

Crossing Over

There are many crossings a human will make in a lifetime. Our introduction to life is just the first.

Come Walk With Me

(Not a reader? Take a listen instead ↓)

Come walk with Me.

Imagine we are once again in Eden, walking together in the cool shade of the trees.

Listen to the sound of the great river, flowing through My garden paradise. Hear the rush of its distributaries, flowing north, east, south, and westward out from My garden. Living water springs from this place, refreshing and pure.

Close your eyes and breathe in the rich, loamy scent of this good earth. There is gold here, and precious stones too, hidden in abundance beneath the surface. Catch the sweet scent of resin floating on the crisp, clean air, the call of the mountain eagle soaring up and away from his nest, the whisper of the wind through the pasture grasses.

I am here with you. I am beside you, all around you. I go before you and I come after you; a burning torch and a defensive shield. I am closer than your very own breath. Nothing will hurt you in this place.

Catch your breath. Rest beside the quiet pools where you will find water for your thirsty soul. Rest here in the stillness.

Feel My presence and be restored.

I see your weariness, your unsettled and aching heart. I know your questions and feel your pain. I see the heavy burdens that you are carrying.

Have you forgotten what a life walking with Me should be like? Have you forgotten that I am the One who has breathed life into your dry bones, that I know the very heart of you, and that I love you?

I am your refuge, your redeemer, your restorer. Lay your burdens down.

Rest alongside Me now, beside the still water, and let Me remind you of My love.

You are made for life, an abundant, overflowing, God-shaped and God-filled life. Of everything made in the beginning, your kind alone were made in My image, made to reflect My glory. Body and soul, you are marvellously made.

You were made for belonging, with others like yourself but most of all, with Me. You were made good, so, so good.

When catastrophe fell in Eden and a great chasm arose between us, I was not defeated. When darkness fell in your world, My light shone even brighter, a shimmering beacon of hope to bring you home. I had known from the beginning that this would happen and I had already made a way.

I sent My light into your world; the glory of My presence cutting through the darkness and lighting your path back to Me. I called you to Me and you heard the sound of My voice. Like a sheep that had wandered and was lost, you have returned to Me, the great shepherd of your soul.

As you drew close to Me, I drew ever closer to you; can you not feel Me close even now? I have not left you, you are not walking alone.

You feel small and insignificant but I tell you, you are My deeply treasured child. Does your heart not stir within you, as My Spirit testifies to this truth?

You say you are weak but I tell you, My power is made perfect in your weakness. I have put eternity deep within you, like treasure in jars of clay.

You say you feel inadequate and unworthy but I tell you that you have been made white like snow, whole and worthy in My righteousness. You say you didn't know My saving power could look like this and I tell you, this is *grace*, *My grace*, and it is sufficient for you.

I am the bedrock on which your feet find firm footing, the Alpha and Omega, encircling you in My safety and protection. I will hide you in the shadow of My feathered wings and My faithfulness will be a shield for you throughout all your days.

I have wept for you, fought for you, bled for you, died for you, and I have been made alive again, for you.

There is nothing I wouldn't do for you.

Quiet those voices in your head, clamouring to be heard, telling you that you must earn My favour, that you must do something to deserve My love. I have borne the cost of our reconciling, it is My gift to you. I have secured your passage home and I will walk that path with you.

Quiet those voices around you, telling you that simply being in Me isn't enough. I tell you, I Am leading you and renewing you and transforming you. You need only abide in Me.

The curse of sin is broken. I have broken it and you are free in Me. My life flows into yours, My Spirit breathing its refreshing wind into your heart. Walk with Me and work with Me and you'll recover your life.

Are you feeling burned out, forced into patterns that are ill-fitting and heavy? Are you tired and anxious, carrying burdens too heavy to bear? I say again, lay those burdens down.

Lift up your weary head and take heart. I am still here, I have always been here and I will never leave you nor forsake you. The good work that I've begun in you, I promise faithfully to complete.

Come walk with Me, I'm all you need.

