

A Kingdom of Wholeness

In God's Kingdom, the citizens of the Kingdom are complete individuals that are lacking in no area of their life. He wants us to be whole, spirit, soul and body. Wholeness begins in the spirit and moves outward. Today I want to talk about being made whole in the part of your soul that contains your identity and sense of self worth. I'm not going to be talking about a self help program or self-esteem building. I'm talking from the perspective of who we are in Christ.

Luke 17:11-19 Ten lepers. This was a culture or a kingdom of dysfunction and disease. They were outcasts and beggars. When Jesus cleansed them, all ten were healed of their physical infirmity, but only one was made whole.

Jesus looked at the man's thankfulness and realized that not only had his physical body been restored, but his sense of worth and identity. This healing not only cleansed his physical body, but it brought him near to God.

Thankfulness is a sign of wholeness. The inability to be thankful in these other nine lepers is symptomatic of their situation. As a beggar and an outcast, one of two things likely happened.

#1 They developed a sense of embittered entitlement because of all the handouts.

#2 They were ashamed of their disease and lacked the self worth necessary to humble themselves and receive the gift with thanksgiving. They took it and ran, fearing that Jesus would revoke it.

The beggar realized that Jesus was giving the him far more than health, he was restoring his dignity and value. This manifested as thankfulness and the Jesus told him he was made whole.

People that don't value themselves have difficulty receiving gifts or compliments because they don't believe they are worthy or that the giver can be genuine.

Immediately after this, the Pharisee's demanded of him that he say when the Kingdom of God was coming. This is very interesting because Jesus says that you can't see the Kingdom, it's inside us.

Earlier Jesus had cast a devil out of a mute person and said that the Kingdom of God had come upon him.

This is fascinating. A person is healed and then Kingdom of God has come upon him, and yet 10 lepers are cleansed and Jesus says that the Kingdom comes not with observation.

I believe Jesus was showing us that his Kingdom is more than just a physical manifestation. In fact, its possible for someone to get healed (have the Kingdom come on them) and yet not have that same Kingdom resident inside them. 10 lepers were cleansed, only one was made whole inside and out.

God's Kingdom is a Kingdom of wholeness. His desire is for you to be well in all aspects of your being.

I want to spend just a bit of time dealing with two related heart issues that will help us to walk in that wholeness. There are two primary things the Jesus sees when he looks at your life.

1) He sees value (worth—significance)

2) He sees beauty (attractiveness—desirability)

In order for us to be whole in our soul, these two concepts must make up our reality. We must be able to say from a pure heart, “I am loved and desired by God, and my life and happiness matters to him.”

Every where Jesus went, he restored value to people. In Matthew 8 Jesus heals a leper by touching him. The leper questions whether Jesus will heal him. It’s not simply a question about health. It’s a question of worth. Do I matter to God? Does God see me in my difficulty? Is he disgusted by my failure and filth? Jesus *touches* him and heals him.

Mt 13:44-47 -- Worth is determined by what someone is willing to pay. There are baseball cards that are worth millions of dollars. Why? Because someone was willing to pay it.

Jesus sold all that he had to purchase you, and it’s not just talking about forgiving your sins. He sold all that he had for the opportunity to have a relationship with you. When you look at yourself is your identity rooted in the price that Jesus paid for you? What is your value? If you had to assign a monetary worth to your life what would it be?

The religious answer is negative 2 billion dollars. I believe it’s time that we set that aside and begin to believe what the bible says about us. Were we worthy for Jesus to come and die for us? Absolutely not. He died for us when we were yet in sin and deserved eternal damnation.

But here’s a slightly different question. Was it worthwhile to God? Were the results of Jesus sacrifice worth the price that he paid?

Even if no one responded it still would have been worth it to God, simply because that’s who he is, he gives freely without any expectation of recompense, but he does desire it.

Heb 12:2 When Jesus was on the cross, the prospect of relationship with you was so great, so overwhelming that he despised the shame of the cross. Compared to the joy of having an intimate relationship with you, the horror of the cross was insignificant.

He died because he is in love with you.

