



The Kingdom Perspective

The Leaky Balloon of Self

Hello this is Pastor Don of Christ Redeemer Church. Welcome to The Kingdom Perspective.

One of the marks of contemporary life is our fragile sense of self. We are easily offended and thrown off by lack of affirmation from others. This is strange since we claim, quite proudly, that we are self-made people. Supposedly, we find our identity by looking within and not to others; “I have a unique identity!”

However, social commentators have long noted that this *ethos of self* has led only to an even more impoverished *sense of self*. Why? Well, we are incurably social creatures. Swiss-born philosopher and writer, Alain de Botton, put it this way:

“...amid such uncertainty [about our self-identity], we typically turn to the wider world to settle the question of our significance. We seem beholden to affections of others to endure ourselves. Our ‘ego’ or self-conception could be pictured as a leaking balloon, forever requiring the helium of external love to remain inflated, and ever vulnerable to the smallest pinpricks of neglect.”

Now, why is this the case? Well, the gospel tells us. We crave affirmation because we were made for affirmation. We were not made for ourselves, but for God. Our happiness and contentment with ourselves (a quite legitimate desire!) can only come from knowing our Creator’s pleasure in us. We are incurably social creatures because we were not made for ourselves, but for another; we were made for the pleasure of God. And this means, we were made in the image of relationship—the eternal love relationship of the Triune God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit).

Something to think about from The Kingdom Perspective.

“I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.”

~ **John 15:5-11 (ESV)**

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