

Aud 21

Side A Malcolm Cameron – “Self Esteem”

Side B Praise Chapel

[SIDE A]

[audio begins in mid-sentence]

Malcolm Cameron: —give up being the centre of my world, and accept myself as God’s creation, lovable, valuable, capable, forgivable and redeemable. Today’s discussion focus on the fact that many people struggle at various times at varying degrees with feeling unlovable, invaluable, incapable, unforgivable and unredeemable, for a variety of reasons. An appropriate response to the self-esteem issue will also be discussed in relation to the individual and the community.

It is difficult to accept oneself as being created in the image of God when one has never felt accepted horizontally let alone vertically. It is also difficult to deem oneself as loveable when one has never known true love. Valuable, when one has not been valued. Capable, when one has never measured up. Forgivable, when one has only felt condemnation. And, redeemable when one only has felt discarded. Adverse life circumstances can cause the development of apparent negative feelings and negative relational patterns which, over a period of time, alienate people from relational intimacy as well as intimacy with God. Developmentally, people become committed to self-preservation in various forms, which function to somehow fill a void or remove the individual from attendant pain. When an individual is unwilling or unable to see the reality of how they’ve been affected by life or how they responded to life, an unhealthy self-esteem is present. People compensate for an unhealthy self-esteem in a variety of ways, as was mentioned yesterday, in terms of being a martyr versus that of performer, to only mention a few. The issue of self-esteem is extremely important for the Christian community, as the effectiveness of ministry will be greatly enhanced when individuals from within the body are immersed in healthy processes of growth.

Despite the fact that people have to live together, many, if not most, have experienced or are currently experiencing deficits in life that for the most part are moored(??) in isolation. I for one know too well the life of looking the part and playing the part when in reality the emptiness of life has been incredibly overwhelming in the midst of apparent success. And then who have established patterns of relating and living that keep me from experiencing the pain of rejection or the loneliness of never getting too close all in the name of ministry.

We are a people who desire to be respected, understood, appreciated and affirmed for where we come from, where we’re at, and where we’re going. We long to be heard, to be seen and to be validated. Yet unfortunately many of us have responded to our life’s circumstances, in such a way that keep us thirsting for something and never quite getting enough.

In the context of personal growth, family background and outside influences such as peers, our responses to life can be both positive and negative. Positive in that all of life can be a learning

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experience, wherein we could become embittered or challenged for a love for others who likewise struggle. Negative in that we find ways apart from God that nullify the effects of living in a sinful world. And God in reality is not big enough, therefore, I've become dependent on my own understanding of how to live so as to survive, resulting in becoming the centre of my world. A young boy has been uniquely gifted musically. His interests are aesthetic in nature, practicing the piano holds greater appeal than playing hockey. The boy is faced with the fact that most other boys his age, play hockey and appreciate physical sport. When the young boy fails to join in, he is relentlessly, for a period of a few years, criticized, taunted and isolated. Feeling hurt on a regular basis, the child learns to withdraw spending much time alone becoming immersed in self, daydreaming, fantasizing and assuming an identity as being different, an outcast, unlovable and incapable in area of athletics and relationships. Equally, if not more devastating his father remains distant, unwilling to reach out with affirmation. [5:00] Expectations are placed on the boy to become a man's man, and the boy is trapped. The young boy now a young man longs to be respected and has never felt respect, affirmed but has never felt affirmed. The young man learns that to survive you must excel, become competent at something, worthy of recognition. Inadvertently, he becomes arrogant, detached and disengaged from others, avoiding the sting of rejection wherever and whenever possible, and the cycle perpetuates itself and is still(??) wondering that God and the Christian community are as much a threat as any childhood prey.

Finding ways to cope for the young man is at the root of self-esteem being at the centre of his world wherein being a performer, or the martyr, or the minister, or the joker is merely a reflection of a greater need. Historically, the young man has tasted the despair of rejection, the pain of not measuring up, the loneliness of losing friends and the lack of value found in the relationship with his father included with the shame found in disrespect and the attendant guilt associated with being different. He also deals with legitimate guilt over ways in which he has chosen to live apart from God. The concepts of love, value, capability, forgiveness and redemption are merely head knowledge as opposed to a living reality. And now the young man seeks to live out life in the context of a Christian community which is dictated by more attendance, more work, more sermons, more service and more hiding, motivated by the fear of being totally misunderstood as possibly questioning or rejecting faith when asking very legitimate questions.

