

Worth of Souls
BOWS Stake Conference
November 17, 2019
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Introduction – Worth of Souls

- My message today is for all ages, but I would particularly like to invite you who are considered youth or young adults to listen for personal meaning in my words
- D&C 18:10
"Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God;"
- I would like to delve into the meaning of this scripture and what we can learn from it
 - What is it this verse is telling you and me?
 - What does the word “great” really mean in the context of this verse?
 - Why is the worth of a soul great in the sight of God?
 - What is it that is not said in this verse that has meaning to you and me?

What does “great” mean in this verse?

- What does the word “great” mean in this verse?
- One way to consider what great means is to ask:
 - If I were able to see a price tag hanging off of my soul what would it read?
- Let me circle back to this a bit later

What it doesn't say

- Let's look at what it doesn't say in this verse
- D&C 18:10
 - " Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God;"
- First and foremost, there is:
 - No list of exceptions
 - No qualifiers
- It doesn't read:
 - Remember the worth of *only certain* souls is great in the sight of God
 - Remember the worth of souls, *except for you Mike Baird*, is great in the sight of God
 - Remember the worth of *only those souls who haven't sinned* is great in the sight of God
 - Only those souls who serve in particular callings ...
 - Only those souls who have a certain skin color...
 - Only those on a sports team
 - Only those who are popular at school
 - Only those that are rich
- *Since this verse does not add exceptions or qualifiers then why should we?*
- Don't we do that sometimes?
 - We "devalue" others
- Sometimes we even will verbally or perhaps non-verbally, give the message to someone else that we devalue them.

Dad's experience

When I was a teenager my father taught me to never devalue others

- He illustrated this lesson by sharing with me an experience he had
- When he was younger, I think a young teenager, he was with was at a job site with his Dad, my grandpa who built homes as was a contractor
- Someone that my grandfather knew and associated with came by the job site and talked with him with my dad present
- This person asked my grandpa: Is this your son?
- My grandpa, trying to be funny answered and said in a derogatory manner: Yes, ain't he the ...saying a derogatory phrase
- This hurt my father deeply and he told me he vowed that when he was a father he would never, ever do that to his children
- And it is true, I don't ever remember my parents ever putting me down
- Sometimes we "devalue" ourselves
 - We think - I'm not worth anything
- It's like we take our price tags and cross out the price of "great" that God put on it and put a discounted sale price of "worthless" or some other price on it instead
- D&C 18:10
 - "Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God;"
- *Since this verse does not add exceptions or qualifiers then neither should we*

We are God's Children

- Why is the worth of a soul great in the sight of God?
- The answer is simple, yet profound
- In the Proclamation on the Family we read:
" ALL HUMAN BEINGS—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents,
- He is the father of our Spirits – we are his spirit children and are loved by him with an infinite love

Share a personal experience

- Let me share a personal experience where a glimpse of this Love and why we are of great worth was given me in 2012 at the stake conference that President Wight was called
- Background:
 - 1993 – 1999 served as scoutmaster
 - 2002 – 2009 Served as bishop of CM ward
 - 2009 – 2012 Scoutmaster
- Interviewed by Elder Anderson and Elder Echohawk
 - An experience both humbling and neat at the same time
- I was really hoping that I would be able to remain in my calling as scoutmaster
 - I loved being a scoutmaster
 - Combination of my love of the outdoors and of serving young men
- I wasn't called at that time to serve in the stake presidency – that happened 2.5 years later in 2014
- After the Sunday session of that stake conference several parents of scouts in our ward told me some variation of "We are really glad you weren't called into stake presidency so that you are still the scoutmaster for our son"
- Brothers and sisters how humbling is that?
- I was touched by their consideration of me serving their sons
- But it the full lesson was brought to me the following Wednesday night after our scout meeting.
- Let me read about this experience from my journal:

5 May, 2012

What is the worth of an 11-year-old boy in the sight of his parents?

One of the most humbling experiences for me surrounding our stake conference took place tonight. Sister _____ the mother of an 11-year old scout, who in about 7 months will be joining with the boys I serve as scout master for, said to me: “We were praying you would not be made Stake President because we wanted you to be the scout master for our son”. What can one say to that? I told her that was very kind of them to think so and that I was very happy to still be scoutmaster!

What a humbling thing. I think it gives me a glimpse of what the Lord means when the Prophet and other leaders say that it is not important where you serve but how. It is all the Lord’s work and is being scoutmaster any less important than any other calling? Not in the eyes of the parents of this 11-year-old boy.

The other thing that struck deep within my heart was a witness by the spirit that the love and worth of this boy to his parents was at type of the love my Heavenly father has for me and the worth I have in his eyes.

Satan is a liar from the beginning

- Why then if we are God's children and have great worth in his eyes do, we devalue ourselves and others?
- If God is not telling us to do so then who?
- The answer is obvious – it is Satan
- He is the one whispering in our ears
 - “Your not worth anything”
 - Or “You are not worth anything unless _____”
 - Successful in business
 - sports star
 - popular at school or on social media
 - on and on
- In the moment sometimes this is hard to recognize that we are listening to the whisperings of Satan
- Let me share a thought to help us
- Consider what we know about Satan from the scriptures:
 - He and his followers openly rebelled against and became an enemy to God desiring to have God's glory (D&C 76:26)
 - He became the father of all lies (Moses 4:4)

Probably most relevant in this context:

- He “seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself” (2 Nephi 2:27)
- He “was a liar from the beginning” (D&C 93:5)
- Given what we know of Satan – why should we listen to what he has to say about our worth?
- Is he going to make our “weak things become strong”? (Ether 12:27)
- No, he will use our weaknesses to drag us down – to be miserable like he is
- Is he going to cheer us up, support us?
 - No, from the story of Korihor in the Book of Mormon, whom Satan deceived (Alma 30:53) and then left to in the end be trampled under the feet of men, we learn in the words of Alma: “thus we see that the devil will not support his children at the last day, but doth speedily drag them down to hell.” (Alma 30:60)
- Has he sacrificed anything for us? - No
- When those whisperings come to our minds:

- “you are worthless”
- “you are no good”
- Remember:
 - Satan is a liar from the beginning, and he seeks to make us miserable like he is

What Does Great Mean?

- What does the word “great” mean in the verse
 - "Remember the worth of souls is *great* in the sight of God;"
- As I said earlier another way to look at this is:
 - What *is* written on the price tag of my soul?
- Well we don't have to speculate
 - We can look at three statements from God to know what great means, to know what is written on the price tag of my soul:
- Proclamation on the Family:
"ALL HUMAN BEINGS—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, **and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny.**
 - Testify:
 - Our nature and our destiny is to live with our heavenly parents
- D&C 18:11-12
"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son"
 - This is how God answers the question – what is my worth?
- D&C 18:11-12
"For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him.
And he hath arisen again from the dead, that he might bring all men unto him, on conditions of repentance."
- The Son of God, our savior and redeemer wrought an infinite atonement (2 Nephi 9:7) on our behalf
- He took upon himself:
 - "The pains and sicknesses of his people" (Alma 7:11)
 - "Death, that he might loose the bands of death" (Alma 7:12)
 - The sins of his people, that he might blot them out (Alma 7:13)
- He descended below all and paid an infinite price for you and me
- So, what does “great” mean?
- Infinite
- When I look at the price tag hanging off of my soul I see two things there
 - Price: Infinite
 - stamped: Already bought and paid for by the Son of God

TESTIFY