

# The Value Proposition

## Luke 14:25–15:32 (ESV)

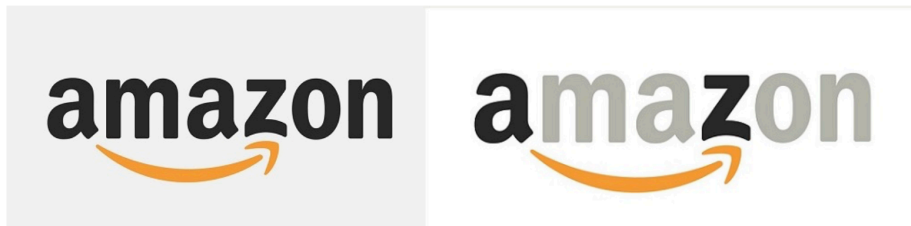
**INTRODUCTION:** Have you ever looked at something a thousand times, but then one day, someone comes along and points out an aspect that you have never noticed before? Once you see it, you can't unsee it.

**EXAMPLES:**

The arrow in the FedEx logo... it's been there all this time, but I never noticed it. Now, it's my responsibility to mention it every time we pass a FedEx truck.



The A to Z in the Amazon logo.



The 31 in the Baskin Robbins logo.



**In the same way, there are certain concepts woven into the narrative of Scripture that many of us overlook, but once you see it, you can't unsee it.**

A few weeks ago, we looked at the concept of *worship* as a **value proposition**. We said that the etymology of the word came from an old English word that meant the worth of a ship's cargo - worth-ship. In the same way, the root of the word appraisal is praise. Remember that we said the enemy seeks to tempt us to see anything as more valuable than God, thus turning our worship from God to things, thus making us idolaters.

With that in mind, consider how many stories in God's Word are related to the **VALUE** you place on God, people, and things. Let me show you a few examples.

- **Genesis 13:8-12:** Abram (Abraham) and Lot's tribes grow to the point that they need to separate. Lot chooses the fertile plains of Jordan, while Abram remains in Canaan, the land God swore to give to him.
- **Genesis 25:29–34 (ESV)** Esau, the first-born son of Isaac, held the right to a double portion of the inheritance as the firstborn, the right of primogeniture. But one day Esau comes in from the field, exhausted and famished. Jacob, his younger brother, has a pot of stew cooking. Esau asks for a bowl of stew, and Jacob says, "I will sell it to you for your birthright". At that moment, Esau had to make a **VALUE PROPOSITION**. He had to decide what was worth more, the birthright or the stew. He chose poorly, and generations suffered because of it.
- **Matthew 4:8-10:** Satan offers to make Jesus King of the world, without a cross... it would only cost him one simple thing. Bow down and worship the devil. Jesus chose wisely.

**CONTEXT:** The text before us today shows the principle of value very clearly. Over and over again, Jesus is going to compare and contrast the **PRICE** and **VALUE** of different things.

Many years ago, **Oscar Wilde** penned his famous definition of a cynic, as someone who "*knows the price of everything and the value of nothing*".

Well, Jesus wants you to know the **PRICE** and the **VALUE** of God, people, and things.

**TEXT: Luke 14:25–15:32 (ESV)**

<sup>25</sup> "Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, <sup>26</sup> 'If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. <sup>27</sup> Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple'."

That is the first value proposition. What is worth more to you, your family, or following Jesus? Keep in mind, this is a Hebrew colloquialism - Jesus isn't saying that you ought

to walk around hating your mom and dad, in fact following Jesus requires that you love and honor them.

But this is a figure of speech that means the **value** you set on one thing is so high that, in comparison, everything else is meaningless.

The OT used this same figure of speech in the Jacob and Esau narrative earlier when it said, "Thus, Esau despised his birthright". It wasn't that he felt emotional hatred toward it, but rather that his love for the bowl of stew caused him to consider the birthright worthless.

