the church of the New Testament because fallible men built them.
- F. Why would someone want to be a member of a church built by fallible men when it is possible to be a member of the church built by the holy, divine Christ?

II. Value is determined by desirability.

- A. What is the value placed on it by others?
- B. Is there a market for this or does no one want it?
- C. In places along the coast, for example, housing is much higher than it is inland because the desire of people to have a home or condo on the ocean is so great.
- D. Paintings by the master artists are in high demand so the prices are exorbitant.
- E. When it comes to the church, God desires the church.
 - 1. He desires it so much that He sent His Son to die for it (Romans 5:8).
 - 2. It took the blood of His Son to purchase the church (Acts 20:28).
- F. The church's desirability is shown by the comparisons made between the church and marriage (Ephesians 5:23-25).
 - 1. Those of us who are married or contemplating marriage understand this beautiful comparison.
 - 2. We desire to be married to and care for the one we love.
 - 3. This is the way Jesus feels about His church.
- G. We also see the desirability of the church in God's eyes when we see that He wants the kingdom to be with Him for eternity (1 Corinthians 15:24).

III. Value is determined by durability.

- A. Have you ever gotten what you thought was a good deal on something only to have it fall apart in just a short time?
- B. If something is durable then it holds its value or even increases in value.

1. For instance, Toyota trucks hold their value extremely well.
 2. The reason is they are durable and last for years.
- C. The kingdom of Christ is durable.
- D. Daniel pointed this out in his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2:44).
1. In the vision he received recorded in Daniel 7 he sees the everlasting kingdom of One like Ancient of Days.
 2. Daniel 7:14, 27.
- E. The church belonging to Christ will stand the test of time.
- F. Peter pointed out its durability in 2 Peter 1:11.

IV. Value is determined by possibility.

- A. How many businesses have been sold because of no growth or it was going into debt only to grow immensely in the hands of the new owner?
1. This is what happened with Jello.
 2. The inventor could do nothing with it and sold his patent for a small sum and the new owners became extremely wealthy because they saw the possibility.
 3. They looked at what it could become and not what it presently was.
- B. The parable of mustard seed points to the potential of the church (Matthew 13:31-32).
1. The mustard seed is one of the tiniest seeds there is.
 2. However, it grows into a large tree.
 3. The point of the parable is that the gospel started small but had great potential to grow.
 4. If you read through the book of Acts, you see that this is exactly what took place.
- C. We can never become pessimistic about the potential of the church to grow.
1. Too many ideas have been shot down that are good because of pessimism.
 2. We need to believe in the power of the gospel and do all that we can to get the gospel out to the world.
- D. We need people in the Lord's church who think big.

V. Value is determined by rarity.

- A. There are car auctions shown on TV from time to time that aren't your normal cars being sold.
1. Many of them are extremely old vehicles that have been beautifully and perfectly restored.
 2. What you here many times is that a particular vehicle is only one of a handful that either were made or presently exist.
 3. The rarer the car, the higher the price.
- B. Think of rare coins.
1. These are coins that have been out of circulation for years.
 2. They are also coins of which only a few were made.
 3. The rarer they are, the more valuable they become.
- C. Friends, there is only one church belonging to Christ.

- D. It is one of a kind (Ephesians 4:4).
 - 1. Paul said we are all baptized by one Spirit into one body (1 Corinthians 12:13).
 - 2. Paul told the Colossians that Jesus is the head of the body, of which there is only one, and that body is the church (Colossians 1:18)
- E. The church belonging to Christ is rare and thus valuable.

Idea from an introduction to a sermon by Barry Grider.