

**OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BABES:  
YOU ARE SPECIAL  
MATTHEW 10:29-31  
NOVEMBER 18, 2012**

As the father of two grown girls,

I can say from experience that parenting is a multi-task sort of vocation.

One of the most important things a parent can do is read to their child.

I was blessed with parents who did just that.

Though they might have been tired by a long day,  
they turned off the TV and read to us.

Reading to your child will encourage them to learn to read.

Good readers are more successful at school  
and consequently have better job prospects later on.

It can also build into them some important values.

Our children's book for today is one that communicates values of the most important kind.

Love and respect for other people.

And knowing the true value of your own life.

**READ BOOK WITH ARTWORK ON SCREEN: YOU ARE SPECIAL, BY MAX LUCADO.**

**Crossway Books, 1997, Illustrations by Sergio Martinez.**

How are you with getting stars and dots from other people?

How much of your self-esteem,

how much of how you feel about you,

is determined by what other people say about you?

Or what you think they think of you?

Stars and dots?

It might be what your parents said about you when you were growing up.

Did you hear that you were lazy? Stupid? Talented?

Beautiful? Smart? A liar?

Why couldn't you have been a boy? Or a girl?

Why can't you be more like your brother or sister?

How much of how you think of yourself was shaped by what your parents said?

What a wife says about her husband,

what a husband says about his wife,

leaves stars or dots all over us.

What has been said to you?

What have you said?

Do you get dots from our culture that judges you by

your weight, you shape, your skin color, your attractiveness, your income?

Today's world teaches that you are just

the most recent result of random, biochemical evolutionary process,  
just another animal.

You've heard of PETA, People For the Ethical Treatment of Animals.

Their founder Ingrid Newkirk has said,

"When it comes to pain, love, joy, loneliness, and fear, a rat is a pig is a dog is a boy."

A rat is a pig is a dog is a boy.

The Bible tells a very different story.

The Bible says we are created by God, created in the image of God,

(Ge.1:26-27)

and so have an inherent value far beyond the rat, the pig and, yes, even the dog.

In the beginning their sense of self-worth was so solid,  
 they “were naked, and they felt no shame.” (Ge.2:25)  
 But we lost that perspective because of the reality of sin.

If you read the story of the fall and sin,  
 when Adam and Eve ate the fruit in the garden,  
 you’ll see that one of the first casualties was the sense of self as OK, as worthwhile, as acceptable.

They ate the fruit and then, the text says,  
 “They knew they were naked and they” covered up. (Ge.3:7)

Shame and guilt entered the picture for the first time.

Dots all over.

Now they did not see themselves as OK,

but as guilty, vulnerable, emotionally naked and needing to cover up.

They hid themselves from each other.

And then they tried to hide from God!

Sin pushes God out of the picture,

erasing the value of a human life based on the Maker,  
 so it’s all about dots and stars.

You gain value only according to what you can accomplish  
 or how you might be used for someone else’s pleasure.

So babies, especially the unborn,

and the elderly, and disabled people are seen as of lesser value.

They’re not productive.

In fact, they cost us something in time, attention and resources.

We end up with a utilitarian view where

the value of the individual depends on what that person can do for me.  
 The very young, the very old, the disabled, are of less value.

And maybe we can go ahead and get rid of them.

Can you see some hints of that sort of thinking today?

It’s interesting to me that, in the biblical story,

in Genesis 3 human beings lose sight of the inherent value of human life,

and in Genesis 4 the first murder takes place.

(Ge.4)

But the Bible insists that the true value of the human individual is not based on what we can do for someone else.

It’s not about stars and dots they try to put on us.

### **MATTHEW 10:29-31**

Jesus says you are far more valuable than many sparrows.

The very hairs on your heads are numbered by God.

Which is noticeably simpler in some cases than in others.

On the other side, I’m told God only made a few perfect scalps,  
 and he put hair on the rest of us.

The hairs of your head are numbered by God.

God knows even the smallest details of your life.

He cares about all of it.

He cares about you.

Not even a sparrow falls to the ground outside of God’s attention.

Nothing escapes him.

And you are worth more to God than many sparrows.

Because you were created by God,

and unlike those other creatures you were created in the image of God.

It means being created with a special capacity for interpersonal relationships.

Relationships with other people and a relationship with God.

And that brings us to a whole new layer of value that God sees in you.  
 We know that “God so loved the world that he gave his only son.” (Jn.3:16)  
 Jesus died for the sins of the whole world.  
 For you.  
 He has invested that much in you.  
 God sees that much value in you.  
 He thinks you are to die for... literally.  
 And if you’ve received that gift from him,  
 you’re adopted into his family, (Ro.8:15)  
 made his son or daughter, (Jn.1:12-13)  
 and his Spirit lives in you. (1Cor.12:3)

It might do all of us some good to meditate on those things from time to time.  
 If we would begin to see ourselves as God sees us,  
 we need to hear his perspective on a regular basis.  
 We need to go up the hill and visit our Maker every day.

Regardless of what other people say, regardless of what our culture says,  
 dots or stars,  
 what God says about you still stands.  
 The question is,  
 Whose opinion of you is most important to you?  
 Whose opinion of you is most important to you?

My brother and his wife had a new baby this summer.  
 His wife has two daughters by a previous marriage, Breck and McKelle,  
 girls who have grown into beautiful, smart young ladies.  
 They are close enough to my brother they both took his last name.  
 My brother and his wife had a daughter together, Sally, who is now in grade school.  
 She is smart as a whip and full of character.  
 Then came their little boy, Jack,  
 who is now just over one year old and expanding his world every day.  
 Then came the surprise baby.  
 Yes, a surprise baby.  
 Ginny was born with Down’s Syndrome.  
 You can imagine the flood of emotions.  
 But it does not change their love for her one bit.  
 Jill and I discovered this Max Lucado book while shopping for a baby gift for Ginny.  
 Needless to say, it was a purchase we could not say “no” to.  
 We want Ginny to know she is special.  
 Special to God, special to us.  
 We got to meet her for the first time last night.  
 She really is special.

And, by the way, you are special too.  
 And if anyone says otherwise, just remember what God says.  
 What he says is what is true.

### **SERMON NOTES:**

Created by God in God’s image (Ge.1:26-27)

No shame (Ge.2:25)

Sin, covering up (Ge.3:7)

Human life not valued, first murder (Ge.4)

God sees value in each person. (Mt.10:29-31)

Jesus died for you. (Jn.3:16)

You're adopted into his family. (Ro.8:15)

You're God's son/daughter. (Jn.1:12-13)

You have his Spirit in you. (1Cor.12:3)