

You Matter Series: Part 1

Today as we begin our Your Matter series I want to share a scripture with you.

Psalm 139:14 (KJV) I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

The Psalmist was acknowledging the fact that he understood that God had created him.

And then I like how the NLT translates vs. 13

Psalm 139:13 (NLT)

13 You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb.

- I like what vs. 14 says - "Wonderfully made"

We especially in America applaud and even worship to a degree, celebrities.

All you have to do is walk past the magazine section at the grocery store to see who it is that matters in the celebrity world.

On February 10, 2007, Barack Obama, a junior Senator from Illinois, announced his candidacy for the presidency of the United States in Springfield, Illinois. I don't mean to imply any disrespect for him, but until February 10, 2007 I had never heard of the man, but then he runs for president, and all of a sudden, everybody in the world knows who he is.

- We know who Jay Cutler is.
- We know here in Indiana who Matt Hasselbeck is.
- We know who Oprah is
- We know who Former bodybuilder/movie star/California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is

- We know who these people are because of their success, because of their achievements.

But we also know of some people who until tragedy struck were seemingly insignificant.

Prior to Tuesday morning Sept 11, 2001, life was normal in New York City. Thousands of people went in and out of the World Trade center buildings without thought or concern every day. Neither you nor I or the rest of the world paid much attention to these people.

That is until four passenger airliners were hijacked by 19 al-Qaeda terrorists.

- Two of the planes, American Airlines Flight 11 and United Airlines Flight 175, were crashed into the North and South towers, respectively, of the World Trade Center.
- Within an hour and 42 minutes, both 110-story towers collapsed.

In total, the attacks on 9/11 claimed the lives of 2,996 people (including the 19 hijackers).

- It was the deadliest incident for firefighters and law enforcement officers in the history of the United States, with 343 and 72 killed respectively.

Until this day, I had never heard of the Taliban, al-Qaeda, or Osama bin Laden. So they didn't matter to me, neither did they matter to most of the world.

- The world's eyes were not on the Lower Manhattan in New York City prior to 9/11.
- Nor were we concerned about the 2,996 people who would die that day,
- But in an instant, the world stopped what it was doing and marveled at the destruction and loss of life that was happening before our eyes.

- All of a sudden thousands of lost and trapped lives became the focus of the world's attention that would last until October 6, when the last Federal rescue team would leave ground zero.

The world didn't know who Genelle Guzman was prior to 9/11.

- I had never heard of her, but on September 12, 2001: At 12:30 p.m., rescuers searching the north tower wreckage for survivors found Genelle Guzman.
- She would be the last of 18 people pulled from the rubble alive.

Today the names of every single person who died in the terrorist attacks of the World Trade Center are inscribed in bronze around the twin memorial pools at 180 Greenwich St, in New York City.

- Their names engraved to be a constant reminder to us all that they were significant and that their life mattered and that they would be remembered.

The Chilean mining accident", began in the afternoon of Thursday, August 5, 2010 as a significant cave-in at the troubled 121-year-old San José copper-gold mine.

- The buried men, who became known as "Los 33" ("The 33"), were trapped 2,300 ft. underground and about 3 miles from the mine's entrance.
- Many people thought the miners all died in the collapse or would starve to death before being rescued,
- But every news reporting agency in the world watched on for 69 days, until on October 13, 2010 when an estimated 1 billion people watched via television and the internet, the last of the miners being winched to the surface.
- I had never heard of him before, but I'll never forget seeing 54-year-old foreman Luis Urzúa... the last man rescued, after 70 long days trapped below the Atacama Desert, being pulled from that hole in the ground.

On Friday evening November 13, 2015 in Paris the capital city of France at least 6 terrorist set off bombs and began shooting until at least 130 people were killed and hundreds more were wounded.

These innocent seemingly insignificant people who were simply going about their lives were each and every one, identified by local authorities, and recognized by media reporters around the world within hours of the attacks.

One moment these people seemed insignificant.

- Unimportant
- Inconsequential
- Almost invisible.
- Just a few of the 7.3 billion people living on planet Earth.
- But in an instant, both terrorist and innocent victim seem to matter to the rest of the world.

We all know who these people are, why?

- Because some exponential event took place in their life.
- Because for one reason or another the world stopped for a second to notice them.

But we need to understand today that people...

- People that you and I bump into every day...
- People that we just pass by...
- People that we pay attention to and people that we choose to ignore...
- Matter to God!

Every single person living on this planet matters to God.

Matthew 10:29-31 (NLT)

29 What is the price of two sparrows—one copper coin? But not a single sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it.

30 And the very hairs on your head are all numbered.

31 So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows.

- Not only is every sparrow important to Him, but also every single hair of every single person on the earth matters to Him.
- You've heard me say it before, it was not the nails in His hands and feet that held Jesus to the cross, it was His love for you that held Him there.

There is an attitude that Jesus had.

It's an attitude and mindset that not every Christian in the world completely understands.

- People mattered to Jesus.
- The adulteress thrown at His feet mattered to Him.
- The little children the disciples tried to push away mattered to Him.
- The widow woman who left the smallest offering at the temple mattered to Him.
- His friend Lazarus who became sick and died mattered to Him.
- People Mattered to Him.

You need to know today that You Matter to Him!

In Jan 2013, Jeremy and I visited one of several villages in West Bengal India.

- The name of that village was Bazrapakur.
- Little did I know that our visit to that little village would have such an impact not only on our own lives, but also on yours.
- For it was on that day that some little orphan boys sang to us a song that pierced our hearts.
- You all heard the story and raised tens of thousands of dollars to build an orphanage and school that will eventually house and care for 36 abandoned and orphaned children.
- Currently there are 18 children who live at the orphanage.
- On New Years Eve, Pastor Bipul messaged me and asked me if the 10 abandoned children he recently found living in horrendous circumstances could also join the orphanage.
- I told him without exception, "yes".

