**God Values Us (Acts 23b-29a)**

 For God, all of us have value, no matter what our situation looks like. Greetings dear brothers and sisters as we bring up a foundational truth from our Christian life…

 What is God’s stance toward His creation? Does He love some people more than others, or are there other reasons why His anger or zeal are kindled at times? Today we’re going to meditate aloud about these issues, keeping in mind that our spiritual life is based on God’s act of salvation through Jesus, but also on His identity as a God of love. Of course, if God was not one of love, today we would not have a means of salvation and new life. Therefore, we’re going to establish today the scope of God’s love through the words of Peter the Apostle. Once again, I am telling that for God, all of us have value, no matter what situation we find ourselves in. Let’s speak, then, about this foundational truth.

 For God, every person is worthy of salvation, and as they accept Jesus, their uncleanness from their sin is wiped away. The concept of uncleanness was connected to an unclean faith. Various nations were considered to be unclean by Scripture and thus the Israelites because they did not know the true God. Not only that, but they followed various evil entities and idols, considering them as gods when they were simply demons or mute statues. In addition, unclean Gentiles (non-Jews) did not follow the laws of Moses, and since the Messiah (Jesus) had not come yet, Jews were compelled to stay away from Gentile homes, since there was a danger of becoming defiled or committing sin by eating there. However, there were also Gentiles that were called “God-fearers” who worshipped the God of Israel but were not able to participate in every religious service because they had not been born Jewish.

 It is important for us to understand the above distinction: the non-Jew could also be considered “clean” if he (or she) worshipped the true God and proved it with works, just as Cornelius the Centurion had been doing, for example. Yes, it is true that man is born in sin, as King David says in the 51st Psalm. Yes, man is fallen and weak in nature. But through God and His Savior Jesus Christ, man is worthy or “clean” enough to be “cleansed”. If we take into account that Jesus healed non-Jews and went to sinners’ houses such as Zacchaeus (who was considered unclean), we understand that for God, there is no location where the Gospel should not be preached. Thus, through His Son’s work, God considered all of humanity worthy of a new life. God saw man as worthy, because when the New Adam defeated Satan and death, a new spiritual reality was put forth before all of humanity.

 There was once a famous speaker from Yale University who said the following:

"The disease of the world today is a loss of faith in the moral nature of man. What we have lost is a conception of the dignity of life and of the imperial position of man in nature. Instead of thinking of the august character and destiny of man, we have been preoccupied with him as one of the highest order of primates. Man has been found to be a speaking animal. The view that he is also the son of God was an amiable, but deluded, notion of our ill-informed ancestors." In the search for the origins of man's physical life we seem to have forgotten altogether something far more important—the meaning and the objectives of man's life, not only whence came he, but whither is he going.”

 If we acquire the latter conviction that man is God’s creation’s masterpiece and that man is going somewhere after this life, then we can understand why every human being is worthy to hear the Gospel. Because God loved you and me, He revealed the Gospel. For all those that have not heard it, God prepares workers to go everywhere and to preach and pass on the Good News about Jesus. It has even happened that the Lord has visited unbelieving people through dreams and miracles, and they have repented and come to Christ. If the Lord God loves the unbeliever that much, then how much more His adopted blood-cleansed children!

 Therefore, realize your value as a human being in God: because He created you, gave the invitation to salvation, and he accompanies you in life with the Holy Spirit.

 God loves all of humanity. This is why the scope of evangelism is international today. May the Lord’s love towards you cause you to see humanity through His eyes, as people that can receive salvation and be changed into new human beings. For God, every person is worthy of salvation, and as they accept Jesus, their uncleanness from their sin is wiped away. For God, all of us have value, no matter what our situation looks like.

 Therefore, let us value human beings – because they also are worthy of hearing the Gospel, because God is their Creator. May the Lord Bless you all. Amen.