Paul uses this way of thinking in a positive sense in **Philippians 3:8 (ESV)**,  
<sup>8</sup> "Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ."

The Hebrew word translated rubbish is the word SKUBALA - it means DUNG. Paul says, all my education, all my degrees, all of my success in business, all my accomplishments - when compared with knowing Christ, it's all SKUBALA...DUNG.

That's a strong statement, but that is what Jesus is getting at in this verse.

Notice that Jesus doesn't say that is something to work up to, and once you are a mature disciple, you will look at life that way. Jesus says this is the first day of kindergarten. If you don't look at following me this way - you CANNOT be my disciple.

WHY? Because unless you see following Jesus as the most valuable thing in all the Universe, you will inevitably start something that you will not have the inner capacity to finish. He gives two examples:

<sup>28</sup> "For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? <sup>29</sup> Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, <sup>30</sup> saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'

<sup>31</sup> Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup> And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace."

What's the point?

<sup>33</sup> "So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple."

**So again, the VALUE you place on Jesus must be so high that all other earthly loyalties look like hatred, or dung, in comparison.**

Does that resonate with you when you think of your Christianity? Are you radically willing to sacrifice anything to follow Jesus? Lay it all on the table. Wave the white flag of surrender, and say I am all in... because it's worth it?

- OR is everything a negotiation? Christ says, Go to church, the Church is my body, do not forsake the assembly... Do you hear that and say YES LORD! Or do you spend each Saturday night debating whether or not you have anything better to do?
- Christ says GIVE, do you break out the checkbook and say YES, LORD! How much should I give? It's all yours. Or do you negotiate? Lord, is that gross or net? What if I bought my buddy lunch? Does that count?

<sup>34</sup> “Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? <sup>35</sup> It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

Again, this isn't a separate thought; He is still talking about the VALUE PROPOSITION. Salt, in this day and time, was a very valuable possession. The Roman Legion was often paid in salt. Hence the phrase, “He is worth his salt”.

But what happens if you have something VALUABLE like salt, but it loses the thing that makes it valuable?

**EXAMPLE:** Like confederate money, after the Civil War was over, it was worthless. It lost all value.

Well, if you set out to follow Jesus, but have not set upon Him the highest of all values, eventually, you will say, “It's just not worth it”. You will never make it to the end.

This is an honest question that any good pastor would ask, “Is following Jesus a hobby for you? Or is Jesus like the treasure buried in a field that a man finds and goes home and tells his wife, “Honey, sell it all.... I am buying a one acre field”.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Remember the rich, young, ruler? **Mark 10:17–22 (ESV),**

<sup>17</sup> “And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, ‘Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ <sup>18</sup> And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. <sup>19</sup> You know the commandments: ‘do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.’ ” <sup>20</sup> And he said to him, ‘Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.’ <sup>21</sup> And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, ‘You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.’ <sup>22</sup> Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.”

At that moment, that young man did some calculating. On one side of the equation, he put all of his possessions. On the other hand, He placed a relationship with Jesus Christ. And he came to the conclusion...He's just not worth it.

NOW, in chapter 15, the VALUE PROPOSITION CHANGES. You see, you might be tempted to feel sorry for the young man because Jesus asked so much of him. BUT before you go down that road, consider the VALUE that JESUS places on YOU.

### **Luke 15:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> “Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. <sup>2</sup> And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, ‘This man receives sinners and eats with them.’ <sup>3</sup> So he told them this parable:

#### **The Lost Sheep**

<sup>4</sup> ‘What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? <sup>5</sup> And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. <sup>6</sup> And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ <sup>7</sup> Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.’”

Do you see it? The lost sheep was worth it! He would leave everything just to find the lost sheep!

#### **The Lost Coin**

<sup>8</sup> “Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? <sup>9</sup> And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ <sup>10</sup> Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Do you see it? The coins likely represented the woman's marriage dowry. To lose one was a very big deal in that culture. Ladies, for some of you this would be like your wedding ring.

