

*“The Surpassing Worth of Knowing Jesus” Isa 43:16-21 / Phil 3:4-14 / John 12:1-8 (4/6/25)*

What is worthy in our lives? What do we value and live by? Because of God’s grace, our church’s contribution, and pastor Erika’s effort, I am so thankful that I had the opportunity to have the ICD classes. In the ICD classes, I could learn that many churches in the Wisconsin Conference are facing many challenges these days. And I also heard many reasons why the churches faced many challenges. However, personally, I believe that the church these days is in challenges because the church has lost the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus.

When I say the church does not know that knowing Jesus is worthy, many people disagree with me. Many Christians say, “We know knowing Jesus is worthy!” Actually, I agree with their disagreement. I believe and I know Christians know that Jesus is worthy, and knowing Jesus is valuable. But, let me give an example.

Sometimes, I go out with my children without my wife to give my wife a free break from the children. Going out with two kids without my wife is difficult and makes me really busy and stressed. But, I try to have this time for my wife as much as I can. Every time I went out with my children, when elderly people saw my children in a restaurant, Walmart, or any other place, they said this 99% of the time. “Oh, your children are so cute! Time is flying. They grow up so fast. Enjoy this time

and enjoy their age.” I know my children are growing very fast, and I know I should enjoy the time with my children while they are still young. But, the elderly people always say that when I was struggling with catching flying tomato spaghetti, and cleaning spilled apple juice in restaurants, or when I was busy putting back the toys that Sua secretly put in the cart, or when I was running to the restroom while my children said they needed to pee. I know the time with my children while they are young is worth it, but I do not get it when I have a lot of struggles with my children. Knowing “my children’s young age time is worth it,” it does not affect my life a lot.

If Christians know the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus, it will change Christians’ lives. In today’s Philemon Scripture, Paul said he considered everything that he had before he knew Jesus garbage. The worth of knowing Jesus changed Paul’s life. Paul was very passionate about persecuting Christians, and he was very proud of his background as an elite Jew. But after he met Jesus, his life was changed. He devoted his life to knowing Jesus and to making people know Jesus.

In today’s Gospel Scripture, Mary poured a pint of pure nard on Jesus’ feet and wiped his feet with her hair. In this time, people need to pay 300 denarii to buy a pint of pure nard. Three hundred denarii was the average annual wage at this time. If we calculate this into the annual wage of the present time, a pint of pure nard that

Mary poured was worth about 68,000 dollars. She knew that Jesus was worth more than expensive perfume. She knew the worth of being Jesus in her home, and she did her best to honor Jesus.

People behave according to what they value. If Christians knew the worth of knowing Jesus, it might change the church. I saw, experienced, and worked at many churches that were busy with many seasonal church work and ministry. But I did not see many churches busy with reading or studying the Bible, prayer meetings, and letting community people know Jesus. If Christians knew the worth of knowing Jesus, people in the world would know Jesus through the church and Christians.

What is worthy in our lives? What do we value and live by? I hope we do not live our lives valuing things that are not eternal. I wish for us to live our lives valuing knowing Jesus. We are continuing to have the Lent season. Lent is a great time to reflect on what we value and live by. Lent is a great time to be with Jesus in our lives. The season of Lent encourages us to use our time to know Jesus in our lives. I hope we can know the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus this week of Lent. And I hope we can experience the blessing of God through the worth of knowing Jesus during this week. Amen.