



## ***Day One: Identity Assured***

Last week, we were at the table with the disciples during their last meal with Jesus before He went to the cross. Let's go and have another look at what was happening:

***John 13:21 – 26 (AMP)*** *After Jesus had said these things, He was troubled (disturbed, agitated) in spirit and said, I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, one of you will deliver Me up [one of you will be false to Me and betray Me]! The disciples kept looking at one another, puzzled as to whom He could mean. One of the disciples, whom Jesus loved [whom He esteemed and delighted in], was reclining [next to Him] on Jesus' bosom. So Simon Peter motioned to him to ask of whom He was speaking. Then leaning back against Jesus' breast, he asked Him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered...*

So picture it. The disciples are sitting around the table and Jesus tells them that one of them will betray Him. The disciples are looking around, wondering who it might be... but John is resting His head on Jesus' chest. Does it specifically say He was not looking around? No. But I suspect he wasn't... He was already there with His head on Jesus, with such love for Jesus and knowing that he was loved by Him. John knew His identity and He knew Jesus' identity and as such, he knew he would never betray Him.

Notice that nobody was game to ask Jesus who would be the betrayer. And so Peter motioned to John – the obvious person to ask Jesus the hard questions because John's intimate relationship with Jesus meant He could comfortably go to Jesus to ask anything. Was that because Jesus loved the other disciples any less? No. The only difference was that John, more than all the other disciples, KNEW He was loved by Jesus. So John asked Him, "Lord, who is it?" And Jesus freely answered.

Peter vehemently said he would die with Jesus and the others readily agreed. Jesus knew Peter's best intentions... but He also knew the struggle Peter would have with fear and He prophesied Peter's subsequent denial of Him. Peter had a confidence in His love for Jesus, but He did not yet walk in an identity that was birthed out of truly receiving Jesus' love for him.



The ensuing days held much confusion, grief and gut wrenching fear for the disciples... culminating in the crucifixion of their Lord and Teacher. Their understanding and expectations of what Jesus had called them to and for was blown apart! They were expecting Jesus to bring a Kingdom that would take over the earth. Yet all they could see in that moment was that Jesus was now dead.

Have you ever been in that place when all you were expecting was blown apart? I know I have! The place when our circumstances don't fit our expectations!

During this turbulent and horrifying place, it was John's knowledge of his identity in Christ... Who he was and whose he was, that sustained him.

**It's in Christ we find out who we really are and what we were born for.**

Amidst all the fear and confusion, where do we find John? He hadn't run away. He hadn't denied Jesus. There he was, at the foot of the cross, looking up at Jesus! Where else would he have been? He just kept following Jesus as the Passion played out.



Where do we find ourselves in the midst of the fear and confusion of our own lives?

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## ***Day Two: So This is Love***

So this is love. Love endures pain... whilst looking to the coming joy.

**Hebrews 12:2 (NIV)** *...fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Jesus lived a life of love which was willing to endure pain and hardship for the sake of the joy He found in the object of His love – us!

He lived:

- A life surrendered to the Father's will.
- A life laid down in love so that others may live.
- A life entrusted to the Father with the certain hope of resurrection.
- A life of mercy, forgiveness and compassion whilst being wounded, betrayed, abused and mocked.
- A life of love, embracing, inclusive and personal.

Jesus never did His own thing... He demonstrated His absolute love of the Father by surrendering Himself to God's will. Even though what God knew had to be done cost Jesus everything He had! He laid down His life so that others may live.

**John 15:13 (BSB)** *Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends...*

In laying down His life, Jesus had to completely entrust Himself to the Father to resurrect Him. When Jesus went to the cross, He knew that if God didn't resurrect Him, there was no other way for it to happen. His only hope and His full trust were in the Father. And with His complete surrender to the Father's will, and despite the mocking and rejection of those He had come to rescue because He loved them, He went to the cross... and He still found joy in it! He found joy, because He was thinking of YOU!



## Soak Time

When you consider the pain that Jesus endured for the coming joy, and then consider that His 'coming joy' is YOU and the abundant life His death and resurrection would free you to live, how does that make you feel?

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### ***Day Three: Love Entrusts Precious Things***

Love entrusts precious things to us. When Jesus was being crucified on the cross, He entrusted His most precious mother to John... John was to become her son.

***John 19:26 – 27 (BSB)*** *When Jesus saw His mother and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, “Woman, here is your son.” Then He said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” So from that hour, this disciple took her into his home.*

Jesus, who completely honoured and cherished His mother, entrusted her to the disciple who was at the foot of his cross... the one who both loved and was loved by Him. In the midst of His own agony and pain, He did not forget about her and He did not forget about John. He made sure that who He had cherished would continue to be cherished. In this, He shows us how to live as true family.

We are to:

- Cherish those who have been entrusted to us;
- Cherish the love and intimacy offered to us;
- Cherish the responsibilities He gives to us;
- Cherish each revelation He shows us; and
- Cherish the Holy Spirit within us!