On mine and Julie's wedding day, my mother lost her wedding ring while helping set things up. I will never forget the anxiety that caused her and my dad...they turned that church over 'til they found it... and they rejoiced.

Jesus says, that sinner you don't want me to eat with, to me is VERY VALUABLE.

He concludes his point with one of the most familiar parables in the Bible.

#### **The Prodigal Son**

<sup>11</sup> “And he said, There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup> And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them.”

Now, remember what we have learned so far - this is the younger son not the older. The older son will get a double portion of the inheritance, and the younger son will get 1/3 of the inheritance.

He approaches his father and demands that he receive it in advance. In ancient cultures it would be the equivalent of saying, I wish you would just die and give me the money.

What does that say about the value the young man placed on his relationship with his father? It's not as valuable as a good time.

<sup>13</sup> “Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. <sup>14</sup> And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup> So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. <sup>16</sup> And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

<sup>17</sup> But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! <sup>18</sup> I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. <sup>19</sup> I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.’ ”

NOW, POVERTY CAN PRODUCE WISDOM if you don't interrupt it. Do you see that his understanding of value has matured? Now he finds being a hired hand more valuable than his life.

<sup>20</sup> “And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup> And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ <sup>22</sup> But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. <sup>23</sup> And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. <sup>24</sup> For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.”

Do you see it? Do you see the value the Father placed on that son? He was worth the best robe, the fatted calf, it was time to celebrate! The lost coin has been found, the lost sheep has come home. But the story doesn't end there... look at verse 25.

<sup>25</sup> “Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup> And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. <sup>27</sup> And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.’ <sup>28</sup> But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, <sup>29</sup> but he answered his father, ‘Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. <sup>30</sup> But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’ <sup>31</sup> And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.’”

Remember, that wasn't a figure of speech, the older son did have the right to everything that remained once the father died.

<sup>32</sup> ‘It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’ ”

The Father is trying to convince the older son of the younger son's value. That is essentially what Jesus is doing with the Pharisees. He is saying that these lost sheep are worth finding.

### **ILLUSTRATION: Thomas Chalmers, “The Expulsive Power of a New Affection”**

It is seldom that any of our bad habits disappear by a mere process of natural extinction. At least, it is very seldom that this is done through reasoning...or by the force of mental determination. ***But what cannot be destroyed may be dispossessed.*** One taste may be made to give way to another.

So, a young man who idolizes pleasure may cease seeking it because he discovers that it drains him of his wealth. So, his love for wealth drives out the idol of pleasure.

Perhaps, then, his love of money is driven out by his worship of ideology or politics. He will give up his money for his new idol influence and superiority.

This is the way the heart operates. ***The old IDOL must be conquered by the new one.***

When the HOLY SPIRIT opens your eyes to see the value of the Gospel - its value suddenly devalues everything else.

- All money is Confederate at that point.
- All gold is fool's gold.
- No earthly allegiance can compete with knowing Him.

### **CONCLUSION/INVITATION: Let's review -**

1. Following Jesus requires that you set a supreme value on Him.

2. Following Jesus reveals that He set a supreme value on you.

It is all a value proposition.

You see there comes a time in every person's life when they have to decide if it's worth it. It may cost you everything to follow Jesus... is it worth it? But before you make that decision, remember... there was a time in Heaven when Jesus had to make a similar decision.

Mankind was lost, sin and death spread to every image bearer. The only hope that you could be saved, forgiven, restored, was if the Prince of Heaven, the Son of God, would leave the glory of heaven, take on flesh, suffer and bleed and die, for you so that you might be saved.

He also had a VALUE PROPOSITION. Yet, he counted the streets of gold as rubbish compared to you. He left it all. Why? The sheep was lost. The prodigal was gone astray. That is what you are worth to Him. What is He worth to you?