

12th February 2024

Priceless

**“They shall look on thee and murmur to each other,
‘Lo! how small was the gift, and yet how precious!’”**

Theocritus, *Idyll 28*

One day, when Jesus was out with his friends, people began to bring their children to him. The Gospel of Matthew doesn't tell us why. A blessing, perhaps? Superstition? Prior news of miraculous cures? Curiosity? Following the crowd? Who knows? The disciples weren't best pleased, though. So "they rebuked them," the Bible tells us. I suspect the "rebukes" were loud and forceful. But Jesus stopped them. "Let them come," he said. "For in each of these children is the Kingdom of God." Each of these children is special. Each of these children has the potential for greatness. Each of these children has more worth and value than you realise. Each of these children is a priceless part of the Kingdom God wants for us all.

Someone I love deeply received a message from a friend that she says she'll never, ever forget. It's been kicking around Facebook and Instagram for a while now, but it was the first time it had come her way. The impact it made was special. For here was a parable about being priceless. The message was accompanied by a picture of a bar of iron – a shape similar to a bar of gold bullion, not in a more typical rod-shape. And underneath was this message:

This is an iron bar. It weighs exactly 1 kilogram, and its value is around \$100. If you decided to make horseshoes from it, its value would increase to \$250. But if you decided to make it into sewing needles, the value would increase to \$70,000. And if instead you decided to produce watch springs, the value would increase to about \$6 million. If, on the other hand, you decided to make precision laser components out of it, like the ones used in lithography, it could be worth in the region of \$15 million. Your value is not just in what you're made of, but, above all, in what ways you can make the best of who you are.

I leave you to ponder this parable and this thought. *You* are that child Jesus used as an example of the Kingdom of God. You are that child whose value is in what you can do with your life. You are that child who, in truth, is priceless. Because you are that child ... a bar of iron that can become precision laser components.

A prayer for today

Priceless? Me? Goodness! That very affirmation is worth such a lot! Thank you. Amen

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