It is likely __?? that we in Christian community have the resources individually and collectively to love, to value, to instill confidence in capability, to forgive and to redeem whereby the love of God is an active force as we afford ourselves, the space and the freedom to live life with integrity in the presence of one another. I'm not an advocate of indiscriminate sharing, nor am I suggesting true confessions, I am suggesting however, that through our commitment to loving one another deeply, the issue of self-esteem works for us and not against us. Loving begins with

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you, it begins with me, it requires painful integrity, sometimes in the presence of another person maybe even a counsellor, which in many cases could be your greatest spiritual endeavour.

There are people in this room who have struggled for years with self-esteem; you've been put down and rejected by circumstances, by people. Some people have been abused: sexually, physically, spiritually, mentally and emotionally. Some of you have been used, some manipulated and some mistreated. Some have felt pressure of unrealistic expectations, or lack of a parent, the isolation of divorce, questions concerning sexuality, trouble with academics, a general lack of self-confidence. And in many instances, you developed patterns of living that are characterized by fear and withdrawal. Our take is to not have you open up something prematurely or inappropriately; our concern, however, is that you take advantage of this particular Christian community here at Trinity. The staff, the faculty, the administration, the counsellors, your friends and in so-doing move ahead in your life with courage, searching out areas of weakness, areas of struggle, and areas of strength, not in self-absorption but in love; love for yourself, which is okay, love for God, and love for other people. And then to keep in mind that growth takes time. Growth is a process. Your issues maybe be resolved quickly or they may take years to be resolved. Growth begins with you and it begins with me. It involves taking risks when desiring to keep being encouraged. It involves giving someone the space to say what needs to be said without me feeling the pressure to give an immediate or pat answer. Loving growth requires a broadening scope that enables me to see the whole picture; that what you are at present will not be what you will be in one, two, three or four years from now. [10:11] Loving growth necessitates action even when you're feeling overwhelmed or immobilized.

Revival in Christian community is not some euphoric experience that somehow captivates its audience into the knowledge of dealing with reality. Revival in Christian community begins when believers are committed to basing their lives in the presence of God and one another, wherein our commitments to self-protection are exposed as well as longings of our hearts to being involved in intimate and engaging relationships.

With this as a backdrop Christians can be liberated to bear with the weaknesses of others, to rejoice with those who rejoice, to weep with those who weep, faithfully moving(??) a friend as iron sharpens iron so as to love with meaning and with substance whereby deep encouragement transpires. The difficult concepts of life comes as a result of death, death itself is a painful and laborious task. It involves recognizing yourself as the victim of adverse circumstances as well as seeing yourself as an agent wherein others have fallen victim to your sin and your self-protection.

We encourage you today to take your lives seriously, we encourage you to do that for the cause of Christ, for the extension of the gospel of peace. The question I think to ask yourself in closing – Is there peace in my life? And I delayed over that question because, for the most part, the

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answer to that is no. I think the answer is no because, there is a striving to be, there's a striving to do, there's a striving to achieve, that striving comes from somewhere. It's not just something I happened to pick up, it's something that's developed over a period of years, a number of years. I believe that striving comes from a deficit experienced in my own walk(??), in my own journey. So what will I do with that? Do I ignore it? Do I deny it? Initially, yes, I did ignore it, I did deny it. Now, I believe God has enabled me to turn around and face the dragon, as it were, and see striving for what striving really is. To see where it comes from, how it functions in my life, how it keeps me distant from people, how it protects me from engaging in meaningful relationships with other people, how it's selfish, how I become the centre of my world. Wherein I convince myself that I am unloveable, I am unredeemable and, I am unforgivable. And seldom has there been a taste in the liberating Christian community in which I have been able to sigh a sigh of relief and say – this is my life, this is who I am, this is me. And it's worse when you are a leader because people put you up there as being something that you are not, something that none of us are and that has led me to be committed to living a life of integrity before God. And, hopefully in the presence of other people to be able to acknowledge, where I am weak and also being able to acknowledge in a healthy way where I struggle. And to do all of that not for me but for other people to lead people into greater depth of understanding of what it means to be a Christian, what it means to be free, what it means to be liberated and not living in bondage.

I'd like you to just bow your heads for a few moments, and just take a minute or two and to reflect over all of that. And also what was presented yesterday. Keep in mind, if you are available at nine o'clock this evening we will be meeting in Fraser Hall lounge and then we will be in Douglas lounge. And also to keep in mind that a very meaningful time of response can be tomorrow during Praise Chapel in which you come as you are, before God in his presence and in the presence of one another to worship; not to feel good but to be motivated into greater avenues of serving one another. **[15:13]**

Now if we can pause for a moment, I would like us to sing all four verses of Amazing Grace all together.

