

Belonging

Sunday message from November 20th, 2022

~ Notes & Reflections ~

- **Belonging is an experience of being both known and loved, where you can bring your authentic self and be welcomed and accepted.**
 - ❖ When, where and/or with whom have you experienced a sense of belonging before? What was it like?
- **We were created to belong, but the experience of belonging often evades us.**
 - ❖ Read the following passages. [Genesis 1.26-31](#), [2.7, 15-25](#) and [John 17.21](#).
 - ❖ What do you learn about being created to belong? Why does the experience of belonging evade us?
- **“God makes a home for the lonely.”** ([Psalm 68.6](#), NASB)
 - ❖ Read [Psalm 68.3-6](#). What stands out to you?
 - ❖ What does this passage reveal about God’s character? About him intersecting our longing to belong?
- **“In Christ, we can find true belonging: True belonging is being fully known and being fully loved.”** (Jeremy Linneman, [The Gospel Coalition](#))
- **“Live in me. Make your home in me just as I do in you.”** ([John 15.4](#), MSG)
 - ❖ Read: Read [John 15.1-17](#) slowly, noticing a word, phrase or concept that stands out to you.
 - ❖ Reflect: Read the passage again, focusing on your word or phrase, asking the Holy Spirit to show you why he highlighted that word or phrase. How does this word or phrase connect to your life right now?
 - ❖ Respond: Talk with God about what he has revealed/spoken to you. What is he inviting you into? How do you receive his invitation? Perhaps your response is to journal, pray, worship, confess, sit in silence, etc.
 - ❖ Rest: Take some time of silence, deeply receiving his word and resting in his presence and love.
- **Consider the following chart. Where might your experience with God fit in this moment, this season?**
(see expanded chart on the next page for descriptions)

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Isolated: not known, not loved | Rejected: known, not loved |
| Fitting in: not known, loved | Belonging: known, loved |

- **Reflect on the following Scripture passages. What is God saying to you about belonging in him?**
 - ❖ Being known: [Psalm 139](#), [31.7](#) and [131](#), [1 Corinthians 13.12](#), [1 Peter 2.9-10](#)
 - ❖ Being loved: [Jeremiah 31.3](#), [Lamentations 3.20-23](#), [Romans 5.5](#) and [8.35-39](#), [1 John 3.1](#)
 - ❖ Listen to and reflect on these truths through the song [“Known” by Tauren Wells](#)
- **Making our home in (experiencing belonging with) God involves: Believing, Staying, Moving in and Making Space. It is a process that requires risk, patience and practice.**
 - ❖ Consider the chart on the next page. What practice or next step might God be inviting you into?
- What statements or aspects of this message bring comfort? Which bring conviction? Take some time to talk to God about what bubbles up as you read/hear and reflect on this message.
- What might God be inviting you into as a response to this message/reflection on making your home in God?

Belonging Chart for Reflection

| <i>Heart Space</i> | What does it feel/sound like? | What is the house like? | Ideas for Staying, Moving In and Making Space. |
|--|---|--|--|
| <i>Isolated (not known, not loved)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God doesn't see and doesn't care • I'm not worth knowing or loving • God is hands-off (deism); • God says, "I have given you everything you need, now GO" • I have to figure it out on my own; left to fend for myself • I am alone, unseen • God is only interested in His plan and my obedience to it | All the foundational components (plumbing, heating, electric, solid foundation, drywall), but no life; cold, impersonal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Paint: rehearsal of names of God, his promises, truth that he loves and cares deeply for me ♥ Furniture: rest, reflect, listen, store/recall gifts ♥ Appliances: ways to experience on first floor what's happening in the basement |
| <i>Rejection (known, not loved)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My sin is too big, too continuous • My past/present too ugly and complicated • Shame, worthlessness | Lived-in, but hidden evidence of damage and pain; holes in the walls covered by fancy artwork; dimly lit, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Turn lights on and switch the bulbs, fixtures: confess and receive grace, ask for God's eyes to reframe your pain ♥ Uncover the holes, patch, repaint: invite God into the pain; spackle and paint are made of time and God's love and grace; maybe the spackling tool is a friend or counselor ♥ Photos on the wall: memories/mementos of who God is, what he's done, how you've experienced him |
| <i>Fitting In (not known, loved)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiding, dishonesty, lack of vulnerability • Shame, fear • Surface/rote interaction with God • God cares about my obedience, but not my heart or my pain • I know God's delight in me, but feel alone in the details of everyday life • Unfiltered living: doesn't matter what I do/say, it's all covered in love | Beautiful, magazine-worthy house, but not personal; like a rental property or grandma's dining room (plastic-covered chairs and china that you only look at); lots of locked closets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Take plastic off the chairs, use the china: seek God himself instead of knowledge about him (meditating on Scripture—read, reflect, respond, rest; times of silent listening) ♥ Unlock/open the closets: Invite God into the painful memories, habitual sin, the past I have a hard time letting go of; let him be my Comforter and Wise Counselor ♥ Switch out the magazine furniture for everyday stuff: invite God into the daily, mundane things; find tangible ways to mark meaningful experiences with God |
| <i>Belonging (known, loved)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerability, honesty, intimacy • God has access to my heart to heal and form it • "With-God" life • Regular rhythms of confession, surrender and enjoying God's presence • Worth based on how God sees me • Psalm 131.2 | Lived-in, meaningful photos on the walls, fire going; blankets, slippers, sweats | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Spend time cuddled by the fire: enjoy God's presence, "waste" time with him, bask in my belonging with him ♥ Buy new photo frames: ready to make new memories with God, for him to reveal himself in fresh ways ♥ Keep space uncluttered: with God, prioritize my time and energy ♥ Invite others to my home: share my experience of belonging |