

NCT SA Connected

Reimagining Church - Let's Worship Together

SUNDAY: 15th November 2020

Theme: Knowing Whose You Are

Key Text: Jeremiah 1:5



*'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
before you were born I set you apart',*

A couple of months ago I was drawn to reflect on a particular 'ear worm' which had been playing over and over in my mind; the song was **'Would you know why I love Jesus'** to the tune **'The Reason'** (SATB 351) <https://youtu.be/MI--OGri3C8>; and I shared my thoughts with you based on Ephesians 3:14 Where Paul wrote; *'For this reason I kneel before the Father...'* (NCT SA Connected Issue 5); Well this week I've had another Earworm running through my mind as I've gone about my daily business; and perhaps hardly surprising given that much of my mind has been occupied on this years Toy Appeal—that it's a song from one of my favourite Disney Pixar Animations - 'Toy Story' - and the theme song *"You've got a friend in me"*.

*You've got a friend in me
You've got a friend in me
You got troubles, I've got 'em too
There isn't anything I wouldn't do for you
We stick together and see it through
'Cause you've got a friend in me
You've got a friend in me*



Those who are familiar with the Toy Story films will know that two of the main characters are Woody (a plush toy cowboy) and Buzz Lightyear (a toy astronaut). Early on in the original film Woody confronts Buzz Lightyear with the fact that he is only an action figure and not really a space hero. Woody shouts;

"You're not a space ranger! You're an action figure—a child's plaything."

And, only after failing to fly, does Buzz realize the truth of Woody's statement. Grief-stricken and disillusioned, Buzz hangs his head in resignation, declaring, *"I'm just a stupid, little, insignificant toy."*

You know every time I hear that phrase I also hear words from scripture, words found Psalm 8v4;

'what is man, that You think of him, the son of man that You care for him?' (NLV)

Have you ever had the devil whisper in your ear telling you that you are not good enough? I know that there have been times when I have - it's a feeling that sometimes comes in response to the hurtful, criticism from another, or when you feel you just don't measure up to the high expectations which others sometimes place upon you; or you find yourself comparing yourself to others who appear to be so much more gifted, so much more able, so much better at handling all that life throws at them... Well let me tell you that the devil just loves to play on those feelings of inadequacy—he's the father of lies (John 8:44). We'll return to these thoughts in a moment; but first back to Toy Story...



Following on from the incident which I described, Woody later seeks to comfort his friend by underscoring the love of the boy who owns them both.

"You must not be thinking clearly. Look, over in that house, there's a kid who thinks you're the greatest, and it's not because you're a space ranger; it's because you're his." As Buzz lifts his foot, he sees a label affixed to the bottom of his shoe. There in black permanent ink is the name of the little boy to whom he belongs; and seeing the mark of his owner, Buzz breaks into a smile and takes on a new determination. It's the same mark which Andy has made on all his prized possessions.

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When we are proud of something, something we have made perhaps – we put our name on it don't we; much like an artist would add his or her initials to a painting, or a potter his or her moulded vase. A Bible verse from Ephesians says we are God's workmanship. To me that means He has made us, and is proud of us!

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus..." Eph. 2:20, NKJV

Other translations say that we are *His handiwork* and *His masterpiece*; God made us—we are His!

So when the Devil whispers to me—You're not good enough! I can loudly proclaim YES I AM! You see God doesn't make mistakes - He makes all things beautiful; and so for me what it boils down to is not knowing who I am - based on the impressions that others may have of me, or by the level of adequacy by which I judge myself—but rather in knowing 'Whose' I am. To whom do I belong? There's that lovely chorus in our song book which has these words;

*Now I belong to Jesus
Jesus belongs to me,
Not for the years of time alone,
But for eternity (SAB 874 c)*



In Toy Story 2 - a repairman is found fixing and cleaning Woody, and as he does so, he paints over Andy's name; it's a rather tense moment in the film—but the point I want to make is that although the repairman painted over Andy's name—this does not take away the fact that Woody belongs to Andy, and nothing in this world—can ever take away from us the fact that we belong to God.

I think my favourite singers at the moment is American Contemporary Christian music singer and songwriter Lauren Daigle - and her song You Say is a song which I've found especially affirming at different times over the past couple of years;

You Say

I keep fighting voices in my mind that say I'm not enough
Every single lie that tells me I will never measure up
Am I more than just the sum of every high and every low
Remind me once again just who I am because I need to know

You say I am loved when I can't feel a thing
You say I am strong when I think I am weak
And you say I am held when I am falling short
And when I don't belong, oh You say I am Yours
And I believe
Oh, I believe
What You say of me
I believe
The only thing that matters now is everything You think of me
In You I find my worth, in You I find my identity

<https://youtu.be/oZvKJl1kK8g>

When God made the world, 'it was good' and in Genesis chapter 1:31 after everything was made, we are told that "It was very good". God loved his creation so much that he desired to have a relationship with it, particularly with us as humans, those who were made 'in his image'

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I love Leslie Brandt's – paraphrase of Psalm 8.



O God
How full of wonder and splendour You are!
I see the reflections of Your beauty
And hear the sounds of Your majesty
Wherever I turn.
Even the babbling of babes
And laughter of children
Spell out Your name in indefinable syllables.
When I gaze into the star-studded skies
And attempt to comprehend the vast distances,
I contemplate in utter amazement
My Creator's concern for me.
I am dumbfounded that You
Should care personally about me.
And yet You have made me in Your image.
You have called me Your child
And chosen me to be Your servant.
You have assigned to me
The fantastic responsibility
Of carrying on Your creative activity.
O God, How full of wonder and splendour You are

When God made us He gave us responsibility, beautiful things to enjoy, & the chance to know & love Him completely. When we hear the devil whispering those words of lies into our ears telling us that we are not good enough, that we don't measure up, that we are insignificant, of little value - we need recognise the One to whom we belong—for *GREATER IS HE THAT IS IN YOU THAN HE THAT IS IN THE WORLD (1 John 4:4)*

We need to know that we are God's workmanship! Just as Andy wrote his name on Woody because he loved him & he belonged to him, God wants to write His own name on us, when we choose to belong to him. There isn't one person reading these words today, who isn't precious to God. If YOU are reading this now - know that YOU matter to HIM.

There isn't one of us whose identity is not hidden in Christ, whose eternal security is not secure in Him – so long as we believe, so long as we choose to be a part of His family.

In Ephesians 1:11-12, and taken from the Message translation, Paul say's...

*It is in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for.
Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up,
He had His eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living,
part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone.*

It is in Christ that we find our true identity; it is in Christ that we have complete freedom to be who God has made us and redeemed us to be. Never ever forget how precious you are to God.

Song: Before the throne of God above (SASB 243) <https://youtu.be/RNMECxm6Wfg>

Songster Piece: The Majesty & Glory of Your Name <https://youtu.be/CAQcdZNDgYU>

MAY THE LORD BLESS YOU AND KEEP YOU.

MAY THE LORD MAKE HIS FACE TO SHINE UPON YOU, AND BE GRACIOUS TO YOU.

MAY THE LORD LIFT UP HIS COUNTENANCE UPON YOU,
AND GIVE YOU PEACE. AMEN