

A Heavenly Exchange

by Max Lucado

It's that time of year again. More than any other season, we're reminded of the remarkable gift of the Savior...a God whose rescue mission transported him from the throne of glory to the heart of humanity. Why did he do it? Because your soul was more important than his blood. Your eternal life was more important than his earthly life. Your place in heaven was more important to him than his place in heaven, so he gave up his place so you could have yours.

Would you do what Jesus did? He swapped a spotless castle for a grimy stable. He exchanged the worship of angels for the company of killers. He could hold the universe in his palm but gave it up to float in the womb of a maiden.

If you were God, would you sleep on straw, nurse from a breast, and be clothed in a diaper? I wouldn't, but Christ did.

If you knew that only a few would care that you came, would you still come? If you knew that those you loved would laugh in your face, would you still care? If you knew that the tongues you made would mock you, the mouths you made would spit at you, the hands you made would crucify you—would you still make them? Christ did. Would you regard the immobile and invalid more important than yourself? Jesus did.

He humbled himself. He went from commanding angels to sleeping in the straw. From holding stars to clutching Mary's finger. The palm that held the universe took the nail of a soldier.

Why? Because that's what love does. It puts the beloved before itself. Your soul was more important than his blood. Your eternal life was more important than his earthly life. Your place in heaven was more important to him than his place in heaven, so he gave up his place so you could have yours.

He loves you that much, and because he loves you, you are of prime importance to him.

He points to the sparrow, the most inexpensive bird of his day, and says, "Five sparrows are sold for only two pennies, and God does not forget any of them... You are worth much more than many sparrows" (Luke 12:6-7).

God remembers the small birds of the world. We remember the eagles. We make bronze statues of the hawk. We name our athletic teams after the falcons. But God notices the sparrows. He makes time for the children and takes note of the lepers. He offers the woman in adultery a second chance and the thief on the cross a personal invitation. Christ is partial to the beat up and done in and urges us to follow suit. "When you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind" (Luke 14:13).

Want to love others as God has loved you? Remember that the humble heart honors others. Again, is Jesus not our example? Content to be known as a carpenter. Happy to be mistaken for the gardener. He served his followers by washing their feet. He serves us by doing the same. Each morning he gifts us with beauty. Each Sunday he calls us to his table. Each moment he dwells in our hearts. And does he not speak of the day when he as "the master will dress himself to serve and tell the servants to sit at the table, and h will serve them" (Luke 12:37)?

If Jesus is so willing to honor us, can we not do the same for others? Make people a priority. Accept your part in his plan. Be quick to share the applause. And, most of all, regard others as more important than yourself. Love does. For love "does not boast, it is not proud" (1 Cor. 13:4 NIV).