[pause 15:24 – 16:29]

[sings]

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

T'was Grace that taught my heart to fear.
And Grace, my fears relieved.

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How precious did that Grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come;
'Tis Grace that brought me safe thus far
and Grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun.
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we've first begun.

Amen. Thank you for coming today and I look forward to see you again soon. [19:27]

[End of side A]

[Side B]

Let's stand and sing "Praise to the Lord"

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty,
The King of creation!
O my soul, praise him,
For he is your health and salvation!
All ye who hear
Now to his temple draw near,
Joining in glad adoration!

Praise to the Lord, who over all
Things is wondrously reigning
And, as on wings of an eagle,
uplifting, sustaining.
Have you not seen
All that is needful has been
Sent by his gracious ordaining

Praise to the Lord, who will
Prosper your work and defend you;
Surely his goodness and mercy

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Shall daily attend you.
Ponder anew
What the almighty can do
As with his love he befriends you.

Praise to the Lord! Oh, let all
That is in me adore him!
All that has life and breath,
Come now with praises before him!
Let the amen
Sound from his people again.
Gladly forever adore him.

[Singing ends]

Thank you please be seated.
Father God this morning we thank you that you are the Lord and that you are Almighty. And Lord as we come into your presence, we ask that you would meet us here. That you would quiet our hearts and that you would open our minds that we might be able to feel your presence and know that the cares that we are carrying upon on our hearts and busyness of our schedule can be put aside for just a few minutes to focus on you. And that we can cast these things upon you and you will carry them for us. We ask this in your name we pray. Amen.

“Therefore, the Lord longs to be gracious to you. And therefore he waits on high to have compassion on you. For the Lord is a God of justice. How blessed are all those who long for him. Oh people in Zion, inhabitant in Jerusalem, you will weep no longer. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry. When he hears it, he will answer you. Although the Lord has given you bread of privation and water of oppression, he your teacher will no longer hide himself. But your eyes will behold your teacher and your ears will hear a word behind you, ‘This is the way walk in it,’ whenever you turn to the right or to the left.” [5:05]

[music plays from 5:06 to 5:45]

[Sings]

And I behold Your beauty,
Your glory fills this place.
Calm my heart to hear You,
Cause my eyes to see You,
Your presence here is the answer
To the longing of my heart.

I lift my voice,
To worship and adore You,

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For You alone are worthy.
A captive now set free,
Your kingdom's come to me,
Glory in the highest,
My heart cries unto You.

Join with us –

[sings]

You are here,
And I behold Your beauty,
Your glory fills this place.
Calm my heart to hear You,
Cause my eyes to see You,
Your presence here is the answer
To the longing of my heart.

I lift my voice,
To worship and adore You,
For You alone are worthy.
A captive now set free,
Your kingdom's come to me,
Glory in the highest,
My heart cries unto You.

[10:40]

As the deer panteth for the water
So my soul longeth after thee
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship thee.

You alone are my strength my shield
To You alone may my spirit yield
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship thee.

I love you more than any other,
So much more than anything
You alone are the real joy Giver,
And the apple of my eye.

You alone are my strength my shield
In You alone may my spirit yield

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You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship thee.

[12:30]

Lord, Lord
Come satisfy the longing in my heart
Nothing I do, Lord
Can take the place of drawing near to you

Only you can fill my deepest longing
Only you can breathe in me new life
Only you can fill my heart with laughter
Only you can answer my heart's cry

Father, I love you
Come satisfy the longing in my heart
Fill me, overwhelm me,
Until I know your love deep in my heart

Only you can fill my deepest longing
Only you can breathe in me new life
Only you can fill my heart with laughter
Only you can answer my heart's cry

Only you can fill my deepest longing
Only you can breathe in me new life
Only you can fill my heart with laughter
Only you can answer my heart's cry.

[15:00] I am going to ask you if you can bow your heads. And if there is anybody who can answer your heart's cry, it is the Lord. The last couple of days, we have been focussing on self-esteem and you have probably heard a lot about it, and maybe some of you are sick of it. But I am willing to bet that there's people in here who have heard some things in the last couple of days who have looked at it as a positive aspect, something that can be changed. And then I'm betting there's other people here who would look at it from a negative perspective and said I'm really not worth that much, look at all the things that are wrong with me.

This morning I want you to take some time to let your heart cry out to the Lord. Self-esteem is an issue that like was mentioned, everybody deals with, and that some time in their life everybody struggled with it. This morning I want you to just stop and I want you to think about one aspect of your life that you would really like to see changed. I'm not saying this morning that it will

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happen overnight but I do know that if you lift it to the Lord and you completely give it up. He will take it from you and he will carry it. And this morning I can speak from experience that I know how freeing it can be to be released either from something of my past or to be released with how I view myself, amidst my peers and the pressures of today. And I ask that you would just take some time in the next few minutes of quietness to just do business with the Lord and allow your ears to be opened to hear what he has to say to you.

