



From Invisible to Indispensable

Life Sunday Children's Message

Verse: "For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

Materials: two quarters, three dimes, four nickels, and five pennies

I have two quarters here. Do you like quarters? Suppose I gave you these quarters. Would that make you happy? Here, I'll pretend to give you these quarters. Now you can pretend to be happy.

I also have these three dimes. Three is bigger than two, isn't it? That means more money, right? So if I offered to trade you these three dimes for those two quarters, would you go for it? All right, let's do it.

I also have these four nickels. Is four greater than three? It sure is. And isn't that even more money? Also, which looks larger, these nickels or those dimes? Right, it's the nickels. Which do you think weighs more, these four nickels or those three dimes? The nickels again, of course. So if I offered to trade you these four nickels for those three dimes, would you feel that's a better deal for you? OK, let's trade.

And I also have these five pennies. Five is more than four and certainly more than three and a lot more than two, don't you think? Doesn't that make these five pennies worth the most money out of all the coins here? So if I offered to trade you these five pennies for those four nickels, would you? Well then, trade me. Now, you've gone from two quarters to five pennies. Do you feel richer than you were when you started out?

Here's the problem. Five pennies are actually worth five cents, one cent apiece. And four nickels are actually worth twenty cents, five cents apiece. That means four nickels are worth more money than five pennies. And three dimes are actually worth thirty cents, ten cents apiece. That means three dimes are worth more money than four nickels or even five pennies. But two quarters are actually worth fifty cents, twenty-five cents each. That means two quarters are worth the most of all. If you'd never seen these coins before, you wouldn't have any way of knowing it just by looking at them. Only the one who made them could tell you how much precious metal, silver or copper, he put into them.

Sometimes we see people as coins. Sometimes we treat people like money. In our Old Testament reading, Samuel the prophet got confused by it. God sent him to find a king for His people. He said one of Jesse's eight sons would do the trick. Samuel thought the biggest, strongest, smartest, prettiest man would make the best one. After all, a king has to rule over a whole country and protect them from their enemies.



So when he met the oldest son, he just knew God was going to choose him. But the Lord told Samuel, “Heights and weights change. Looks come and go. They say something about the body, but they don’t tell you much of the person. That’s why I look on the inside at the heart. I care what the man is made of more than what he’s shaped like.” And the youngest son, the littlest boy, he became the greatest king in all the land and the whole history of the Scriptures.

Have you ever thought having more muscles or more makeup equals a better person? Have you ever felt like having more toys at home or more points in a game or more friends from school amounts to a better person? And have you ever believed you were a better person because of what you have or where you live? Or have you ever believed you were a lesser person because of how you look or how you sound?

Everyone has different numbers. And scores and sizes can’t measure how precious a person is. Distances and dollars won’t tell us how special somebody is. It’s sinful to think of ourselves that way, and it doesn’t work. It’s sinful to treat others that way; it hurts. Only the One who made us decides our value. Nobody has enough to be better than God. No one does enough to be as good as God demands. And there’s no number that can buy a person or a family or a home or happiness or heaven or love or life.

So thanks be to God! When He looks at our hearts, He doesn’t pay attention to us counting and calculating, as if people were numbers and we were money. He sees how He creates us, and the Heavenly Father breathes His life into us even before we’re born. God sees how He redeems us, and Jesus Christ comes to us and dies for us and rises beside us even though we’re broken. God looks at us and sees how He calls us, and the Holy Spirit takes us as His own treasures forever even after we’re old.

And His three is more than our one. And His grace and His forgiveness and His compassion and His blessing are better than all our subtraction problems. Because the Lord God Almighty wants us and He holds us and He keeps us and He cares for us. However many nickels or quarters we have, however many coins or points we pretend we are, we are His. Human hearts have the face of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit on them, just like these pennies and dimes. We belong to Him, and that’s what we’re worth.

You get to show the people you know. You can tell the ones you meet. Say, “You don’t have to have more muscles or makeup or toys or friends. Human life means more than what you have, where you live, or how you look. I’ll trade you something better. In fact, I’ll give it to you. It’s God’s love.” I look at your heart and her heart and his heart, and I see how much God loves you, from before you’re born, even when you’re broken, and after you’re old. And I know how precious that makes you. Let’s pray.

Dear Heavenly Father, You see us as treasures and you treat us as special. Let me also love everyone around me with my words and my actions, no matter what they look like or what they can do, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.