The people that have been entrusted to us are intended by God to be as much our joy as we are Jesus'. They are precious treasures and He asks us to treat them in the same cherished manner as He treats us, and to receive the love that they offer us with gladness.

Consider John, who became Mary's son. Jesus entrusted her to him, and what does it say he did? From the hour of Jesus' crucifixion, John immediately took Mary into his own home. He made her part of his family and he loved, cherished and took care of her.

HE also intends to be OUR joy, if we will let Him, and receive the love and the intimacy that He offers us. As we do that, He honours us by giving us



revelations and responsibilities which are vital to His Kingdom, and He even moves into our hearts by the Holy Spirit living within us! We become His home, His precious tabernacle, and He cherishes and takes care of us. Is there any greater honour in this world?

## Soak Time

Considering the list above, ask Holy Spirit to show you how you can cherish the love that has been entrusted to you in all of these areas:

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## ***Day Four: Paid in Full***

Max Lucado describes with poetic licence from the eyes of a centurion who witnessed the crucifixion of Jesus...

*"The jeering was silent...eerily silent. Those who wept now waited.*

*Suddenly, the centre head ceased to bob. He yanked Himself erect. His eyes opened in a flash of white. A roar sliced the silence. "IT IS FINISHED!" It wasn't a yell. It wasn't a scream – it was a ROAR! A lion's roar! From what world that roar came, the centurion didn't know but he knew it wasn't this one.*

*As he moved closer, he saw Jesus was staring into the sky...I had to see... but after a few steps I fell and fell again. The ground was shaking, gently at first now violently...he tried to walk but fell again... at the foot of the cross...he looked up at the face near death...His eyes were afire...unquenchable...the eyes of God. It's alright, God's eyes said. I've seen the storms and it's still alright."*

Wow! *"I've seen the storms and it's still alright."* Is this not a picture of seeing the joy despite the pain? And you know what, He says this to us today. He's seen the storms we'll face... but it's alright. And it's alright because everything has been PAID IN FULL.

***John 10:10 (AMP)*** *The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows).*

***1 Peter 5:8 (NKJV)*** *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

Our enemy the devil roams around LIKE a roaring lion, but it's Jesus who is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. His roar has paid the price IN FULL and satan may not steal from us any longer!

Satan knows that he has no weapon other than deception, so that is why the warfare we face is what takes place in our minds. The enemy knows that his best strategy against us is to make us doubt ourselves and our identity in Christ, and to get us to question whether God is trustworthy.



Let's remember that satan is the father of lies!!!! He did it to Adam and Eve in the garden. They had already been created in the image of God, but satan came along and said that God didn't want them to be like Him and if they partook of the fruit, then they would be like God! He tried to do the same thing to Jesus when just after God had declared over Him, *"This is My Son in Whom I am well pleased,"* (Matt 3:17) satan immediately tried to tempt Jesus to doubt this by saying to Him in the wilderness, *"If you are the Son"* (Matt 4:6).

There was a battle against Jesus' identity in the wilderness as satan tested His identity. Yet Jesus won the battle in His mind there against satan and came out in the power of the spirit.



How has satan tried to devour you by warring against your identity in your mind? Considering how Jesus defeated satan in the wilderness, how can you deal with satan as he roams around as a lion, trying to devour you?

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## ***Day Five: Laying Down Lies***

Our journey is the same as Jesus'. When we enforce the victory that Jesus has already won over our identity, we will come out in the power of the Spirit.

We need to remember that HE will perfect that which concerns us (Ps 138:8). He simply asks us to believe what He says about us, and to trust Him to change our hearts. He is the Master Goldsmith. Just as when gold is purified, it is heated so that dross comes to the surface. The Goldsmith scoops it off and positions Himself and faithfully watches over it until He knows it's completely purified. And when does He know that's happened? When He can clearly see His reflection in it.

In that process, we are not to look at the dross and take that on as our identity. We are instead to realise that as He reveals and brings to the light another area in our soul, He's simply changing us from glory to glory.

We need to realise that even throughout this process, our identity in His eyes is righteous and constant. Author, Susie Larson, puts it like this:

*"I'm not who I was. I'm not what I do. I'm someone He enjoys...You're not a sum of your past mistakes; You're not the accumulation of your grand achievements; You're not your family tree; You're not your flaws; You're not even your virtues; You're a masterpiece made by God Himself; You're someone He loves; You're someone He cared enough about to create, redeem, and establish for the earth today; You're prized, loved, accepted, called, equipped and sent; You're blessed to be a blessing...You are a treasured vessel created by the one Masterful, Star-breathing God. He has set His affections upon you. He intends to use you to do great things."*

If your identity is not found in Him... *"I'm the disciple whom Jesus loves"...* *"I have been set free"...* *"I am righteous"...* then it is time to come and lay down anything that doesn't align with His image of you. As you take communion, lay down the lies you have believed about yourself. And receive the resurrection identity that He has freely purchased for you.

*Soak Time*



You can partake of the bread and the cup in your own home. Lay down the lies and pick up your identity. Describe what happens in your heart during this time.

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