

## BELOVED

***“As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water. Suddenly the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and resting on Him. 17And a voice from heaven said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!” (Matthew 3:16-17)***

There is a big difference between son and beloved son.

**The Definition of Beloved: Loved and Lovable.**

*What are the words or definitions that you are hearing over yourself?*

Now Jesus was about 30 years old when this event happened.

What are other definitions he must have heard for 30 years.

Jesus may have heard the words:

***Peasant.***

***Unlearned.***

***Poor.***

***Mistake.***

***Carpenter’s son.***

***Jew. Oppressed.***

**The sacred voice of God, was NOT telling him who he was in light of:**

- **His social class** (Peasant).
- **His formal education level** (Underprivileged).
- **His nationality** (Jewish).
- **His backstory**, who and what his parents were and did (Peasant class with questionable birth).
- **His occupation** (Carpenter).

But rather:

**The divine voice defined him as he was in the realm of eternity.**

- Who He was before he entered time and space.
- And who He would be afterwards.
- His timeless identity.

**Our timeless identity is our truest identity.**

Who we were before we were born and after we die.

It's not in who you became, but in who you always were.

For example, being athletic *can't* be your truest identity, because you didn't always have muscles, speed, coordination, and agility- and you won't be able to keep them.

Your truest identity is not who you eventually became, but who you were even in your mother's tummy.

Your truest identity cannot be a doctor, lawyer, businessman, or engineer, because you became those things after schooling, testing, and interviewing.

**Being the *beloved*, is not something *became* you...it's what *begot* you.**

Now you can grow more aware of that identity.

But you don't become it.

You are it.

Beloved was your identity before you got popular, got married, got money- and it will be your identity when after you lose your job, spouse, and physical abilities.

***“We are intimately loved long before our parents, teachers, spouses, children, and friends loved or wounded us. That’s the truth of our lives.” - Henri Nouwen***

***“I have loved you with an everlasting love...” (Jeremiah 31:3)***

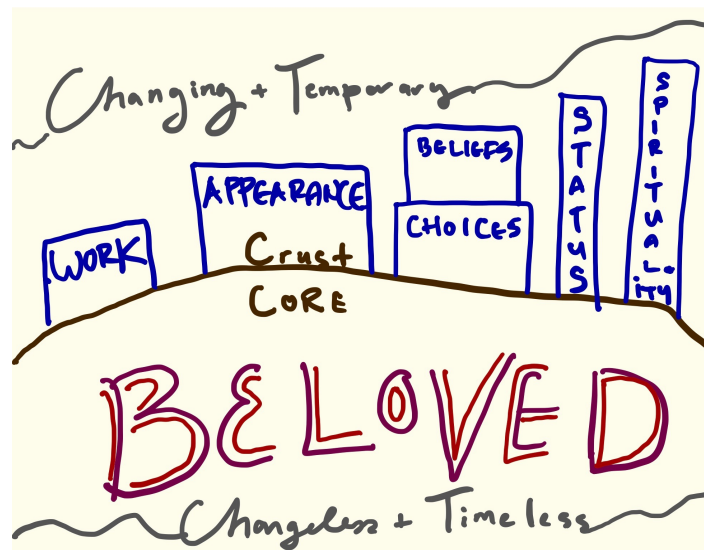
I think about that song, *“Jesus loves the little children...Red, and yellow, black and white- they are precious in His sight...”*

Two questions about that song:

- 1) **Ok, if babies, (unborn babies + newborn babies) are all precious in His sight, when do they fail to be?**
- 2) **Or, could it be that it remains the core of their identity- their changeless identity?**

**Our core identity is not our crust identity.**

(Show Visual #1)



While there may be some additions and subtractions to the crust: damage, pesticide, markers, and stickers, but the core remains.

**Our core is that we are beloved.**

- \* That is why we crave love from the core, because we are the beloved.
- \* Our core was made by love and for love.
- \* That's why it feels so good to be loved.
- \* We are resonating with our core.
- \* That's why rejection is so painful and damaging.
- \* Because it goes against the core.

**Broad shoulders and big biceps with no core is no use.**

We need a strong core, or else everything else becomes a liability. The core is that we are loved and lovable.

I remember once hearing a sermon by David Wilkerson, a man who gave his life for God, a fiery holiness preacher. Built one of the greatest churches in the nation in the heart of New York City. He talked about being harsh and not knowing the father's heart.

(YouTube, 15:14-17:00) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDwnkZFXu8>

I've read Mother Teresa's diaries and after all her sacrificial work in India among the dying, she said, *"I felt utterly abandoned by God, I felt so unwanted, so unlovable."*

I could relate to what they said, although I'm much younger, and have not accomplished nearly as much, I know that nagging feeling.

