

Chapter Seven

Remembering Who We Are

There is something remarkable about children.

They do not spend their earliest years questioning whether they possess worth.

They simply receive life.

They laugh without permission.

They wonder without embarrassment.

They trust until trust is broken.

Perhaps this is why Jesus placed a child in the midst of His disciples and quietly said,

“Unless you become like little children...”

He was not inviting us to become childish.

He was inviting us to remember.

Perhaps Eden was humanity’s childhood.

Not childishness...

But complete trust.

The child does not awaken each morning asking,

“Must I earn my father’s love today?”

The beloved simply awakens into affection.

Could it be that this was the atmosphere of Eden?

Identity was never achieved.

It was received.

Adam did not introduce himself to God.

God introduced Adam to himself.

“You are Mine.”

Before humanity ever accomplished anything...

Before dominion...

Before vocation...

Before stewardship...

Before even naming the animals...

There was relationship.

Love spoke identity before humanity demonstrated usefulness.

How different this is from the world we inherited.

From our earliest memories we begin collecting identities.

Successful.

Failure.

Accepted.

Rejected.

Smart.

Broken.

Religious.

Unworthy.

We spend years allowing our wounds to answer the question,

“Who am I?”

Yet wounds were never intended to become mirrors.

Perhaps this is why shame is so destructive.

Shame does not merely tell us that we have done something wrong.

Shame whispers that we are something wrong.

It quietly replaces belovedness with performance.

Communion with comparison.

Wonder with self-consciousness.

Could it be that humanity has spent thousands of years trying to become what the Father declared us to be from the beginning? Beloved.

Jesus seems entirely free from this struggle.

He never appears anxious about proving Himself.

He serves without insecurity.

He loves without fear.

He confronts without hatred.

He withdraws without guilt.

Even in rejection He remains rooted in the Father’s delight. Why?

Because His identity is received.

Not manufactured.

Before His public ministry...

Before a single miracle...

Before a sermon...

Before the cross...

The Father's voice declares,

"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Notice the timing.

The affirmation comes before the accomplishment.

Could it be that the Father has always spoken this way?

Perhaps we have imagined God waiting for us to become worthy before calling us beloved.

Jesus reveals something entirely different.

Belovedness is where transformation begins.

Not where it ends.

Love is not the reward for becoming whole.

Love is what makes wholeness possible.

This changes everything.

We no longer obey in order to become sons and daughters.

We learn obedience because we already are.

We no longer seek the Father's acceptance.

We live from it.

We no longer strive to earn communion.

We awaken to the communion that has been waiting for us all along.

I have come to believe that salvation is, in many ways, the remembering of our truest identity.

Not remembering with the mind alone.

Remembering with the heart.

The prodigal son did not become a son when he returned home.

He was a son in the far country.

He was a son while feeding pigs.

He was a son while rehearsing his apology.
His return did not create his identity.
It awakened him to it.
Could it be that this is our story as well?
Perhaps the Father has never forgotten who we are.
Perhaps we are the ones learning to remember.
And as remembrance grows...
Fear begins to loosen its grip.
Comparison loses its voice.
Shame quietly releases its hold.
The coverings we have worn for so many years begin to fall away.
Not because someone tears them from us.
But because Love has made them unnecessary.
This is what it means to come home.
Not becoming someone new...
But becoming who Love has always known us to be.
Perhaps this is why the Apostle John could write,
“Beloved, now we are the children of God...”
Not someday. Now.
The journey back to Eden is, at its heart, the journey back to belovedness.
The Father’s voice has never ceased speaking.
The only question is whether we have become still enough to hear it once again.
“You are My beloved.”
Perhaps those words have been echoing through the Garden from the very beginning.

I AM still here...

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