



Pentecost is not in Lockdown

Welcome (Mandy Schmickl)

We are valued

Invocation:

We are gathered in the presence of the Almighty God

He is omnipresent

He is the Creator of the whole universe

He is the only God that reaches out and searches communion with His creation

He cares for all creatures

He is Father, Son and Holy Spirit

May our gathering in His presence

- build you in your faith,
- bring peace in your heart and mind
- give you hope for the future

Our response:

As we approach your presence:

Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

We worship you for who you are

We praise you for what you are doing in our lives

We are grateful for your mercy and grace

I greet you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.



We are valued

People are currently deprived of their freedom. Being in Lockdown and under house arrest, without knowing for how long, has different effects on people's social life, but also their self esteem as some have lost their jobs, others are living in fear and are reluctant to go to the doctor and in the process are making themselves even more vulnerable. This also happened to people in the Concentration Camps during the Anglo Boer War.

I have two coins here that have the symbol of two sparrows: a ½ cent and a 1cent coin.



The story behind the two sparrows on the ½ cent and later on the 1c in the South African currency, apparently happened during the Anglo Boer-War¹ in the concentration camp where a young woman was starting to feel devalued when she saw a sparrow and was reminded of Jesus' words in Matthew 10: "*Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them*

will fall to the ground outside your Father's care ... So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows." Some years later it was decided to put the two sparrows on the smallest, least valued coin in the South African currency ½ c and when that was discarded it was placed on the 1c. Making it possible that the poorest of the poor will get the message that they are also valued.

In 1962 when we accepted the new currency (decimal: "Daan Desimaal")² I (4 years old) asked at a bank if I could get one of those Daan Desimaal sents. Someone in the line gave me a ½ cent and with that I could buy a big packed of sweets (which was like Christmas)!

The value of those ½ cents today is: \$³ = R18.18 (today)



1964



1969

¹ Image accessed from: <https://za.pinterest.com/pin/148337381451443378/> 17 May 2020

² Listen to the advert on Springbok Radio: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cVhueSjiuYU> (Afrikaans) & Even the Brits can learn something from South Africa: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EosWw5RfLE8>

³ Image & information accessed from: <https://worldcoinsinfo.com/coins/44/44uar15.jpg> 12 May 2020

Monetary value is not the only value that material things have. Think of something that you really value that no money can buy that from you. The same with us. Our value is not how much money we have in the bank, the house we live in or how many degrees we received (from Stellenbosch or Pretoria) ...

What makes us more valuable than many sparrows – or any other creature on earth?

Why would God put so much value on us?

Genesis 1:1,2, 26-28 & 31 (NIV) - ¹*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* ²*Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the **Spirit of God** was hovering over the waters.*

²⁶ *Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,^[a] and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”*

²⁷ So **God created mankind in his own image,**
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

²⁸ *God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”*

³¹ **God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.** *And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.*

God values us because we were created to His image. The only difference between us and most of the creatures on earth are the following:

- The only creatures of God’s creation that were made to his image was the humans, we, you, me, them, ...
- When we look at ourselves and to other people, irrespective of ethnic, gender, socio-economic and political background, we need to realise that God values everyone: “*God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.*” (Gen.1:31) because everyone was made to His image. When I worked on the streets here in Pretoria with drug addicts, prostitutes and homeless people I had to always look for something that reminded me of God’s image ... sometimes I had to look real deep, in their eyes, through their eyes into their soul and discover their own beauty: God’s image!

How much does God value us?

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. (John 3:16-18)

- He gave His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ as Saviour, to restore the relationship between mankind and Him.

No matter what sin you had done, the price was the life of His Son, Jesus Christ. The price was paid:

⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

²³ You were bought at a price; (1 Corinthians 7:23)

You are highly valued by God

Any valuable product has a guarantee. Most products come with a one year or two year guarantee, but none have an eternal guarantee.

- God gives His Holy Spirit as a guarantee of the full value.

¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. **When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.**

Heard the Gospel

Believed

Put our Hope in Christ

Marked with the seal, the promised Holy Spirit

- A **deposit**
- **Guaranteeing** our inheritance
- The redemption of those who are **God's possession**

Many people are born but because they have not experienced rebirth, they have not yet discovered their full value, even though they like Nicodemus are very religious. Once they experienced rebirth it is merely the beginning of the journey of discovering the value of being a child of God. It is only when we discover what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit, that we see life, our circumstances, our context in a different light. We can even see difficult circumstances (like Lockdown) as a Godly ordained opportunity, see the Bigger picture and when we engage with other people, we see them as God would see them.

My hope is that we could journey this discovery and re-discovery of a Spirit life together, while we are in Lockdown – but the Holy Spirit is not in Lockdown!

Thus, why are we more valuable than many sparrows?

We are not only God's creation

- we are made to His image and in Christ
- we become God's child and
- the Holy Spirit puts His seal as a guarantee.

The importance of knowing your value is that you will treasure yourself as well as value and appreciate your fellowman – see yourself and others differently than what the world does.

Tonight, we are looking at what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Romans 8)

Dear Father

Thank you that I/we was/were made to your image;

Thank you for showing me/us that you value me/us as your creation and that you were impressed with the result;

Thank you that you did not refrain from me/us when I/we sinned against you;

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for stepping into my/our place and paying my/our debt by dying on the cross;

Thank you, Holy Spirit, for leading me/us to Christ and for giving me/us the guarantee that I/we am/are God's child/children.

As your child/children, I/we would like to become the person that you want me/us to be and to understand what my/our true value is and how our relationship with you can add value to my/our life here on earth.

We pray for:

- those who are ill, heart-broken, depressed, live in fear, dismay that you will surround them with your love;
- those who are worried to experience your peace in heart and mind;
- those who are living in despair to gain hope;
- those who are in doubt to strengthen their faith.

May the love of God the Father – your creator, The grace of His Son our Lord and Saviour and indwelling of the Holy Spirit bless and keep you.

Amen