And I want to strengthen my core.

Don't you?

Our choices don't change our core identity as the beloved.

- If God commands us to love all, our neighbors, our faith community, and even our enemies, it's because He does too.
- He may not love how they are living or all the choices they are making, but he still considers them his beloved.
- He may not agree with the crust, but He has great affections towards the core.

**How can we love our enemies and forgive them from the heart?**

- It's when you understand the crust doesn't define or delete the core.
- The crust of their behavior doesn't determine the core of their identity.

Don't get too crusty.

- When you are aware of your core identity and affirmed in it, you become a blessing to others, and you help others become aware of their core.
- If you get often depressed over your crust, you may be someone who makes others insecure about their crust too.
- If you believe your crust is your core, you will influence others to believe that as well.

The healthiest, more life-giving relationships are when humans can connect core to core.

- When two people who know they are the beloved connect, it's empowering. But, too often relationships are not core to core, but crust to crust.
- We only see someone as a job, a body, a face, by their social economic status, their choices (even ones they made a long time ago).
- When we can only see someone's crust, it reveals that we may only know ourselves by our crust too.
- Often we pay too much attention to our crust, and not enough attention to our core. Yet, it's only locking into the core that can get you grounded.

A friend of mine was looking to buy a house in an area that the land was constantly moving, so the house was settling. One side of the house was about six inches lower than the other side of the house.

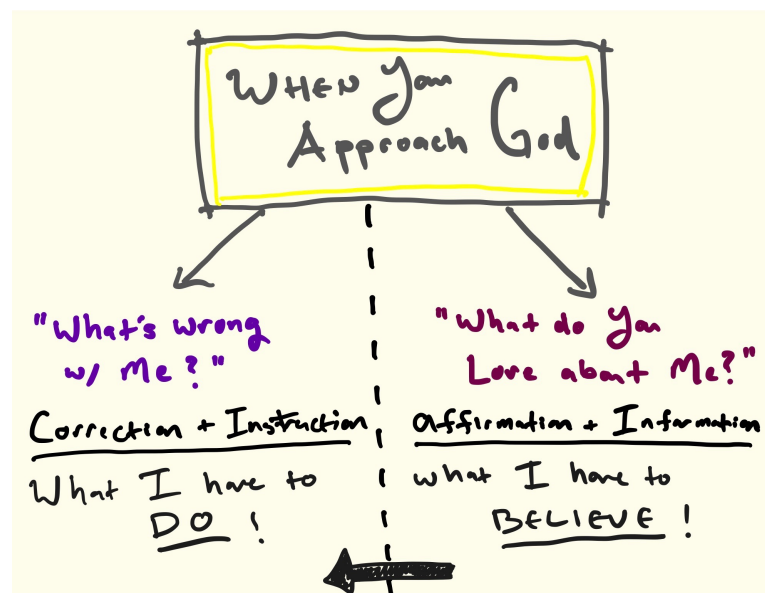
- It just looked lopsided. You can just pass the potatoes by putting it on the table because it would just slide down to the other side.
- She did some research and got some estimates on what it would cost to keep the house from continuing to sink, and one company told her it would cost her 20,000 dollars, because they would have to anchor the house to bedrock.
- Otherwise, even if you touched up the shallow parts of the foundation, all of it would continue to sink. So in order to get the house grounded, it would have to drill into bedrock.
- Our core identity is the bedrock. It's important that we get anchored to our core because life is full of storms and earthquakes.

To be fathered by God means we must receive affirmation from Him, not just correction. Teachers give correction. Fathers give affirmation. Teachers give information. Fathers give identity.

We don't enjoy prayer as much when we are only fishing for corrective words.

### (Graph #2)

Which tone do we have an easier time hearing, hearing what's right about you or hearing what's wrong with you? When you are all alone, which station do you hear?



Chances are, we know the God of correction, but not the God of affirmation.

Perhaps our parents trained us to listen to correction or what's wrong with us, that we have a hard time tuning into and believing what is lovable about us.

Ed McGlasson asked a powerful question, *“Did your dad ever pull you aside and say, ‘Son, this is what I love about you...’. Or, ‘My daughter, this is what I so love about you...’”*

Chances are, we only heard what was wrong with us. So we really want to hear what's right with us, but when we do, we don't always believe it, or it's not enough or just evaporates.

We've been so accustomed or conditioned to hearing what's wrong with us, and we don't have a grid for hearing what's lovable about us.

**“The real work of prayer is to become silent and listen to the voice that says good things about me.” - Henri Nouwen**

But at the river Jordan, Jesus received affirmation from the Father.

