

## Loved to Love

Male Devotional Leader

### Realization

our faith

This world has conditioned us to lie to ourselves - that our perceived flaws do not deserve to see the light of day but must be guarded with the utmost security. It assures us that the failure to rein in our individuality will cause us nothing but shame, regret, and loneliness.

The world is overrated.

*See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called **CHILDREN OF GOD**; and so we are. The reason why the world **does not know us** is that it **did not know HIM**. -1 John 3:1*

We are loved by a love that:

- does not falter or sway
- is not deterred by expectations
- does not withhold out of spite
- is not contaminated by greed, conceit, or lust

But by a God who loves us deeply from the inside out. He is a God that seeks to break our chains and use us to go out and change the world. It is through relinquishing our ties to these feelings of inadequacy and self-preservation that we can come to terms with who we are in relation to Christ. Our dissatisfaction with THIS world and its constructs tells us that we were made for another (C.S. Lewis). Our actions, therefore, all amount to a greater cause.

*I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but **THE WILL OF HIM WHO SENT ME**. - John 5:30*

If the one true living God loves us, who are we to not do the same? As we learn through experience and maturing, the significance of our individuality is placed in how we can uniquely give Him the glory. As Christians, our actions cease to be fueled by our search for approval but start being fueled by the bigger picture in store. As we begin to replace our perceptions of ourselves as inadequate and incapable with cherished, cared for, loved, then comes stability. Interestingly, it is through giving up control (and all the unnecessary worries that come with it) do we experience true joyful freedom. It is in the fact that our contributions are amounting to His greater plan that we can learn to love ourselves.



## Ivanne Cheng – Devotional Leader

### Extension

community

The gift of love is not one that can be kept to ourselves. By definition, true love cannot be contained but seeks to be spread. As true love is seeking the *best* for others and through our fulfillment in Christ we have experienced the *best*, therefore, loving others requires 1) actively sharing the joy we have been graciously given and 2) spurring them on to find their place in the kingdom.

*God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world **WE ARE LIKE JESUS**. There is **NO FEAR** in love. But perfect love **DRIVES OUT FEAR**. -1 John 4:16-17*

Fear, shame, and guilt have no place in the kingdom. These present a daily struggle to choose His joy over our humanity. The joy that comes with realizing our worth in His eyes instills a profound confidence in our identity. A people that spurs each other on towards Christ is one that embraces each other's hurts and collectively lays them down at His feet.

*Greater love has no one than this, that someone **LAY DOWN** his life for his friends...You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should **GO AND BEAR FRUIT** and that your fruit should abide. - John 15: 13, 16*

With a community filled with joy and fueled by their confidence in their relationship with Christ, God is most glorified. God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him. As we foster a fellowship in which people, as they grow into their skin, find their value in Him, we drive each other to grow in our faiths and, subsequently, our responsibility to the people around us.

So, basically my vision is a giant lovefest. Through the people he has placed in my life, I have learned to see Him (and myself) more clearly and come to appreciate what I have to offer. There is nothing more beautiful than a community that loves selflessly, serve wholeheartedly, and is unified in one body rooted in him. God has great things planned! God Bless.