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The stone of value

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It has been a rather lazy time in my life. When I say lazy I suppose it comes from the French word for laissez or whatever will come. When we deal with words we deal with their origins. Some people can relate to their names and others cannot. For example the name AKIN is like a best friend and worst enemy. On one hand the name relates to pain and of that I am quite familiar. People like to know what their names mean. So when I say I am A Kin to humanity they can all relate. In Tagalog Akin means "you are mine" again speaking of personal possession. A way of describing romance perhaps? I guess the work akin is one that mean like or to be like. So if I am akin then I am like you. So we have a connection to man and a connection to people. One that pulls us into conversations and gives us an opening.

Today I met a woman with the last name of Martell. She said it means strength. I told her it had a deeper meaning. Mar is connected to that which marks and leaves us with an indelible impression. Some could see it negatively as not just an impression but a scar. But Mar is also connected to the word for sea or ocean. So Mar and tell has a deeper connection as well. Tell speaks of those who sang songs or those who told stories. Tell is an ancient burial for knowledge. Tell is also a form of the word Tale so we could say Mar Tell means to sing or speak stories while riding the ancient craft across the sea. But like all words and names most of us forget the meaning of names and words and phrases and fall into a kind of funky "you don't say" mentality. Yet I suppose if we could wake up and begin to sing a few songs maybe we might get excited.

Speaking of which this last weekend was a great one for garage saling. Saling to me isn't just taking your boat and catching the wind but getting in your vehicle and following your eyes to the next sign. Signs are important to us. They point out to us the way to go and give us incentive. I get excited about Garage Sales. I can look around at my room and I realize that a good half of what I own is a product of a garage sale. Some people disdain sales and some turn their noses up but if we are honest we go to sales because we want to get a bargain. And people can be like pack rats. Pack rats collect junk and sometimes that junk has to be parted with. I admit that when a couple from our

church had a sale to raise money for teens going to camp I got rid of enough to fill up the back of their van. I could probably do it more than once and not 'miss' the stuff I part with. But all of us can be like that. We collect and use things until they lose value to us. Watching the antique road show I am amazed at the things people found and salvaged on the way to the garbage worth thousands.

One of the questions I've been thinking about today and for most of my life is the question of value and property. Jesus didn't condemn those who owned property. He only condemned those who had much but refused to part with it. I wonder sometimes what would happen if we lived in a world with only rocks. Everyone collected rocks but Grog. Grog says "Give up rocks" but we didn't want to because we had rocks coming out of every pocket. In a way that is what 'things' are. They are like rocks that weigh us down. Solomon cried out that he had done everything and seen everything under the sun and all was vanity.

What is vanity? Similar to pride its the idea that we need more and more and more to make us happy. We walk over everyone on our way to value. But value is the real question of the spirit and the mind. If I want value I find it in God and in my relationship to him. But sin, like value, is something we place our hopes in. It draws us into a relationship with things and when we have fulfilled that relationship we find that they didn't bring us happiness like we thought. But here is the key to happiness. A relationship with God begins with time and time spent with God brings us to his desire for us. That we be happy. Now God knows that we have need of things. Things are not evil nor is possessing things evil. Most of us know the scripture that says "The love of money is the root of all evil." That is true. But money, like things, is not evil. Scripture speaks of those who will live on land and raise crops and enjoy life. Owning land and owning property is not the evil we think. It is when those things become the center of our existence and we 'pride' ourselves in them while leaving God out of the picture that trouble enters in.

Now we have a pocket full of rocks as an adult and people tell us we are doing wrong by being selfish or we are not giving enough away. Well, maybe I said it wrong. After all rocks are so common any kid can pick them up and fill his pockets full of them. God must have loved rocks to make so many. So, if the love of money is evil and we see the love of rocks as evil or the love of

things as evil then aren't we in a dilemma? After all God made rocks by the zillions and if rocks were how we lived by that Jesus became the chief rock or cornerstone. Hmmmm. So then what is the evil of loving rocks or loving money?

After all there are islands where rocks were the main source of currency. So we have a problem that doesn't seem soluble or solvable. I love rocks means I am evil? After all if I spend 'money' on rocks because I love rocks which is more valuable to me. The rocks or the money? So I have a problem or is it that I see a sense of humor in life. That money is like a desire and a desire is like a key and the key is like a choice. Now I know that I want that new car or new house and I can take the lottery and pay them big bucks for a 'key' to that house but there is no guarantee that the key will work. I am playing with chance. And chance is something most of us don't give much thought to.

Perhaps we should.

For if the love of money IS the root of ALL evil then money must be like chance or like the lottery. It must have something to it that leaves out God. For God made rocks and if we use 'rocks' as money then we give value to the rock but we give the rock to pay the price for something we truly value. Where people go wrong is perhaps in the value they place on the rock. They take its true value and they change it so the rock becomes something it was never intended to be. A source of value to which is inscribed words or truths that were never intended for it. Now if I want value I have to understand what true value is. And I can't find it in chance nor in ascribing something to the rock that isn't there. I find if I do that I take the true value of the rock and negate it so I can then ascribe to it the value I want it to have. I take Gods choice for the rock and toss it out and then give it an artificial value which means the true value and meaning is lost.

Now if Christ became the cornerstone and is the rock of my salvation why then did we ascribe artificial value that was never intended to be there? I have seen this in the church and in 'faith' circles and in the way we treat scripture. It, the Bible, has become a book of chance inscriptions which we pull out one by one to give value to our needs. But when we align ourself with scripture the way God intended then the rocks of the law and the rock of grace fall into place around the true cornerstone. The cornerstone being Christ Jesus.

So I know there is value in what Christ did for me but I don't

have a way of 'loving' the rock or the value God placed in Him without Gods help. God wants me to see that true value begins with a name. And a name is the one given to Jesus. It begins with a word which is a name. And the value is one that changes in one way but remains steadfast in another. And all of us need to understand that value is what God places on it. Rocks are there for the taking and children fill heaven with stones they find but we need to understand that Jesus is the rock of eternal value and upon His name we find our needs supplied. So if we hope to find value in this world it all begins with a sailing lesson upon the sea of Galilee. The Galilean named Jesus who gave us life that a rock might walk upon the water. And that is a story of the sea that I want to tell someday.