Father, this morning you've heard the cries of many people and Lord this morning I ask that you would be faithful to your word and that you would hear these cries. And as was read earlier in Isaiah that you would take them and that you would carry them, and that you would release the individual from the burden that accompanies it. Father, sometimes the hardest thing for us to accept is love. Because oftentimes we look at ourselves and think that we are unloveable, and that there is nothing good within us. But, Father, because of what you did so many years ago, you've become able to look at us strengths, weaknesses, and you've been able to see through all that, and love us because of who we are.

Father this morning as we go from this building, I ask that you would help us to just remember that once given away to you never has to be taken back upon ourselves. Lord, this morning I pray that you would help each person here to understand what it means to be free, and to be able to feel within their heart a peace, that no matter what they have gone through will not in any way change their relationship with you because of your love for them and because of the grace that you have bestowed upon all of us. Father, help us to stop and to really focus our attention and to think primarily of your love for us.

[20:03]

[sings]

Think about His love, think about His goodness
Think about His grace that's brought us through
For as high as the heavens above
So great is the measure of our Father's love
Great is the measure of our Father's love

Think about His love, think about His goodness
Think about His grace that's brought us through
For as high as the heavens above
So great is the measure of our Father's love
Great is the measure of our Father's love

How could I forget His love
And how could I forget His mercies
He satisfies, He satisfies, He satisfies, my desires

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Think about His love, think about His goodness
Think about His grace that's brought us through
For as high as the heavens above
So great is the measure of our Father's love
Great is the measure of our Father's love.

[23:07]

You're the sole desire of my heart,
You're the sole desire of my heart.

Still more with every passing day,
As things of earth just fade away,
I come to know the joy of loving you.
You're the sole desire of my heart.

You're the sole desire of my heart,
You're the sole desire of my heart.

Lord, speak to me, I am standing still,
I come to hear, reveal your will,
I will listen to your voice and then obey.
You are the sole desire of my heart.

You're the sole desire of my heart,
You're the sole desire of my heart.

Still more with every passing day,
As things of earth just fade away,
I come to know the joy of loving you.
You're the sole desire of my heart.

[25:10]

I believe in Jesus
I believe He is the Son of God
I believe He died and rose again
I believe He paid for us all

And I believe He is here now
I believe He is here

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Standing in our midst
Here With the power to heal now
Here With the power to heal now
And the grace to forgive

I believe in You, Lord
I believe You watch from above
I believe You died and rose again
I believe You paid for us all.

And I believe You are here now
I believe You are here now
Standing in our midst
I believe You're here now
Here With the power to heal now
Here With the power to heal now
And the grace to forgive.

[27:08]

[Revelation 21: 1-5]

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is now among men. And He shall dwell among them; and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.’”

“I am the alpha, the omega says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come.”

Let’s stand and close the service his morning. Sing, “Crown him with many crowns”

[sings]

Crown him with many crowns,
The lamb upon his throne;
Hark, how the heavenly anthem drowns
All music but its own
Awake, my soul and sing
Of him who died for thee,
And hail him as thy matchless King
Through all eternity.

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Crown him the Lord of love
Behold his hands and side—
Rich wounds, yet visible above,
In beauty glorified.
No angel in the sky
Can fully bear that sight,
But downward bends His wondering eye
At mysteries so bright.

Crown him the lord of life!
Who triumphed over the grave,
Who rose victorious to the strife
For those He came to save.
His glories now we sing,
Who died, and rose on high,
Who died eternal life to bring,
And lives that death may die.

Crown him the lord of heaven!
One with the father known,
One with the spirit through him given
From yonder glorious throne,
To thee be endless praise,
For thou for us hast died;
Be thou, O lord, through endless days
Adored and magnified.

[31:08]

There is one thing that is very good, I guess, about the issue of self-esteem and that is that we are all in it together. I am going to ask if you would just grab the hand of the person next to you, and we are just going to close in a word of prayer and we will be on our way. Father, we thank you, this morning for your love and, Father, we thank you that you have been crowned with many crowns and that you long to bestow the blessings upon us, from the riches of your grace. Lord, teach us to be willing to accept that. Go before us now as we go through this day. We ask this in your name we pray. Amen.

Before you go, give the person next to you a big hug.

[piano music plays]

[End of Side B]