



You Are Special

INTRODUCTION

“You made us for Yourself, and our heart is restless until it finds it’s place of rest in You.” Augustine

Put simply, We were created by God for God.

There is a truth friends and the sooner we learn this the better...everything we need, everything truly we hope and long for, like peace, hope, and eternal joy, is found in one place and that is Jesus. You won’t find it any place else. Our hearts are restless until we place our full and complete trust in who Jesus is and what He has and continues to do for us...

This is why the Bible tells us to...

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.”

and we must trust God in all things...I read a quote earlier this week by Tim Keller...

“The Bible tells us that our real problem is that everyone one of us is building our identity on something besides Jesus.” - Keller

Our real problem is that we, all too often, are trusting something other than Jesus. We look to others for our sense of worth and meaning. We look to things to bring us lasting joy. We might be hoping our career will give us healing and hope, bring us lasting joy...it won’t. We might be hoping that a significant other, a boyfriend, a girlfriend, a husband or wife will be the thing that makes everything okay...it won’t. If I could just have a little more money, a better bottom line than all my problems would disappear...they won’t. If I could just have more success than I would be fine...you won’t. If I could just get everyone to like me than I will be happy, you won’t. If I could just get that new toy, or that amazing video game system, or have more friends or have more popularity, or better grades or that cute new outfit...Anything we place our identity in other than God is an idol and idols will always disappoint you.



But Jesus...

“For the Scripture says, “WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.” Romans 10:11 (NASB)

“And this hope (the hope that comes from our trust in Jesus) will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.” Romans 5:5 (NLT)

“I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him.” Romans 15:13 (NLT)

This is my prayer for all of us...that we would be so wrapped up in who Jesus is and the everlasting love He has for us, that our hearts would be filled with His love, that everyone and everything else would be “rubbish...utterly worthless” when compared to the “infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord”

You are Special...

God’s love, shown to us by Jesus upon the cross, is what changes everything. God uses it to transform us from the inside out.

I think Punchinello represents us. Broken, sad, lost, helpless and hopeless, trying real hard to be someone, to do the right thing, but failing miserably. Punchinello had finally had enough of life as he knew it. He saw his brokenness and decided “This isn’t right.” So he goes to see Eli...and I love that scene at the end, where the dot falls off. It doesn’t fall off because Punchinello does something. He doesn’t follow a three step plan to get rid of dots. He says “I think He really means it.” All he does is believe that what Eli says is true. He trusts it as real, He begins to experience the everlasting love of His creator...and when that happens, Punchinello’s transformation begins. The Gospel, as it is revealed in this story, is what transforms Punchinello.

“Resounding in your heart and your mind the gospel of grace is the announcement that all the incomprehensible good news is true...you are forever loved.”



LUCIA....

“Only the Gospel changes the heart, and therefore, only the gospel can lead to lasting change in our lives.” - Keller???

Seeing the love of God and the wondrous glory of Jesus is what restructures our hearts and reorders our desires. The beauty of God is what transforms our hearts.

Seeing the love of God shown in Jesus sets us free and changes our hearts so that we want to know and serve God. We learn to love God by seeing His beauty and love revealed to us by Jesus. Trust in Jesus is not only the way we become Christians, it is the power that enables us to do, every moment of every day, the very things Jesus commands us to do.

Is your heart captivated by the glory and beauty and everlasting love of God? Your identity is whatever makes you feel the most significant. What makes you feel the most significant is what you will put the most weight upon.

Your heart was made in such a way that only the eternal love of God can satisfy it. We weren't created for another human being we were created for God. Trusting in His perfect love is what drives out fear, worry, and insecurity. Jesus is life itself. He is what makes us special.

Jesus is better than money. He is better than human love. He is better than any earthly pleasure, He is better than popularity. To be known and loved by the creator of the universe is better than approval of any person.

If we would simply understand the gospel, what a treasure God's presence, love and acceptance are than even when life is goes really wrong you will find a joy that sustains you because you will know that you are special to Him. When life punches you in the face, you will be able to say “But I still have the love and acceptance of God, a treasure I don't really deserve.”

When you are satisfied with God's approval of you in your life you will no longer worry and obsess over what everyone else thinks about you. You can quit hiding your faults, quit pretending, and let people see the real you because you no longer depend on their admiration to give your life meaning.



It's a liberating, freeing truth that you have all you need for everlasting joy. His approval and presence are all you need for life and happiness.

And we need to be reminded of it daily. It's why Eli tells Punchinello "Come see me everyday."

Those people who really believe the Gospel become like the Gospel and that is what it means to live loud. Those people who have had their lives totally transformed by the gospel show it by becoming like the gospel. God changed us by pouring out His underserved kindness on us.

You will never find the bottom of God's love.

When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen. Ephesians 3:14-21

Isn't that a tremendous truth...

Sometimes you just have to look out at the ocean and say "Wow...that's a bunch of water"

All of us need to begin to understand that only Jesus, His love and forgiveness can give us hope. We need to see that our true need is Jesus himself and the everlasting love He offers us. To know that I can be fully accepted by Jesus no matter what I do or don't do.



Most people feel that they have to work in order for God to love them and care for them...but Jesus said on the cross “no, that is not how it works.” Jesus lived the life we should have lived and the died the death we should have died so that we could know that God loves us and when we experience this love that is too great to understand, then and only then can we be truly satisfied with life.

Jesus says “My purpose is to give a rich and satisfying life.”

ENDING

You, Lord, are all I have, and you give me all I need; my future is in your hands, How wonderful are your gifts to me; how good they are! I praise the Lord, because he guides me, and in the night my conscience warns me. I am always aware of the Lord's presence; he is near, and nothing can shake me. And so I am thankful and glad, and I feel completely secure, because you protect me from the power of death. I have served you faithfully, and you will not abandon me to the world of the dead. You will show me the path that leads to life; your presence fills me with joy and brings me pleasure forever.

Psalm 16:5-11