

## He Only Has Eyes for You!

A sermon based on Isaiah 43:1-7

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The song “I Only Have Eyes for You” was composed in 1934 by Harry Warren and Al Dubin. Have you heard it before? It’s been recorded by numerous musicians, including Peggy Lee, Frank Sinatra, and Art Garfunkel. *Rolling Stone* ranks the Flamingo’s version of the song #157 in their list of the 500 Greatest Songs of All Time.

“I Only Have Eyes for You.” It’s really quite the love song, wouldn’t you agree? Listen to some of the lyrics: “My love must be a kind of blind love; I can’t see anyone but you... Maybe millions of people go by, but they all disappear from view, and I only have eyes for you.”

You know, you’ll probably never find it on any top 500 Greatest Songs of All Time lists, but the Lord has His own version of this golden oldie. It goes something like this: “you are valuable in My eyes,” or, in our NIV’s, “you are precious and honored in my sight.” Same thing. That’s the love song God serenades you with in Isaiah 43. And today, we are delighted as we hear him sing those words to us. You delight to hear those words sung to you. Because you’re special. God only has eyes for you!

Now, the *you* in our text is singular, not plural. It’s *you* not *you all*. Why the big deal? Singular *you* denotes a focus that is individual and intimate, particular and personal. And you see the same specific concern for *you* comes in Isaiah 43:1, where God says, “I have called you by name, you are Mine.” His care is cosmic and universal, to be sure, just like the familiar children’s song, “Jesus loves the little children (and adults), all the children of the world...” Or, John 3:16, “For God so loved the world.” There’s no doubt about that. But to emphasize the value God places on you as an individual, He employs twenty-five second person word forms in Isaiah 43:1–7, all of them singular. Over and over again it is you, you, you . . . you! “You are valuable in My eyes.”

Those who first received these words were far away from home. These Israelites were in Babylon, and Babylon said, “You are nothing in my eyes.” Babylon was distant, aloof, cold, and calculating. It called Judean exiles slaves and prisoners, mere cogs in their vast and ever-growing political machine. And then these encouraging words from God, “You have value...in my eyes, you are precious.”

What about you...and you...and you? THE REAL QUESTION OF THE DAY: Where do I find my value? Where do each of you find your value?

To get at this, let me take you back to one of my childhood memories. Maybe it was one of yours, too.. As a child, one of the places my family went was to the state fair, maybe it was Six Flags. Anyway, the park had all kinds of rides and enough sticky cotton candy to amaze my little life. But what fascinated me most were all the fun house mirrors. Some mirrors would make me look tall and skinny. Others would make me look short and fat. And still others would make me look ugly and creepy. None of them reflected who I really was.

And neither do the mirrors that surround us. Just turn on the TV, surf the net, go to a mall, pick up a magazine. There we see perfect people with perfect families and perfect marriages delighting in perfect jobs. And when these images seductively summon us, what do we see? We see that we don’t measure

up. You name it—we don't have it. Addicted to how the world sees us, we begin feeling tall and skinny, short and fat, ugly and creepy. If we look into these mirrors long enough, we begin to languish, lose heart, and feel worthless. My looks aren't there, my house isn't the best, my job stinks, as do other parts of my life. And it weighs on you, doesn't it?

And when we feel worthless, we not only discount ourselves, we begin discounting everybody else. You name them—we discount them: spouse, child, colleague, parent, boss. When we feel like nothing, we treat other people like nothing. We sell each other off for cut-rate prices, slashing and burning reputations with piercing words. Obsessed with what we don't have, we get stuck in the game of gossip, the silent stares, and the jungle of passing judgment. And it's all sin, isn't it? Sin that causes us to lack true self-worth when we look at our lives. Sin that causes us to unfairly devalue others in a mean and nasty-spirited way.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, let me be as clear as possible. How you stack up in the eyes of others does not reflect your true value. Your value comes from the Lord, and He says, "You are valuable, precious, honored in My eyes." It's the same *you*—singular, not plural. Specific, reserved, and exact. It is *you!* And *you* are incredibly valuable. The Hebrew word here, translated "valuable or precious," conveys significance, stature, and substance. You are prized, priceless, preferred, and precious.

Let me explain. Value is based on ownership. A car owned by Elvis Presley is worth a lot more than my 2008 Ford Escape, which the harsh Alaskan driving environment has damaged, dinged, and I've dented and almost destroyed! My car's worth is connected to the fame of its owner (or lack thereof); which means not a whole lot! Don't want to even think about what we could sell it for, especially when the last vehicle we traded in for it, Becky's beloved minivan, only netted us \$100.

So, is your value based on ownership? The Lord says in Isaiah 43:6–7, "Bring My sons from afar and My daughters from the end of the earth. Everyone who is called by My name, and whom I created for My glory, whom I formed and whom I made." God has created and claimed, fashioned and formed us. We are His sons and His daughters.

And you know, value is not only based on ownership. It's also based on how much someone is willing to pay? God says in Isaiah 43:4, "I will give people in exchange for you, nations in exchange for your life." When Israel passed through the Red Sea, the Lord paid for it with the life of Egyptians. Now Israel was about to leave their captivity through the Persian King Cyrus and God will pay for it with the life of Babylonians. Our God is willing to lay down people's lives for us.

And for us? How can we trust the Lord to place value on us? Think about this? Isaiah 40:26 says that He calls every star by name. The Milky Way is 104,000 light-years across and contains over 100 billion stars. To count them one by one would take a person over 3,000 years. According to the latest probings of the Hubble Space Telescope, there are hundreds of billions more galaxies in the universe! And this God calls each of them by name! This is the God who says in Isaiah 43:1, "I have redeemed you, I have called you by name," and in verse 4, "You are valuable in My eyes." This is the One who says, "I only have eyes for you."

Who? *You*. Still you, just you, always you, forever and ever . . . you! Are what? Valuable, cherished, of infinite worth. Where? Not in the eyes of Babylon, or in our lives, sin, the world, Satan. There we are nameless numbers and state-owned statistics, another notch on their belt. Where are we valuable? Not

in our eyes. When our eyes are wide open, we see our unfaithfulness, dishonesty, idolatry, and ongoing sin.

So where are we valuable? God says, "In My eyes!" To quote Luther, "Although in supreme trials you seem nothing in your own eyes and are condemned as one cast off by the world, in My eyes you are glorious. Therefore you may be vile in your own eyes, in the eyes of the world, and even in those of your brothers (as happened to us on the part of our Enthusiast brothers). Fear not. In My eyes I regard you as a precious jewel."

How precious? How valuable? 1 Peter tells us, "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect." You see, in the waters of baptism, God claimed you as His own; and on a hill called Calvary, He paid for you with His Son, Jesus. With precious blood of the perfect Lamb of God that far surpassed any monetary amount we could come up with, God redeemed you (again, a word we saw last week as well). This means God has more than just eyes for you.

He has hands and feet for you, nailed to a cross. He has a head for you, crowned with thorns. He has a side for you, pierced by a spear.

But there is *more*. God has a heart for you. Jesus says, "As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you" (John 15:9). God has ears for you. Jesus says, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7). And God has body and blood for you. Jesus says, "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins" (cf. Mark 14:23).

So, is there really any question what your value is? The worth God puts on you and gives to you is all that matters. Find your value in him, in his blood, in his suffering, in your forgiveness. Find eternal value in his loving and protecting arms. And don't leave. Delight! God only has eyes for you! Amen.