One of the greatest definitions of love is the willingness to suffer on the behalf of your beloved. I am continually amazed at God’s willingness to suffer heartache, disappointed, attacks on his character, blaspheme, physical and emotional torment of the cross. He did it all willingly because of his love for you. I’m amazed at God’s willingness to suffer on my behalf daily. We say things like, “I’m amazed at how God puts up with me.” The truth his he doesn’t view it that way. I think about my friend Jesse and all the things he does on a daily basis for his family, it’s suffering. Yet God doesn’t view it that way. I have never heard the Lord say, “Look at all that I’ve done for you.”

I believe that when you get to heaven not only will you see the absolutely stunning beauty and awesomeness of Jesus, but you'll see yourself the way he sees you, and the revelation that will absolutely rock your heart is that YOU WERE WORTH IT.

I want to say to you that your life really does matter. You really are significant. You really are a child of the most high God. He valued you so much that he died and suffered unknowable torment just to be able to talk to you and have relationship. Do you understand how extreme that is? Do you understand what that says about you? What that says about God?

The second reality of our identity is similar, but I want you to see that you are not only valuable to God, you are desirable. He wants you. He wants your affection. He doesn't need it. He doesn't demand it of you, or try to manipulate you into loving you, but you have a real, God given ability to love with abandon and sacrifice, and He so loves you that he desires to be the object of your affection. Again, God is complete in himself and he doesn't need our love, but he does desire it, and he sees us as desirable.

Buckle up for this next part. Song of Solomon 7:5-6

The Bride's hair crowns her like royalty. The Bride has an awareness of her own beauty and status in the royal family, and here's the crazy part—that awareness—that regal carriage—is actually attractive to God.

Religion has taught us that the most surefire way to be pleasing to God is to talk about how ugly and defiled we are. I used to believe that the best way to approach God was to list all my sin and failure, to grovel and wallow in the dirt and pray that God would in his mercy decide not to smite me for my impudence in approaching him.

Hebrews says that we are to come boldly before the throne. How do we do that? It says by the blood of Jesus. But what does that mean? The blood means first of all yes that our sins have been paid for, but it also means that our beloved was willing to die on the cross for us.

I believe that it actually pleases God when we agree with the scripture and see ourselves as beautiful. I know in my own life that my wife would not suddenly be more attractive to me if she rubbed ash all over herself and dressed in sackcloth and groveled at my feet. That's not the kind of relationship I want to have with her. I want partnership. A King desires a Queen. Moreover, a King desires a Queen that knows she is a queen.

Anniversary. What if my wife had refused them? What if she was unaware of her own beauty and didn't agree with me?

It doesn't bless me when my wife speaks poorly about herself. It wouldn't bless me if you came up and talked to me about how ugly my wife was. The Lord has told me to be careful how I speak about his Bride.

The Power of God's love is so extreme that he can literally be captivated by frail, transient human beings. All flesh is like grass, and yet the Lord keeps all our tears in a bottle. I really believe that the Lord deeply treasures the memories that he creates with you.

Once he showed my wife a picture of herself when she was a child playing. It was like a memory but from his perspective. He was showing her how he's loved and watched over her her whole life. One day we may sit in some divine movie theater and watch God's favorite highlights of our lives.

So the second point I'm making is that our identity must be rooted in the reality of our status as a royal Bride that is desired by God.

Repeat after me. I am valuable and desired by God. My life has meaning. My life has significance. I am a member of the royal family.

The Lord wants you to be whole. His Kingdom is a Kingdom of complete individuals that are so loved by God that they can love God in return, and love others without restraint and with the need of that love being returned.

Everything that Adam lost in the garden—his identity, his significance, his membership in the family of God—Jesus won back for us. It was God's original desire for man to rule this earth in partnership with woman. It's now God's desire to the last Adam to rule this earth in partnership with his Bride.

A Bride who is aware of who she is. The Lord commissioned me by saying "Tell my Bride she's beautiful, because she doesn't know."

I'm telling you church. You are beautiful. I'm so excited about what the Lord is doing in the world. I really believe that we are coming into a time when we will cast off the last shackles of religious doctrines that war with our identity, and that we will shine and not only be beautiful on the inside, but manifest that beauty for the world to see.

John 17:1

I believe the Holy Spirit is transforming and healing hearts even right now...

The praise of a beggar is not the same as the praise of a King. When we worship from our identity as royalty we worship with greater power and bring greater glory to God. We don't do this with arrogance, but we recognize the position to which God has exalted us, and then from the position we step off the throne and worship him as the God who is capable of taking broken human beings and making them priests and Kings with hearts that are whole.