

RANSOMED HEART

LOVE GOD. LIVE FREE.

September 2013

Dearest Friends,

This letter is about you. The you God had in mind when he created you. It is an invitation, from God, to become who he had in mind. I'll let Stasi take it from here...

“People are weird. We just are. Well, I’m not – but everyone else is. The definition of normal for most of us is “me.” But that will only get us so far. It is helpful to acknowledge the truth that we are just as quirky as everyone else and that God loves quirky! He loves you! He has a fabulous sense of humor and he adores yours. (He always gets your jokes even if no one else does!)

He made you – on purpose. You are the only you – ever.

Becoming ourselves means we are actively cooperating with God’s intention for our lives, not fighting him (or ourselves.) God accepts us right at this moment and he wants us to accept ourselves as well. He looks on us with pleasure and with mercy and he wants us to look at ourselves with pleasure and mercy too! Accepting who we are includes accepting and being thankful for our imperfect bodies but it isn’t limited to that. We can accept other truths about ourselves. Our personality is our own. Our story is our own. The way we have chosen to self protect is ours. We have a style of relating, a kind of sin we easily fall prey to and favorite way to spend a free afternoon. We already are ourselves...in a way.

God not only accepts us, he loves us. Embracing ourselves is a stretch for most of us but how can we love our neighbor as ourselves if we do not love ourselves? How can we become joyful women if we are unable to see the humor in our own folly? We do become even more “ourselves” as we repent of areas in our lives that have nothing to do with faith or love but God does not live in a perpetual state of disappointment over who we are. Berating ourselves for our flaws and our weakness only serves to undermine our strength to become. Repenting from our sin is essential. Beating ourselves up for sinning is no longer an option.

Embracing ourselves has nothing to do with pride or arrogance or settling for a lower version of who we are. Embracing ourselves has everything to do with embracing the goodness of God’s creative work in us. It means trusting God; believing that all he has made is glorious and good. And that includes us. You are the only one who can be you. The world, the Kingdom of God, and all those around you need you to embrace who you are created to be and become more fully your true self.

About twenty years ago, I was at church and in a very low place. I felt hideously ugly. I was telling myself that I looked like Jabba the Hutt. (Not very nice words to say to oneself.) Kneeling in prayer, I asked God, “In my sanctified imagination, I immediately “saw” a woman kneeling. The sun was filtering through the window and streaming a golden beam of light on her

head. She was wearing a lovely fitted white satin dress. Her hair was softly yet ornately done up with seed pearls in it. She was beautiful, clearly held in the gaze of her God, and a Bride.

He saw me then as beautiful. He sees me now as beautiful.

When God looks at us – me, you, any beloved one – he does not view us through the veil of our sin, through the shroud of our failures or the canopy of our past. When God looks at us, He sees us through the blood of Jesus. When God looks at you, he sees the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Clearly, we need to see ourselves as he does! Both who we are in this moment and the person he is forming in us; the person we are becoming. Once we do, we must choose to believe him and walk towards that person.

It is kneeling at Jesus' feet with our gaze on him that we see Jesus more truly and see ourselves more clearly, as we both really are. In prayer, in worship, our spirit aligns with the Truth. In worship, we enter into the presence of God. It is in his presence and only in his presence that he heals us and speaks to us. In worship we can ask God to give us _____ for us. I want that. I want to live unto that – God's idea of who I really am. Don't you?

Who do you think you are? Who are you on the road to becoming? Do you have a vision of who you could become? How does God see you? What is his vision of who you are to become? It's vital that we ask him that question. And then wait for his answer.

Having a vision of who you are becoming informs your present. Knowing who we are and who we are to be both _____ and _____. We live today knowing who we are going to be tomorrow. Knowing who you are becoming puts hope in your heart and a spring in your step. The key is to _____ we are who God says we are. And then rest in the knowledge that God is the one responsible for our transformation. We lean into him. We look to him. We depend upon him. We trust him. We will fail. He will not.

So ask him.

And then, write it down."

Such good words, such hopeful words. This will be our last excerpt from _____. I hope you've enjoyed them – I hope you'll dive into this wonderful book and tell everyone you know about it. Because redemption is the greatest thing we can give another human being!

Love,



John (and Stasi)