

Being Who God Made

11/26/17

Psalm 139:14 (NRS) *I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.*

I believe that one of our greatest challenges as an individual living on this earth is accepting, appreciating, and approving of ourselves as God has made us. So many of us just don't like who we are - or at least parts of who we are.

Some of us don't like our bodies: they are too thin, too fat, too short, too tall. Our hair doesn't grow right, if at all. Our skin is messed up – bumpy, grainy, wavy, wrinkled, pimples...Our eyes look weird; our nose is too big and our ears too little. I don't look good wearing clothes or not.

We start to believe the lies in the advertisements that the only way we are going to find happiness and a life partner is to change how we smell, or look. We need to change our hair and skin. We start to believe that God made a mistake when we were made. Maybe He just got tired out when it came to us, so He threw us together with whatever left over scraps were lying around.

We start to believe that our bodies are deficient and ugly. We tell ourselves that we have to look like someone else – anyone else. And our attitude starts to sound like, “How can anyone like me when I look like this?”

This is a challenge that most of us face at times in our lives. I think women, especially feel the pressure of living up to some arbitrary standard set by ... who knows? Does anyone really know what we are supposed to look like? Is our hair supposed to stay its normal color all of our lives? Are we all suppose to have the same physique and smell like lavender, be the same height, have the same shaped teeth, and same size derriere?

Why do we listen to these ads? In Genesis 1:31 we are told, “Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.” Why can’t we believe that? God created us and saw that we were very good.

When we are thinking from our worldly ego natures, it is easy to criticize ourselves. And when we are criticizing ourselves, we are inadvertently criticizing God. But God understands; Spirit sees us differently, through a different set of eyes than humankind. If we are quiet enough we will feel the love that God has for us, and hear words that sound much like this: “I adore you just as I made you. You are beautiful; a masterpiece, unique in all of Creation. Dare to step out and become the person I made you to be, then you will know joy.”

When we can allow Christ to flow through these bodies, we start having different thoughts: “This is the body I have been given. How can I use it to celebrate and serve God?”

We do the same thing – the comparing game – not only with our bodies, but with our gifts, talents, experiences, attitudes, reactions, and personalities. Many of us think: If I were only more like that guy, then I would be more liked and appreciated. If I only had that gal’s personality and charisma, then I would be happy.

Christ commanded us to love our neighbor, not envy them or compare ourselves to them. We are to love our neighbors. Every one of us is uniquely and wonderfully made. We are perfect as we are – with all of our quirks, messes, imperfections, strengths, abilities, and talents.

To serve God, we don’t have to be like anyone else; we can’t be like anyone else. Irenaeus was a Christian leader of the 1st century; he wrote, “The glory of God is a human being fully alive.” Fully alive. How do we become fully alive? By being who God intended us to be.

When we use the talents that God has given us, or when we observe someone using the talents that God has given to them, don’t we feel God smiling upon us? To experience Spirit flowing, whether it is through us or around us, it brings joy to our hearts. We are moved; our hearts are touched and sometimes we cry. There is something pure, revealing, and disarming about the unimpeded expression of God.

Isaiah 43:7 says, “Bring to me all the people who are mine, whom I made for my glory, whom I formed and made.” We exist to serve God and to bring glory to God, recognition, praise, and joy to God.

All God needs from us is to be what He created us to be: a natural open expression of ourselves.

Job 37:5-6 reads: “*God’s voice thunders in marvelous ways; he does great things beyond our understanding. He says to the snow, ‘Fall on the earth,’ and to the rain shower, ‘Be a mighty downpour.’*”

God wants us to be what He created, not something different. God said to the snow, “Fall on the earth.” That’s it; just that one thing: fall. He didn’t want it to swirl or downpour. He basically said, “You are snow, so do what I made you to do.”

He said the same thing to the rain. You are rain, so do that which I made you to do, so be a might downpour. This is simple: do what you were made to do. Can’t we learn this simple lesson? I am here to do what God wants me to do, to fulfill my function, not someone else’s. You are here to perform your function, to serve as only you can, to be only who you can be. It is simple, but we make it complex with our lack of confidence in what God made us to be. We listen to the ego, to the advertisements, to all those other people who are trying to gain our confidence and control us.

God just wants us to be us. “Patrick, I made you as you are, so be Patrick.” We are each getting this message, “Do your thing; shine your light. Do what it is that you love to because I put that in you. Do what you were created for.”

What is that God is asking us to do? So many of have wandered far off that road. When we were children, we were true to who we were. But as experiences past, we were criticized for what we were; we were not accepted, and we allowed that to alter our behaviors and choices. We started building walls and layers to protect us against rejection. We started to think that if we were only like everybody else we could fit in more comfortably.

If we can get in touch with that inner child, that inner “us” again, perhaps we can start to peel the layers back and express who we truly are – that perfect, unique expression of God – that Child of God. Perhaps we can rediscover the sacred passions, desires, and capacities that were originally imprinted upon our hearts.

Life is not living in a beautiful sparkling clean home, with perfect well-groomed and well-behaved children, a perfect job, with dreams instantly fulfilled. Life is not perfect parents and in-laws, perfect health with a perfect body, surrounded by people who think just like us, share all the same interests, and worship the ground we walk on.

No way. Life is messy and magnificent, weird, wild, and wonderful, challenging, and lovely, and through this diverse zaniness is the opportunity for profound joy, meaning, and fulfillment.

So we can ask ourselves, “What do I need to peel away and leave behind in order to reclaim the essential ‘me’ that God created?”

What do I need to allow so that I can be all that God intended me to be?

I don't have the answers to these questions for anyone. Perhaps for myself, I need to release the fear around God's plans for me and surrender to them instead. I need to trust; have faith. Maybe I need to develop the courage and confidence to live the life God has in store for me with the same degree of acceptance that the snow and rain have for their purposes.

Maybe we all need the courage to allow Christ to move through us and acknowledge that God loves us just as we are. Perhaps we can learn to accept the truth that we are created with intention and purpose and are of exorbitant value to God. Possibly, we can come to realize that God has plans for us that are meant to bring us joy, hope, and a wonderful future. Maybe we need to face our responsibilities and walk away from the roles and expectations that other people have for us, and choose to be the person who haunts our hearts with smiles and possibilities, and is just craving to be released.

My prayer is that we can intrepidly become the person God has made us to be, without making excuses, grumbling, complaining, comparing, fearing, or resisting. I pray that we can realize that we are not created to fit a mold; we are here to break all molds and live as the unique masterpiece that God intended.

Let us pray....