- Until Feb of 2013, these children would have never had a chance to be loved and cared for and educated.
- We didn't know this village or these children even existed.
- But to you and I here this morning, they are not insignificant nor are they invisible,
- But - They Matter!
- www.OpportunityHope.org

I understand that in this world that we live in, things are pretty confusing at times and we want to hate those who hurt other people.

But do you know who most of the terrorists are?

- You know who most of the gang members of Chicago and New York and Los Angeles and every little town in between are?
- They are children who no one cared about until some religious extremist or some drug pusher decided to take them in and show them some attention and make them feel important to the point that that kid would do whatever evil they were shown to do...
- All because someone made them feel like they mattered.

I believe its invaluable important that every child and every young person who walks into the doors of this church knows first and foremost, that They Matter.

- They matter to me
- They matter to you
- And they matter to God!

People matter

- You are not just another face in the crowd
- You are not just another number on the world's population clock which by the way will have grown over 13,500 people in the 1 ½ hours we will be here today and 100,000 people so far this morning.
- Understand something.... You are not just important to us when a tsunami or a bomb hits or when you become a movie star or sports star or the next president of this country.

But you matter right now.

- Exactly where you are.
- Exactly who you are.
- You Matter
- Your existence is not insignificant.
- You have value
- Your life means something to all of us.
- Your soul is invaluabley important to us.

Just down the road from my house are a couple of small graveyards.

- I'm not talking about the big one on 30 we all drive past on our way to Wall Mart,
- But these are little ones that no one has been buried in in over 70-80 years.
- Some of the head stones are over 100 years old.
- I'm absolutely confident that if I said a single one of the people's names that are on those headstones, no one in this room would recognize them, but apparently - they matter.
 - Somebody thought enough to build a fence to go around the graves,
 - The grass gets mowed,
 - If a headstone falls over, someone goes and stands it back up.
- These people who have been gone for generations apparently still matter.

Can I suggest something this morning?

- If someone is going to build a fence and cut the grass and stand up the headstones of people who have been gone for nearly 100 years in this community...
- Then I believe someone should build a fence, (how many know where I'm going?)
- And cut some grass
- And stand up some headstones so to speak; of some people who are living right now, all around us, who feel like their life just doesn't matter.

It shouldn't take a 9/11 or a Tsunami or a Paris France in your life for us to pay attention to you and realize how much you matter.

We put a 5x16 ft. banner on our front corner not just to announce the series today,

- But to also genuinely say to the thousands of people who pass by here every day that You Matter to this church!
 - You are not just a number.
 - You are not just another passing car.
 - You are not just “traffic”.
 - But to us, You Matter.
 - Your family matters.
 - Your marriage matters.
 - Your kids matter.
 - Where you’re at in your life matters to us.
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- Good or bad.
 - Pretty or not so pretty,
 - Skinny or not so skinny,
 - Young or old,
 - Single, married, divorced, widowed,
 - Straight, BI, or Gay – (There I said it) You Matter.
 - Loving life or hating the world - You Matter.
 - Never been in jail a day in your life or just got out last night - You Matter.
 - “Red or yellow black or white, you are precious in His site” – You Matter
 - Whatever your past religious experience - You Matter.
 - Whatever religion or doctrine you hold to or don’t hold to – You Matter
 - Love Jesus or Hate Jesus – You Matter
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- We love you.
 - We care about you
 - We’re praying for you
 - We’re concerned about you
 - You matter to us as individuals
 - You matter to us as a church

- You matter to this pastor and this ministry team
- And most of all, You matter to God
- You don't have to become famous
- You don't have to become a statistic
- We don't have to read about you in the newspaper
- Or see your face on the nightly news

You don't have to destroy your life to get our attention

- You Matter.
- Right now You Matter.
- Right where you are in your life at this very moment. You Matter.
 - Your life has significance
 - Your life has value
 - Your life has worth
 - You Matter.

Did you know that before a person who has faced a disaster in their life can move forward they have to first understand that They Matter?

- To someone,
- Either to yourself
- To your family
- Your friends
- Or to God.
 - In order to pick up where you left off.
 - In order to get your life and consequently your walk with God back on track, you need to understand one simple thing.
 - You Matter!

Hey, this church is all about seeing people's lives changed.

- We are all about people who may feel like you just don't matter coming to an understanding that not only do you matter...
- But that you can be a part of something that is making a difference in other people's lives right here in our communities and around the world.

That's why we saying today, You Matter!

- We'll be saying it a lot this year.
- Not only will I be saying it to complete this series over the next 4 weeks...
- But you will be hearing overtones and undertones in nearly every message that is preached here this year to say to every individual who walks through these doors that "You Matter"!
- You can trust that when you invite your friends and family to Acacia that we are going to be saying to them "You Matter".
- We're going to be doing everything we can from the moment that they walk through the front door of this church until they get in their car and go home to say to them, You Matter.

Acts 2:39 (KJV)

39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

That promise that God made through the Apostle Peter was that every single person on the planet mattered.

They mattered so much that He wanted to fill them with His Holy Spirit if only they would receive it.

You matter to God. And you matter to us.

- I'm looking for the miraculous in your life.
- I'm praying for His providence and blessing in your life.
- I'm believing for amazing things in your life.
- You Matter!
- Your Life is Significant – There's a reason you're still here.
- Grace sees your past but is concerned about your future.

Close...