

Malachi 3:17, “And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day **when I make up my jewels**; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”

My Treasured People

Have you ever looked at something and said to yourself that can't be worth anything? There isn't any value in that. I hear about people who take their so called “junk” to an expert appraiser, and surprisingly they find out what they own is worth much more than they thought.

The Antique Road Show is a television program where local people bring along their possessions to be evaluated for authenticity and worth. I liked watching the show because of the different facial expressions people made when they find out that their “junk” was actually worth a great sum of money.

- For instance, a lady brought on the show four small pieces of carved jade dating to the reign of a famous Chinese emperor (1736–1795), including a large bowl crafted for the Emperor. These items were given a conservative auction estimate of up to \$1.07 million dollars. Funny thing is the person didn't realize she was holding a great treasure in her hands.
- Another person brought in a 1937 Clyfford Still oil painting, valued conservatively at \$500,000, and they had no idea of its value.
- My favorite one was an older man brought in a Navajo first phase Chief's blanket, valued at between \$350,000 and \$500,000. The owner thought it was worth very little and therefore the blanket hung over a living room chair in his house for years.

Such discoveries are national treasures.

When I think of a treasure I think of an accumulated or stored wealth in the form of money, jewels, or other valuables.

In Malachi 3:17 we are introduced to a different kind of treasure. A treasure that belongs not to men but to God. We read, “in that day when I make up my jewels.” The word for *jewels* can be translated *treasure*. The primary idea expressed here is a possession most precious to the owner.

What treasure does God prize most? Is it his vast and unsearchable universe? No. Is it his angels in heaven? No. It's God's redeemed people. We are God's treasure, we who are believers in Jesus Christ. Remarkable, that God sees us this way in Christ.

We read in Psalm 8:3-4, “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?”

The prophet Malachi declares not only does God think about His people, but He views them as His precious treasure. Therefore, the title of my message is simply, *My Treasured People. God sees His people as His treasure.*

We who are believers in Jesus Christ are God's special and blessed people, and this should encourage us in our walk with the Lord. There are three things I would like to consider from the text today.

1. An Unlikely Treasure

We consider gold and diamonds as prized treasures. These are highly sought after, and in large demand because of their great worth.

But what worth does Christ see in us, His people? We have no appeal. We have no attraction. We have no value in and of ourselves. If you look at my life and I look at your life there is nothing that glitters or shines. There is no special quality to behold in us. We are sinners.

The Bible makes it clear that "sin is transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4) and that "all unrighteousness is sin" (1 John 5:17). All have sinned, and fallen short of the glory of God. We are sinners.

Jonathan Edwards observes, "There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell, but the mere pleasure of God."

Christ saves His people while we were hardened, and darkened in our sin. We were good for nothing but to be tossed away, possessing no inherent value or good at all.

We read in Romans 5:8, “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Christ takes hell deserving sinners and makes them into His polished jewels. Let this sink in, saved sinners are God's treasure; they are dear to him. He will preserve them as his jewels, when the earth is burned up like dross.

Do diamonds, emeralds, or rubies ever loose their value or luster? No. So it is true with the child of God. God always sees us in Christ as his precious jewels. The way God sees His people in Christ will never change. We will always be His jewels because we are in union with Christ.

A Christian author writes, “I imagine that few things seen by the eyes of men are as beautiful as the breastplate of the high-priest, studded with the twelve rows of gems, each with its own separate beauty, melting into splendid harmony, that Lord

commanded Moses to make for Aaron. The stones on that breastplate were intended by God to represent his people, as he beholds us, perfect, spotless, holy and pure in his darling Son.”

Sinners are unlikely treasures. But Christ takes sinners and makes them into His jewels. Are you still living in your sinful corruption? Sin defiles but Christ saves. Trust in Christ and He will make you into a jewel that shines forth for the honor and glory of God.

God’s people are an unlikely treasure.

2. A Redeemed Treasure

The value of God’s treasure is not in the people themselves but in the blood of Jesus Christ. We are a redeemed treasure.

We read in 1 Peter 1:18-19, “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:”

The precious blood of Christ has a REDEEMING POWER. It redeems from the law. We were all under the law which says, "This do, and live." We were slaves to it: Christ has paid the ransom price, and the law is no longer our tyrant master. We are entirely free from it.

The law had a dreadful curse; it threatened that whosoever should violate one of its precepts, should die: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."

By the fear of this curse, the law inflicted a continual dread on those who were under it; they knew they had disobeyed it, and they were all their lifetime subject to bondage, fearful lest death and destruction should come upon them at any moment: but we are not under the law, but under grace, and consequently "We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but we have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

C. H. Spurgeon writes, "Your redemption by his death proves that your soul could not be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx or the sapphire; and when the ever-glorious God shall exhibit your sanctified spirit as an illustration of his

glorious character and work, no mention shall be made of coral or of pearls, for your worth will be above rubies; the topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal you, nor shall the precious crystal be compared to you.”

Robert Murray McCheyne prayed, “I am persuaded that I shall obtain the highest amount of present happiness, by maintaining a conscience always washed in Christ’s blood; by being filled with the Holy Spirit at all times, and by attaining the most entire likeness to Christ in mind, will and heart, that it is possible for a redeemed sinner to attain in this world.”

Are you trusting in the precious blood of Christ to redeem you from your sins? The blood of Christ washes the vilest offenders clean.

God’s people are a redeemed treasure.

3. A Peculiar Treasure

By the words *peculiar treasure*, God suggests that the lot of the godly will be different from that of the world; For we know that we have been chosen by God, before the foundation of the world, for this end — that we might be to him a peculiar treasure.

But when we are afflicted in common with the wicked, or when we seem to be even rejected, and the ungodly, on the other hand, seem to have God's favor to them, then nothing seems less true than this promise.

The Psalmist struggles with the thought of the wicked prospering and the righteous suffering in Psalm 73:2-19. He says, "But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They set

their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth. Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.

And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High? Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning. If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children. When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.

The Psalmist realized that the faithful are God's peculiar treasure, that they are valued by him, and that he shows to them peculiar love, as to his own inheritance.

We read in Exodus 19:5, "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all

people: for all the earth is mine:”

Psalm 135:4 declares, “For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.”

Peter writes in 1 Peter 2:9, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;”

God's people are "a peculiar people" (I Peter 2:9) which means "a purchased people." The Greek word here carries the idea of making a ring around something to mark it as one's own.

Christ has made a ring around us and claimed us for Himself. Salvation is the costliest item on earth. It cost our Lord everything to provide it and it costs us everything to possess it.

Both ideas are taught in Luke 9:22-24, “ The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.

It cost our Lord everything to provide salvation for His people. Luke continues,

And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.”

It costs us everything to possess salvation.

What is said of Israel could be said of all God’s people in I Chronicles 17:21, “And what one nation in the earth is like thy people Israel, whom God went to redeem to be his own people, to make thee a name of greatness and terribleness, by driving out nations from before thy people whom thou hast redeemed out of Egypt?”

God’s people are a peculiar treasure.

In closing, the prophet Malachi declares in chapter 3:17 that God’s treasures His people. This seems unlikely since we are sinners. But Christ came into the world to redeem sinners. Those who are washed in the blood of Christ are special in the eyes of God. Believers are God’s peculiar people.

Are you here today and outside of Christ? Come to Christ and He will save you from sin. Are you a believer in Christ? Then God sees you in Christ as His precious treasure. May every believer praise the Lord today for making us His glorious jewels. Let us pray.