



Something I absolutely love to do is eat breakfast out. Usually it is at a little local restaurant that I have affectionately coined “a hole in a wall,” meaning simply it is a one-of-a kind place that is built, run and staffed by local folks. When I traveled widely in itinerant ministry, I always sought out these places over national chains. There is something intangibly enjoyable about such a way-station. Besides eating local fare which can range from wonderful to awful, it is usually staffed by a fascinating cross-section of waitresses and bussers who are ever so representative of Americana.

The smell of the place, the taste of the water, the consistency of the mashed potatoes, the flakiness of the dessert, and yes, the mannerisms and friendliness of the staff, the canned music choice; this is the stuff of which “hole-in-the-wall” restaurants develop character. Over the years I have gained many a little friend at the local spots I frequent. These little nooks often give opportunity for staff to sit down with you while you eat what they cooked. And over time, hearts not

infrequently share hopes and fears, dreams and nightmares in their lives. I find such encounters rewarding. Intermingled with all the tyranny of their “nows” lies an inherent value in them that many are unaware of. So very often, they seem to try to attain some measure of value through their love relationships. So few seem to know the Lord. Thus I find it a challenge to become a friend; often to them just a friendly old lady. But my heart longs for them to come into a life-changing relationship with One who would forever give them a value beyond any they can attain from any other.

So from where does one garner their self-worth? Upon what basis do we interact with others? The basis for one’s self-worth will have profound effects upon those with whom he or she lives and moves and has her being. What really is the source of a Christian’s value? Upon what do we tend to predicate our worth? How does “my opinion of myself” impact others?

It is possible that I place my value on the fact that I am a Christian, a born-again one at that. It may be I think well of myself because of actions or practices I *stay away from*. Some of us think especially well of ourselves by our born-again works, or by our ministries. Others do nothing at all, and are proud of their *lack* of works thinking *that* proves they live by faith alone. Some demonstrate their value by their apparel; some by the vehicle they drive, be it a Cadillac or a Toyota Prius. Some find worth in the type of

housing in which they live or what part of town they live in.

Another popular measure of self-worth is education. After all, one might suppose, *not everyone* has a college degree. And for some of us, that comes from a *Bible College!* Still others take pride in the fact that *in front* of their name (as opposed to *behind* their names) there might be an appellation such as Reverend or Pastor or Prophet or Bishop or even Apostle. But does *that* really give us value?

Suppose a person was all of these things; would they by virtue of those titles, positions and possessions be one bit better than a waitress at Mario's Pancake House? What is it, really, that gives a Christian their value? And how does one know if their self-image matches Christ's assessment of who and what they are?

I have wondered to myself lately what causes me to engage a waitress in conversation at a restaurant. I have wondered what (if anything) that waitress is left with when I get up and leave. Would she have known the Lord loved her? Would she have been drawn to the One, the only One who has loved her with an everlasting love?

I have come to the conclusion that my motives and self-estimation are far too often carnal and self-serving. I like to engage people in conversation, and while I tell myself it is so that someday I can talk to them about the Lord and perhaps lead them into a deeper walk with Him, often my motivations are really about me. I like to talk. I like to be engaging. I like for people to like me. I like to make people laugh. But notice everything I just wrote is about "I", not at all about the Lord! But the Prophet Isaiah says,

*I will greatly rejoice **in the Lord**, My soul shall be joyful **in my God**; For **He has clothed me** with the garments of salvation, **He has covered me** with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.*

**Isaiah 61:10**

Today I read this Scripture and it jumped out at me like a church bell ringing in a Kentucky valley. Loud. Clear. Strong. Gentle. True.

**Jesus is Lord!**  
**Jesus is King!**  
**Everything good in me is Him!**  
**Jesus is everything!**  
**Jesus is The One Person worth living for!**  
**Jesus is The One Person worth dying for!**  
**Jesus is The Only Person who gives me true worth!**

**Jesus is The One person worth humbly loving a waitress for!**  
**Jesus!**

So how might I give Him great joy, and draw others to Him?

With humility. **He is my reason** to rejoice.

With His love for others. **He has made my soul joyful.**

His salvation is a most expensive garment which **He purchased for me.**

He saw my own awful pride and sin. And out of a love so Divine as to be incomprehensible, **He covered me** with His beauty, with His righteousness.

And he has done this with as much happiness, with as much anticipation as when a bridegroom decks himself out for his wedding day, or as a bride dresses for her wedding day. With utter abandon to me, He has given His all. Without consideration for the enormity of the price my salvation cost Him, He has loved me. He has bought me. He has ransomed me.

**And with this exact same love, He loves my waitress.** As though He were a Bridegroom, **as though she were His Bride. His love makes us the same! He has made us worthy!** What wondrous love is this? What kind of god would love you and me so?

**Only One. Only One.**

So where does our value come from? From Him. Abba. Father. Jeshua. Jesus. Savior. King. Friend. Spirit. Comforter. Strength. Peace. Healing.

The next time I eat out, I'm going to see my waitress in a new light. And I pray she will see Him in a new way, too. Jesus, shine through me. Love through me, Lord. Jesus, radiate Your beauty through me. Lord, embrace this waitress through my demeanor. Shine Your love upon her to the extent that she will be arrested by the beauty of Your face and turn to You and discover You as her Greatest Friend, Savior, and Bridegroom King. And Lord, let my "tip" as the world sees it, be my "Amen!" to Your love for her, and to the immeasurable value You have placed upon us both.