

## INTRODUCTION

### I. Tell Them What You're Going To Tell Them

#### 1. Illustration of Perceived Need (*Real Life Example*)

- (1) What are your values?
  - i. Sports teams?
  - ii. Movies? Music?
  - iii. Politics reveal values.
  - iv. Vocation reveals value.
  - v. What about people? What kinds of people do you value in your life? Why?
- (2) Peter Singer (The Dangerous Philosopher)
  - vi. Chair BioEthics at Princeton
  - vii. Most worthwhile life is the one with the most complex conscious life and feeling
  - viii. Disabled elderly and children are worth less than a chicken
- (2) Quotes:
  - i. Highly intelligent pigs with a right to life, more than less intelligent human beings.
  - ii. More moral to save the life of a pig, than child with mental disability.
  - iii. "It might be more compassionate to carry out medical experiments on...disabled orphans, than on perfectly healthy rats."

#### 2. Explanation of Perceived Need (*Real Life Implications*)

- (1) Perceived value is fickle. Highly subjective. And we will see today, very harmful.
- (2) In fact, very often how we see others is often indicative of how we see ourselves.
- (3) If we don't pick the right "value system" we can become very harmful individuals to ourselves or others.
- (4) Some of the world's greatest atrocities were committed by "value systems".

### II. Bridge (v10:17-18)

#### 1. Introduction To Today's Text

- (1) The Bible confers value very differently than we do.
- (2) Where is Jephthah from?

**Slide:** Gilead Map | **Slide:** Jordan Map | **Slide:** Jordan Fertile Hills

- (3) Valuable real estate.



# #1 - PERCEIVED VALUE IS FICKLE (v1-3)

**Key Text:** "...and *worthless* fellows *collected* around Jephthah and went out *with* him..."

## I. Self-Protection and Self-Promotion Are Fickle Value Systems (v1-2)

### 1. Exposition

- (1) Self-promotion diminishes the worth of Jephthah
  - iv. He is given value because of what he does (military specialist), not for who he is.
  - v. Son of a prostitute (half Canaanite/half Israelite); family scandal (reminder to everyone)
  - vi. All of this is occurring just after the peace administration of Jola and Tair (45 years).
  - vii. Therefore, who needs a great military leader during peace time?
- (2) Self-protection diminishes the worth of Jephthah
  - i. Jephthah has come home from military service to his, now, full grown brothers.
  - ii. He is run off to protect their inheritance. Less of the pie to share.

### 2. Illustration

- (1) What are reminder's of bad decisions in your life? What if someone in our church had affair...
  - i. Because we devalue anything that threatens our approval (weakness).
- (2) Zach donut story
  - i. Because we devalue anything that threatens our security.

### 3. Application

- (1) In some ways, these proclivities are Gospel-driven.

**Micah 7:19:** "...You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea."

**1 Peter 1:5:** "And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power..."

- (2) Ask yourself: Do you underscore people's value with regard to potential self-promotion.
- (3) Ask yourself: Do you underscore people's value with regard to persistent self-protection

## III. Fickle Value Systems Are Harmful Value Systems (v3)

### 1. Exposition

- (1) v3 - Treated as worthless = identifies as worthless = communes with worthless

### 2. Illustration

- (1) Birds of a feather | Unhealthy pastor at Origin starts a church, then produces unhealthy disciples
  - (1) American Dehydrated Onion and Garlic Association (ADOGA); Nat. Assoc. of Ballon Enthusiasts (NABE); The Obedient Wives Club; [StachePassions.com](http://StachePassions.com)
  - (2) Interest groups = people will naturally gather with people they identify strongly with

### 3. Application

- (1) If you tell someone long enough they are worthless or wo/ value, sooner or later they will start to believe it, architect an identity around it, make decisions like it, gather w/ others who identify strongly with it.
- (4) Ask yourself: Do you underscore people's value with regard to their potential risk impact.
- (5) Will they be adverse to or advance my personal agenda?

➔ **BIG IDEA:** Our changing experiences, and subsequent changing disappointments, often dictate what we promote and how we protect. As a result, we find changing value in those who can advance these changing agendas. This process can be harmful to us and others because it is not immutable.



## #2 - INHERENT VALUE IS FIXED (v4-28)

**Key Text:** "...be our head..."

### I. Through Jesus, Our Value Is Assigned (v4-5,8b)

#### 1. Exposition

- (1) Where did this sudden value come from? (11:29a) Who raises up Jephthah? (10:16)
  - i. The Lord raises Him up to Judge and deliver Israel (from worthless → head)

#### 2. Illustration

- (1) Sand/Rocks from Iwo Jima; Mt. Suribachi | Conferred upon it a value

#### 3. Application

- (1) Jephthah had no perceived value conferred upon him by his family or his homeland.