"So you'll go out in joy, you'll be led into a whole and complete life. The mountains and hills will lead the parade, bursting with song. All the trees of the forest will join the procession, exuberant with applause. No more thistles, but giant sequoias, no more thornbushes, but stately pines—monuments to me, to God, living and lasting evidence of God." | Isaiah 55:12-13, MSG

Searching For Identity

"If I find in myself desires nothing in this world will satisfy. I can only conclude that I was not made for here." | C S Lewis

Searching For Identity

I want to confess, at the outset, that as I was attempting to put down some of the thoughts I wanted to share relating to identity, my mind ran an internal commentary about myself. Thoughts such as, "what will people think of me?", "how will I be perceived?", "I wonder if they'll think 'this' thing or 'that' thing " ran on loop in my brain. I felt overwhelmed at

the thought of showing up, convinced that I'm extremely flawed (and therefore inadequate to be sharing anything of value), anxious about my capacity to sufficiently convey and do justice to God's truths, and wondering, perhaps, at whether I'm even the most articulate person in the world to be attempting to do so!

It struck me as really quite ironic that I was wrestling with my identity **as I prepared to write and share about identity!** I guess it seemed to prove, at least to me, that our identity, [our true identity](#) is something that we have to work hard at reminding ourselves of and something we all have struggled with or will struggle with throughout our lives.

I want to refer to a particular quote which I love – Colossians 1:13

“For He [God] has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves.” | Colossians 1:13 (ESV)

How truly life-changing! In becoming [disciples of Jesus](#), we've also become subjects of his kingdom – living in the sphere where Jesus rules!

We Are Kingdom People!

I think this is the first important truth we need to know, believe and establish at our core when we start to think about our identity and who we are. Before we relate ourselves to anyone (or anything) else in our lives, we are first and foremost [kingdom people](#) and **Jesus is our king!**

Choosing to be a Christian has its origins in believing the things about Jesus, in an intellectual sense – who he is and what he came for – but there's more to it than that. We are also choosing to surrender to his guidance and leadership in our life as a willing subject of God's [designated king](#). Jesus

has been given all authority in heaven and earth, he has first claim on our affections, he is the motivating force in our decisions and the final judge of our soul (Matthew 28:18-20, Isaiah 9:6, Luke 1:33, Acts 10:36, 1 Corinthians 15:27, Colossians 1:27, Romans 8:10, Ephesians 3:16, Acts 10:42, John 5:22. 2 Timothy 4:8, James 1:21, 1 Peter 2:25).

Perhaps we need to take a step back and consider the powerful force that enacted this transfer from the dominion of darkness. The motivating force in all of this was love – the love of an eternal God and the love of a righteous king, [who willingly died](#) for those who were still his enemies. While we were still in darkness, Jesus died for us. This is the meaning of '[saving grace](#)' – undeserved, unmerited and entirely outworked without our help or contribution.

“Christianity is not about our disciplined pursuit of God but about God’s relentless pursuit of us – to the point of Jesus dying on a cross for us that we might become His friends. The inexhaustible God loves us so intensely that every time we turn to Him after wandering from His love for us, all heaven breaks out in a thunderous celebration (Luke 15:7)

Most of us believe this intellectually. This is the message of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Experiencing this infinite love in our hearts, however, is another matter. The sinister voices of the surrounding world and our pasts are powerful. They repeat the deeply-held, negative beliefs we may have learned in our families and cultures growing up:

- *I am a mistake*
- *I am a burden*
- *I am stupid*
- *I am worthless*
- *I am not allowed to make mistakes*
- *I must be approved of by certain people to feel ok*
- *I don’t have the right to experience joy and pleasure*
- *I don’t have the right to assert myself and say what I think*

and feel

- *I don't have a right to feel*
- *I am value-based on my intelligence, wealth, and what I do, not for who I am.*

It is astounding how many deeply committed followers of Jesus would affirm that the preceding statements articulate how they truly feel about themselves. Like the prodigal son, they are content to relate to God as hired servants, rather than enjoy the full privileges of sons and daughters of our heavenly Father (Luke 15: 11-21)" – Peter Scazzero

"Whom the Son sets free is free indeed!" | John 8:36 (ESV)

Perhaps we are also more willing at times to relate to God as slaves still chained in the dominion of darkness than of kingdom people, set free and redeemed by the Son and the king!