Jesus is being defined.

Not according to how people saw him.

But how God saw him.

Not what creation thought.

But what the Creator intended.

**Our truest identity in our purpose, not our press.**

- The manufacturer's purpose determines your truest identity, not the customer reviews.

Our divine purpose is to be the manifestation of God to the world as his beloved children. There is maximized fulfillment when a product is in-line with its purpose.

Finding our identity as the beloved, is foundational to a life of love and the becoming of a powerful person.

***Have you ever wondered why Jesus couldn't start his ministry at age 20?***

I know preachers we began in their early teens. I started when I was 15 years old. I'm not sure we would ever know the answer, we can only speculate.

We do read from Luke's account of the life of Jesus, that he **“grew...in favor with God.” (Luke 2:52)**

So there was some kind of progression. I had assumed that he was working his up his brownie points, through faithfulness to the family business. While there may be some truth to that, I'm starting to wonder if he was also growing in his “awareness” of being God's favor on his life.

In other words, perhaps the awareness of his favor was progressive. He needed it. Maybe it wasn't that God was loving him more, but He was understanding God's love more. As he continued to mature in his identity as the beloved, he became ready to manifest his purpose and calling to the world.



I've always appreciated the fact that before he ever worked a miracle, he was blessed and affirmed by his father in heaven.

**We seem to get it backwards. We believe we need to become successful, powerful, popular, extraordinary- and then we qualify for affirmation.**

Yet, the journey of Jesus depicted in the synoptic gospels tells us that we first need to be affirmed by our father in heaven, and we consequently *become* more successful, powerful, popular, and extraordinary. It's very counterintuitive and countercultural, but in a fallen world, we often get things backwards. So we need to be re-trained.

**FALSE: Our achievements -> God's affirmation.**

**TRUE: God's affirmation -> Our achievements.**

I will never forget when I held my daughter for the first time in the hospital room. I was so proud of her. She only did two things well at the time, those two things are generally not something we take great pride in.

I understand that as she grows, I'll have growing hopes and aspirations for her, but I'll never forget the most foundational feeling I had towards her.

This is my daughter, and in her I am well pleased. It's the core of my heart towards her.

- There may be other feelings I have towards her, but it won't replace the core.
- There may be things that get added to the foundation, but the foundation is still the foundation.

**LET'S NOT:**

- **Flip the foundation for the props.**

- Exchange the core with the crust
- Trade the accessories for the essence.

***In the Garden of Eden, we read about how they were naked and unashamed (Genesis 2:25).***

**They were authentic (naked) and affirmed (unashamed).**

- There was no an ounce of self-rejection in their soul, and they were able to live freely instead of posing, suppressing, concealing, etc.
- They didn't need *anything* to feel special and significant, other than just being themselves.
- **They didn't need any costumes, props, badges, credentials, medals, pedestals, titles, tools, weapons, etc.**

That was the world right-side up, now the world is up-side down.

That was the perfect culture of God's Kingdom, now other inferior cultures dominate.

**In our fallenness, it's more common to find human beings covered and ashamed.**

- We need to cover ourselves with layers in efforts to feel significant, but what we have on is never enough.
- What we have achieved and attained is never enough.
- We have a lot of self-esteem aids, and yet, we may still feel ashamed to the core. We feel rejected, we feel worthless.

**Why do our relationships suffer when we are covered and shameful?**

- Since, we don't know how to connect on a heart-to-heart level, only a prop-to-prop level, crust to crust, accessory to accessory.
- We may take everything as a personal attack, and we operate out of a hyper-sensitivity, since our core is not strengthened.
- We are always questioning our worth, so when someone raises the question, and makes us doubt our beloved-ness- it is painful.
- There is much disappointment- as we hope for another to complete us, for in essence- you feel so incomplete.

**1) Whenever we hear someone trying to define our core by our crust, we need to re-connect with the core.**

We cannot fully accept everything everyone tells us about ourselves, especially when it's contrary to the beloved.

Prayer should be a place we get grounded.

**2) Also, we need to get around people who have the revelation of who we are.**

And they see us, speak to us, treat us, like the beloved. How can we remind others that they are the beloved? We need to have a culture of blessing, where we speak well of each other.

**3) We need to continually cultivate a thankful heart over our true identity.**

When I'm so thankful that I'm the beloved, I'm less resentful over those who see and treat me otherwise.

I remember hearing a story from a mentor of mine, when he was dating the girl of his dreams, his church was also going through a split. I think he was the young adults pastor. He didn't really care the church was falling apart, because Lisa was going out with him and liked him.

*Not sure what's falling apart in crust land,  
but let's connect with our core that we are the beloved:  
loved and lovable.*