

THE VALUE OF VALUES

Hillsboro Presbyterian Church

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The story of the rich, young, ruler in **Luke 18:18-30** is THE story for Americans. This man had great wealth, authority over others, and (Matthew tells us) youthfulness. Many would say he had it all...but valued having treasure on earth over having treasure in heaven. He put goods before God. What do you value more than God? Values are core beliefs that affect everything we are and do. Some say, "It doesn't matter what you believe" but that is just not true. Remember: **KNOW>BE>DO**. Our values determine our character which determines our behavior. In this message we're going to look at the Cause, the Cost, and the Cure of living without God's values. In coming weeks we will look at what values God wants His People to hold.

What is THE CAUSE of the lack of values in our society? Two words: Truth Decay. We no longer value truth. We value convenience and pragmatism. Is it easy? - and - Does it work? Many today don't even know the difference between right and wrong...or say, "There's no such thing as right and wrong. So there are no standards." What happened? We fell for three very deceptive philosophies that have replaced truth in our society.

1st) Individualism - means **live for myself**. Only I can be the standard of my life, only I can judge what's really true, only I can judge what's right and what's wrong and you don't have any place telling me what's right or wrong or true. I basically am my own god and I live for myself and I've got to do what's best for me. It is nothing new. **Judges 21:25 *In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.*** This is an easy philosophy to hold onto because it means I never have to feel guilty. I don't have to measure up to any standards. I run my own life. The result for Israel was anarchy. Anything goes. The only thing that matters is me.

2nd) Secularism - summarized in three words: **God is unnecessary**. Even if I believe there's a god, "I don't need God in my life." We have systematically removed God from every area of public life and we relegated God to Sunday mornings. God on demand. 50 years ago, most schoolrooms had the Ten Commandments hanging on the wall -- a standard of moral authority. 50 years ago, the majority of people in America went to church. Not so today. So where are people getting their morals? Television. **Romans 1:25 *They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator.*** Materialism is when we worship things instead of the God who created everything. Our idols are our possessions.

3rd) Relativism - means: **no absolutes**. "What's true for me may not be true for you and vice versa. Therefore, what's right for me may not be right for you and vice versa. So nobody can say what's right or wrong because all truth is relative." So we set our own standards to look good. OR "It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you sincerely believe it." Really? You can be sincerely wrong. If I believe a cup is filled with water but it's really filled with sulfuric acid and I drink it...then I would be sincerely dead. It does matter what you believe. OR "Don't be so judgmental and narrow minded!" Listen: people who tell you the truth are those who love you. OR "There are no absolutes!" You've just stated one. God has established the entire universe on universal laws - physical AND moral - that are universal and unchanging. Now Bible teaches we are to treat everyone with love and dignity. Jesus didn't tell people to do whatever they wanted; that it didn't matter...it did matter. Jesus treated everyone with grace and truth. **Ephesians 4:17-19** (Living Bible) ***Live no longer as the unsaved do, for they are blinded and confused. Their closed hearts are full of darkness; they are far away from the life of God because they have shut their minds against God, and they cannot understand his ways. They don't care anymore about right and wrong.***

What is THE COST of the lack of values in our society? Our culture is collapsing. Every day in America: 14 children/youth are murdered... 326 children are arrested for alcohol offenses...359 children are arrested for drug offenses...3356 high school students drop out of school...3533 babies are born to unwed mothers...6042 children are arrested...13,076 public school students are suspended from school...135,000 children pack guns or knives to school. In the time of this message: 228 children will be beaten, molested, and otherwise abused...57 kids will run away from home and 3/4 of those girls will end up selling sex to survive...20 children will attempt suicide. That is just part of the cost. **Proverbs 29:18 *"Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint.*** We're seeing that today. America was founded on 2 presuppositions: 1) our rights are endowed by our Creator - and 2) we are to follow basic moral laws that God has laid out for us. These were the cornerstones of our society. **Psalms 11:3 *When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?"***

What is THE CURE of the lack of values in our society? The cure is **rebuild the foundation** - that means start at the **beginning with God**. Why? **Because God is Truth**. What makes something wrong? Not because we say it's wrong but because it's anti-God. It is against God's character. God is honest. So when we're dishonest, it's wrong. God is faithful. So when we're unfaithful, it's wrong. God is just. So when we're not fair, it's wrong. When we are different from the character of the Creator who made us, it's wrong. When we are like the character of the Creator who made us, it's right. This is how we decide what truth is. **Proverbs 2:1,9 *If you accept (God's) words and store (His) commands within you...then you will understand what is right and just and fair - every good path.*** I know there are many schools and things that are trying to teach values without God. Let me quote a few people. **"Morality without God is impossible."** - Abraham Lincoln said that. Or: **"A moral government without God is impossible."** - George Washington said that. America's greatest leaders looked to God to guide them...and they looked to God's Word for God's guidance. **2 Timothy 3:16** (Living Bible) ***The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us do what is right.***

In the coming weeks, we will look to God's Word for 10 values God gave His people and has for us. These are the values behind the 10 Commandments – and beyond the 10 Commandments - that get us to the Spirit of the Law. We will learn that **God values: Responsibility, Trust, Self-control, Balance, Respect, Forgiveness, Purity, Fairness, Honesty, and Love**. These are foundational values for Christians. I encourage you to prayerfully and faithfully build your life upon these values...and your family...and our church...and our country...and our society. From beginning to end, remember: **"What is impossible (for people) is possible for God."**

We only have 3 choices for our values. We can say, "My values are going to be based on me". OR "I am going to look at what the world does." OR "My choice is God who is absolute, universal, and unchanging." Internal, external, or eternal – those are our 3 choices. As Christians, we have chosen the One who has chosen us...and tells us to **"come, follow me."**