The Process Of Discipleship

Discipleship – being people of the kingdom – is a process that moves us from being spiritually and emotionally immature children to being fully mature and developed adults – *"people dedicated to God, and capable and equipped for every good work."* (2 Timothy 3:17, NET).

This process of discipleship is a principle-centered, character-based, "inside out" approach to developing our authentic self in Christ. It means to start first with ourselves; even more fundamentally, to start with the most inside part of self – our core – and to honestly analyse our paradigms, our character, and our motives and to realign those with the king we are serving, with the master we are following.

I think a lot of us struggle with having a clear sense of who we are, and our Christian life is often theory rather than practice, layering over our core, rather than challenging

ourselves to examine what lies at the heart of us. This process of layering – creating and developing a false self over the top of core emotional truths – ensures that we remain entrapped and enslaved to ‘the old man’, rather than liberated in Jesus as a [new creation](#).

It takes courage to decide to live differently, to follow Jesus into the unknown and to be committed to emotional and spiritual reality. It takes courage to define ourselves by how God sees us – deeply loved, despite our flaws and to live from that basis of [grace](#) in our Christian discipleship.

“Define yourself radically as one beloved by God. This is the true self. Every other identity is an illusion.” | Brennan Manning

I’d really like to encourage us all, but especially those of you who might be really struggling with identity right now in your life, to give real attention to developing your authentic self in Jesus.

1. Pay attention to your interior (the “heart of you”) in silence and solitude.
2. Find trusted companions to help you along the way.
3. Move out of your comfort zone.
4. Pray for courage.

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are God’s children. Our existence is now framed by Christ’s life – who is [a life-giving Spirit](#) (Romans 8:16).

Here are some core, emotional truths that we can believe and take deep into our hearts, as much-loved children of God: We are created in God’s own image (Genesis 1:27), the crowning glory of His creative work (Psalm 8:5). We are incredibly unique and known intimately by God (Psalm 139:13-16) and we are more valuable to Him than many sparrows (Matthew 10:31). Even when we have travelled far from His spirituality (Romans

3:23), He loved the world so much He sent His son to die for us (John 3:16). While we were still 'at enmity' with Him, He reached out to reconcile us back to Him (Romans 5:8-10). His grace, not our sin, has the final word in our position before Him (Romans 5:20). Those who step into His grace are saved (Romans 10:13), we are born-again (1 Peter 1:3), adopted as God's children and positioned as His heirs (Ephesians 1:5, 1 John 3:2, Romans 8:16-17). **We belong to God and He loves us with the love of a perfect Father** (John 14:18, 1 John 3:1).

"...This is my [Paul's] prayer. That God, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ and the all-glorious Father, will give you spiritual wisdom and the insight to know more of Him: that you may receive that inner illumination of the Spirit which will make you realise how great is the hope to which He is calling you—the magnificence and splendour of the inheritance promised to Christians—and how tremendous is the power available to us who believe in God. That power is the same divine power which was demonstrated in Christ when He raised him from the dead and gave him the place of supreme honour in Heaven—a place that is infinitely superior to any conceivable command, authority, power or control, and which carries with it a name far beyond any name that could ever be used in this world or the world to come." | Ephesians 1:18-21, JB Phillips

If you are struggling with your identity as a disciple or want to understand more about God's work of grace in your life (and how that causes radical transformation), I would highly recommend reading the following two books: "What's So Amazing About Grace" by Phillip Yancey and "Emotionally Healthy Spirituality" by Peter Scazzero.

The Christian life isn't always easy and the next step isn't always clear. Sometimes we need courage to take that step and sometimes we just need to stand still and watch God go to work

for us.

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