

VALUES?

“Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? And your labour for that which satisfieth not?” (Is. 55:2)

There is perhaps no better index on our value system than the way we spend our money. That's why Isaiah was concerned! The way the people were spending their money was indicative of a serious spiritual problem. Our treasures, and our hearts, are inseparably linked together. Amos had the same concern. The people of his day were so affluent that they had both summer houses and winter houses (Amos 3:15.) They reclined on beds of ivory and invented instruments of music like David. They invested in the “good life.” They rubbed their soft effeminate bodies with expensive cosmetic preparations. They drank wine from expensive goblets and dined on choice cuts of meat (Amos 4:4-6.) At the same time, however, they sold the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes (Amos 8:6.) Their value system was a stench in the nostrils of God.

This spiritual malady came forcibly to mind not long ago when Mike Tyson was paid \$27,000,000 for biting off part of an ear. As disgusting as it was, that does not mean that many would not pay to see him do it again. In fact, some feel that his outrageous conduct will only make him a bigger “draw” the next time around. How sad! How tragic!

Our present evil world has given us a value system that pays Jim Carrey \$20,000,000 for making a movie, while Jonas Salk was only given \$60,000 for discovering a vaccine for polio. Michael Jordan makes \$30,140,000 each year which is a thousand times more than most school teachers are paid. There are 245 players in the NBA with salaries of over a million dollars per year, but the heroes of our military risk their lives for the wages of a welfare recipient. We are spending money for that which is not bread, and our labor for that which does not satisfy.

Let's compute the value of a pitch thrown by a baseball player who makes only a measly \$3 million per year. If he pitches 30 games, and averages 100 pitches per game, the cost for each pitch is \$1,000. That includes balks, wild pitches, and all. His salary for a single game is more than most police officers make in three years. There is an old joke about the pitching star in the Dominican Republic who was asked if he could pitch 30 games in a single season. “I'd like to,” he replied, “but I don't think my boss would let me off work that much.”

Pablo Picasso once described himself as an entertainer who understood the times. As a struggling young artist he painted reality and nearly starved to death. Then he placed his finger on the public pulse and began to slop together the outrageous. Soon he became as famous as Dennis Rodman and Madonna, and in essentially the same way. In our society, being ridiculous pays more than being talented.. I am told that one of Picasso's multi-million dollar “sculptures” was on display for several years before someone discovered that it was upside down. It didn't matter to him one way or the other. He was laughing all the way to the bank.

Even more sad and sinister is the tragic plight of the drug addict. They too spend their money for that which is not bread and their labor for that which does not satisfy. While the children are hungry, and the rent is unpaid, they sell their souls for a little bag of powder. Blinded by an irrational addiction they self destruct while family and friends weep with regret. The alcoholic is not far behind. They too barter away their spirit, soul, and body oblivious to eternity. As always, somebody has to pick up the tab. Who pays for the private jets and luxury cars of the drug dealers? Usually, it is those who can least afford it. They beg, borrow, and steal and their dimes and dollars wind up in some billionaire's account in an off shore bank. The lavish life-style of the drug dealer is in stark contrast to the bus driver who stops by the house to take our children to school. Our value system pays the bus driver the minimum wage.

Jesus taught that we should lay up treasure in heaven where moth and rust do not corrupt, and where thieves cannot break through and steal. I am confident that His Holy Spirit will lead the true believer to do just that! You, as a Christian, are marching to the beat of a different drum. Your citizenship is in heaven and your value system is given by the Sovereign of the Universe! That's why the world is losing it allure and eternity is the star by which you steer.

