

# Chronicles of Diversity

*Your leadership weekly*



*Moose Jaw Lake on the Wonder Springs  
Solitude Center*

## How much?

*27 August 2003; Volume 5, Issue 31*

In our modern world, when we think about obtaining virtually anything, one of the first thoughts, normally the first thought, that comes into our mind is, "How much?" This is usually reserved for monetary distinctiveness, but intangible prices quickly work their way into our decision matrix.

Because of that training, we have a very difficult time dealing with things that we cannot easily affix a tangible value. When David bought the threshing floor that would one day become the site of the temple of God, he said when Araunab was willing to donate it, "No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God with that which costs me nothing." (2 Samuel 24:24)

As I was walking somewhere shortly after having my little finger operation last week, I began reflecting on how blessed my life has been, especially after these medical procedures, but it has come with a price, a price that I would have not been willing to pay if I would have known the full price up front.

Was it worth the cost? My answer probably has much more to do with my emotional state than any actual cost. Because I know that the Lord can make up those perceived costs of mine in a moment. But that will not change the fact that the blessings I now treasure have come with a price.

These last few weeks we have been dealing with the rare opportunities for solitude and silence. How much are you willing to pay for the opportunity to experience this life changing gift?

If any fear is part of your pricing mechanism, chances are, no the facts are, you will not be able to set a proper value up front, to be alone with yourself, alone with God.

During my time in Eastern Washington I had the opportunity to go down to a piece of property in my inheritance that joins the Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area, behind Grand Coulee Dam. This property is right in the middle of the least accessible region of the lake.

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The purpose was three fold. One was to spray the noxious and obnoxious weeds as I had promised the county weed control officer. The second was to see if there was any possible way to get any water in this small canyon that steeply falls into the lake. That turned out to be a trickle of possibility, but perhaps enough for recreational uses. Third because of the remoteness, to sample the opportunity for solitude and silence.

On this weekend in August, solitude and silence did not exist. Houseboats and other obnoxious water craft noisily traversed this remote region of the now passive Columbia River, as their occupants sought a time of refreshing from their life in the more settled environments of man's habitation.

Earlier that week I had the opportunity to speak with the person who assessed the potential Wnder Springs property for the Pend Orielle County Assessor. His fair market value for the property was about \$200,000 less than the asking price. This hits the point, "What is the value of a unique location for finding solitude and silence?" By Seattle standards this property would be really cheap, but what is the actual value? How much?

In my mind since that time, I have been pondering these questions and I have not come up with any type of satisfactory answer. In that regard, I would like to ask the readers of Chronicles, to help find an answer. Can solitude and silence in any way fit into your lifestyle? How much would you be willing to spend believing that the future value will be more than your present investment. I suppose the proper way to say it, "How much are you willing to invest in solitude and silence, knowing that it can change your life, but more importantly the lives of others less fortunate than yourself?"

So, if as Richard Manning says that solitude and silence are the most rare commodities on the earth, what is their value? More than gold, silver, precious gems, a new Lexus or Mercedes?

However, not as rare, how much for family, friends, freedom. Not only freedom from the tyranny of others and the state, how about the freedom from the tyranny of yourself? This brings us to the free gift of grace offered alone in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary.

Just as most of the world does not understand the value of solitude and silence, so too most people do not understand the value of this amazing grace. We all know things of value must cost us something.

The evangelical church must answer to this misunderstanding of cheap salvation, as it hands out salvation tracts on the street corner, as close as your television screen, or altar call. God's gift of grace in historic Christianity is a gift of God and hence free, but it is not without cost. It is so costly that unlike solitude and silence, its foundation is not found in the world, but only in the pre creation love of God.

This week I listened to a portion of a radio program where a Baptist fundamentalist was discussing variations of the faith with a reformed Calvinist. Missing from the discussion was the legalistic charismatic, but the two did a great job on their own moving the straight and narrow path into the broad and easy ditches of dead moralism and doctrine. I also caught a portion on television of health and wealth preaching.

Missing the great point, were them all. Perhaps, I did not get the proper context of any of the discussions, but the topic is not American morality, or Reformation doctrine, or gifts of the spirit, or getting your due from God. The point of all of these points of reference is what does it cost you, to get where you need to be with God. In short, they have all added some sort of works to the free gospel gift. And that additional cost does not sit well with the non Christian world, nor with God.

To put this in some sort of context with solitude and silence. Solitude, isolation, and silence are the prime agents of change of the human personality, not your sense of self worth, or the size of your bank account, or your education, or your moral behavior, or the love of your family.

Acceptance of the gospel itself, in its freedom alone, is free and makes you free. By definition. Even though we try valiantly to change the terms and the conditions, God has ordained the how much. And it is outside our ability to grasp, similar to solitude and silence, by our choices, before having experienced the power of this costly gift.

So where do the works come in? First of all any of the fruit of our works are not inherently bad on their own. It is just when we elevate these gifts to the level of godliness or above, that they become a

form of idolatry, and we are guilty of breaking the law of God as written in the Ten Commandments. Those tablets of stone that are in the news at this time in Alabama.

But more importantly in working to achieve these worthy goals, we miss God's goal, that is the work itself. The work of God to recreate us into the image of Jesus Christ. What we have missed is just what the Jews have missed. We want our Messiah to be a ruling king, in power and in majesty. We want to be His top notch helpers based on our merits. That is the image we seek.

How much? We will pay any price not to have to be the suffering servant, the man of sorrows, the author of grace.

It is in the work alone, that hardship, that pain, that disappointment, that we learn the true price of grace. That true nature of the work will not be experienced however, without the wilderness and paying its price. If it was true for Jesus, it is more than equally true for you. In the solitude is where you receive the gift of perspective.

The context of David in our verse from Second Samuel truly illustrates this principle. David with the best of intentions decides to take a census of the people God has given him to rule. He learns that he has 1.3 million soldiers, but also of his sin to do the work in the first place. Through his choice of God's plague as a consequence for his sin, he loses 70,000 people. This solitary wilderness of leadership costs David much more than the money he shells out to buy the threshing floor. But the lesson David learns about himself, and the grace and mercy of God is priceless.

How much? What price should I expect to pay to purchase a priceless piece of property? That is only priceless if it can become a place to reflect upon the priceless gift of grace offered alone in Jesus Christ. The assessor of Pend Orielle county has put his assessment on the fair market value of the land, the trees, the artesian springs, the lake, and the buildings. That is only the beginning, but how do you proceed from here?

### *Seeds for Prayer*

While my left hand is in a small cast from my operation last Wednesday, it was a success and the ligament that allowed my little finger to dislocate more than frequently was reattached to where God made it in the original. The tourniquet was on my arm for twenty minutes. The whole procedure added an additional couple of hours. The biggest hassle so far has been trying to write this week's message. The cast has a tendency to engage the caps lock button on the keyboard and I cannot use my little finger because it is hidden under the plaster. Late Wednesday I have my post operation appointment, which hopefully I will get some type of splint that is more workable and learn more about the continuing recovery.

I would value your contributions both prayerfully and otherwise, relating to this potential Wonder Springs center. There is a view of the lake from the deck of the manufactured home on the property in the PDF version, and I have more pictures and other literature if you would like to see them.

Please pray for these requests.