

Know Who You Are

Mini Sermon prepared for a nursing home, Sydney, April 05

“Hi! I’m Elizabeth and I’m 28 yrs old and I am married to a lovely man from New Zealand. It’s a great privilege to be here with you today and I pray that God will speak to us all during this service this morning.

In the next few minutes I want to share something special with you. I want to tell you 2 short stories which will hopefully help us to understand something wonderful about what God thinks about each and every one of us.

I wonder, as I tell you these stories, if anyone can relate to them? I am a Christian now but I haven’t always been. For many years I ignored Christianity and did things my own way. I had faith in God but I really didn’t make a decision to follow Him or do anything about it.... This way of life, however, got me in a lot of trouble. I got into bad company which pretty soon led to bad habits. I ended up in what was an unhealthy relationship with a man who wasn’t very respectful or kind to me. But I didn’t think much of myself which meant that I felt powerless to leave him or change my way of life. Things got really terrible and I didn’t know who to turn to or what to do. I felt trapped and guilty because in many ways, I had brought the situation upon myself.

Well, this was all happening while I was at studying. During this time, about once a month, whilst in the area on business, my father would come and visit me. We usually went out for dinner and I really enjoyed seeing him. In fact, his visits became welcome relief from the chaotic and distressing life I was leading.

On one visit, I was feeling particularly bad about myself and the situation I was in concerning the horrible relationship. My father knew nothing about what was going on but he could see that I was stressed and very down. He asked me how I was and I just murmured something about having made some bad decisions and not knowing what to do.

When he heard this, my father paused, looked me straight in the eye and said this: ‘If only you knew just how precious you are. You are so precious to God and to your mother and I and if you knew this, really knew this, then it might help you with whatever you’re going through”

It was as if time stood still as his words rang inside my head. I WAS PRECIOUS...REALLY PRECIOUS!! This hit my heart like an arrow and a sense of self worth rose within me. I was important, special and loved by God so it didn’t matter what anyone else said or thought. This revelation gave me the courage and strength to get out of the terrible relationship there and then and started me on my journey back to God.

So that is my first story, of me realizing with the help of my father just how precious I am to God.

The second story is comes from a man I recently met. I visit many elderly people in hospital and love to hear about their lives and families. One gentleman that I met told me about his life during the second world war. Despite his many efforts to join the army, navy and air force, he had been deemed too ill to fight. However, he wasn't the only thing to have happened to him at this time. A friend of his, who was a deserter stole his name. Now this meant that the gentleman couldn't receive any coupons or rations because the other man using his name was getting them all. As you can imagine this was a terrible thing to endure. His story was sad but it's what he said at the end of his retelling of this story that greatly saddened me. He said "this meant that during the war he was nothing, not even a name."

So how do these two stories come together? Well, they are both about the value we feel as people. My sense of value had been lost which then led me into a life style that took a great toll of my self worth and the gentlemen from the war's sense of value had been shattered by not being able to fight and by his friend effectively stealing his identity.

Now society values many things, some good and some bad. As we all sit in together in this room, there is much life that has been experienced which is priceless. The value of the jobs you have had, the families you have raised and the courage you have shown is huge. But what about the value of you as a person? Maybe you don't feel valuable anymore or maybe you haven't ever felt valuable. Maybe you feel forgotten or lost or invisible. Maybe you can relate to my stories and know what it's like to feel unworthy of love and respect or to b=feel that you are nobody, not even a name.

I want to tell you what God thinks about you. Because what He thinks is the truth.

Jesus said that even the hairs on our head are all numbered by God (Luke 12:7.) He knows us in intimate detail and He loves and values us just as we are. God tells us in Isaiah that we are called by name, each person chosen personally by Him. In fact, He even goes on to say that we are honoured and precious in His sight and He loves us. Our Father in heaven knows about the times that you have not felt valued, just as He did when I was going through that hard time in my life. He also knows when our self worth has been knocked down as with the gentlemen whose name was stolen during the war. But the fact is that no matter what life or people do to us, God always values and loves us beyond our imagination or wildest dreams.

I believe that God wants you to know TODAY just how precious and honoured to are to Him. He never has nor never will stop loving you just as you are and He longs for you to know and feel His love. I pray that God will speak to your heart right now about His love for you and that you would respond by allowing His love into your life."

Helpful Scriptures

I Am...Carried & Cared For

'Humble yourselves, therefore under God's mighty hand that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.'

1 Peter 5 6 & 7

I Am...Delighted In

'The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you will singing.'

Zephaniah 3 v 17 (NIV)

I Am...A Friend of Jesus

'I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his masters business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father, I have made known to you.' John 15:15 (NIV)