

**“You exist because God loves you already.**

**You are a child of divine love.”**

**Archbishop Desmond Tutu**

### **Part of the Kingdom**

In light of Jesus’ message that God’s kingdom is readily available, consider why God wants you to be a part of that kingdom.

#### Scripture:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. Ephesians 1: 3-6

But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life. Ephesians 2: 4-10

#### Voice of wisdom:

“Jesus, the Beloved of God, reveals the truth of our own belovedness. Notice how this repeatedly occurs in his gospel encounters: sharing a meal with those rejected and marginalized, responding to the desperate cry of a blind beggar by the roadside, requesting the company of an unscrupulous tax collector, refusing to condemn a woman caught in the act of adultery....In each encounter, Jesus communicates through his words and deeds the message: You are beloved. Indeed, his entire public ministry enfleshes the astonishing words spoken shortly before his death: ‘As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you’ (John 15:9).

“In these and other gospel encounters we glimpse in Jesus’ tender compassion the Father’s ever-present love streaming toward you and me. No matter what we have done, how disastrously we have failed or into what distant country we have wandered, God wants us to know that we are loved. Archbishop Desmond Tutu captures this good news vividly:

We don’t need to prove ourselves to God. We don’t have to do anything at all, to be acceptable to him. That is what Jesus came to say, and for that he got killed. He came to say, “Hey, you don’t have to earn God’s love. It is not a matter for human achievement. You exist because God loves you already. You are a child of divine love.

“Explore this mystery-laden truth carefully. Jesus, uniquely the Beloved Son, attests to your and my infinite value as a child of God. From all eternity it has been God’s purpose that everyone discover their belovedness in the Beloved, for this is truly who we are: beloved children of the Most High.”

Trevor Hudson, *Discovering Our Spiritual Identity*, p. 27

## Study 7

### **Contemplation:**

What key words and ideas stand out to you? How do they help you take a deeper look at yourself as God's beloved child?

God tells us repeatedly that we are loved by Him. What can you do to hang on to that truth when you may not "feel" the love of God at a particular time?

Trevor Hudson's examples come from Matt. 9: 10-13; Mark 10: 46-52; Luke 19: 1-10; and John 8: 2-11. Choose one of these stories to spend some time in this week. Consider how Jesus' love was shown and how it was received.

### **Practices:**

Write down one or two of the key phrases that are important to you. Hold them (literally) before God and wait silently on him. Record any further thoughts he may give you.

Jesus spoke and acted the love of the Father to the people he encountered. What words might he say to you if he sat down for coffee with you at Starbucks? Write a "letter of love" from Jesus to yourself, using your own words, or phrases from Scripture. Be sure to use your name in it!

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