**Rom. 3:12:** "All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."

- (2) Jesus assigns a value on the life of believer, whether it is perceived or not by anyone else.

**Isa. 43:4:** "...you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you..."

- (3) Which is why the church must speak language, use language, promote language that promotes people identifying first and foremost w/ Jesus.

- i. Negative statements (obvious); We even have to be careful with seemingly positive ones

**Rom. 15:7:** "Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God."

- (4) Therefore, it is intrinsic. Fixed.

### II. Through Community Our Value Is Affirmed (v6-11)

#### 1. Exposition

- (1) Jephthah is at first hesitant and seeks clarification
- (2) Swearing in ceremony

#### 2. Illustration

- (1) Counseling changes resulting from affirming identity, versus disparaging works.

#### 3. Application

- (1) Our responsibility is to affirm the dignity, worth and value of every person who come here.
- (2) Whether we perceive it or not.

### III. Through Faith, Our Value Is Assumed (v12-28)

#### 1. Exposition

- (1) What happens next is 17 verses of attempted diplomacy. Messengers are dispatched. (v28)

#### 2. Illustration

- (1) Jamie in Florida (maybe I am worth something, maybe I can lead, maybe I will go to college)

#### 3. Application

- (1) There are people you're avoiding, things you're not doing because you find your value *IN* them.

**1 Tim. 6:12:** *Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called.*

- (2) We assume the identity of our new value, through faith.

➔ **BIG IDEA:** Through Jesus our value is assigned. Through community our value is affirmed. And through faith our value is assumed.



### #3 - VALUE BECOMES VANITY WHEN LEFT UNGUARDED (v29-12:7)

**Key Text:** "...so the Ammonites were subdued before the people of Israel."

#### I. Vanity Solicits Glory (11:29-31; 12:1-6)

##### 1. Exposition

(1) Jephthah solicits glory (v11:29-31)

- i. He did not give a second thought would have to pay the price for this. What animal, who it belonged to, whether they could afford it. Glory.

(2) Ephraim solicits glory (v12:1-6)

- ii. God uses the most obscure game of password to show how serious about His glory He is.

##### 2. Illustration

(1) Giving the MVP award to an otherwise shy kid produced a monster the following year.

##### 3. Application

(1) While God *did* confer value to you, He *did not* confer glory to you.

(2) That fact that your worth something is supposed to be about the Glory of God in making all things new.

(3) Nothing you do and nothing you are produces value apart from the grace of God.

**Isa. 42:8:** "I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other..."

(4) And if we're not careful, value becomes vanity if we start to take our eyes off of the value giver and onto the value receiver.

- i. Either with ourselves

- ii. or conferring too much value to others ("I thank God for what He's done through you...")

#### II. Vanity Elicits Harm (v34-40,12:7)

##### 1. Exposition

(1) His daughter...full of life.

(2) Allen, it sounds like he sacrificed his daughter? That's the most natural reading of the text.

(3) Notice God is silent. God didn't instruct it, command it, or approve of it.

- i. Just because it's in the Bible, doesn't mean it's prescriptive.

(4) Jephthah's vanity produced a religious action...rather than a Gospel action.

- (1) Maybe you're thinking...this isn't very relevant, because I would never let vanity affect me that way.

##### 2. Illustration

(1) Give Us A Church building; Sell it out from under another church, effectively closing it.

##### 3. Application

(1) We're back to where we started. Fickle value systems are harmful value systems.

- i. Harmful to others (v34)

- ii. Harmful to ourselves (v32-35)

- iii. Harmful to the greater community (v40)

(2) Ask yourself: Have I ever done something life-taking for your own glory?

➔ **BIG IDEA:** Value becomes vanity when left unguarded. And vanity solicits glory and elicits harm.



# CONCLUSION

## I. Tell Them What You've Already Told Them

### 1. PERCEIVED VALUE IS FICKLE

(1) Self-Protection and Self-Promotion Are Fickle Value Systems

(2) Fickle Value Systems Are Harmful Value Systems

### 2. INHERENT VALUE IS FIXED

(1) Through Jesus, Our Value Is Assigned

(2) Through Community Our Value Is Affirmed

(3) Through Faith, Our Value Is Assumed

### 3. VALUE BECOMES VANITY WHEN LEFT UNGUARDED

(1) Vanity solicits glory.

(2) Vanity elicits harm.

## II. The Gospel

*Lk. 12:4-7: "I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do...Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows."*

