

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 22 Oct 2023

Sermon Title : Loving Ourselves

Speaker : Rev Peter Koh

Text : Psalm 139:14

INTRODUCTION

How is our self-esteem? Do we have a good self-esteem or do we struggle with our worth in life? How many of us compare and say, “How come I am born in this family and not in the other family?” or “How come I am not able to buy things as I like?” Sometimes we hate ourselves because we do not like how we look or do not think highly of ourselves. God in His word in Psalm 139:14 tells us we are fearfully and wonderfully made by Him and so we are to love ourselves.

We are fearfully and wonderfully made

“I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” (Ps 139:14a)

Fearfully made

- Created with infinite care and precision – You cannot find another “you” in the world because we are unique. God has not mass produced us but made us special individually. In creating us, God considers all that we have to face in our lives and ensures that we, His creation, will not fail but thrive well.
- Purposefully and intentionally formed – The materials used to form us, and our design have been carefully selected and thought through, as a designer would do. God makes sure all our parts are not only functional but also long lasting (lasts a lifetime).

Wonderfully made

Endowed with:

- incredible abilities – abilities to create and build things e.g. machines, weapons, etc
- intellect – being able to think and make choices and decisions
- capacity to experience a rich tapestry of emotions and relationships.

A robot may seem to be able to perform certain physical functions that we do but it cannot feel fear and other emotions. God has endowed us with such emotions and intellect so that we can embrace who God is and acknowledge His power.

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

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Embracing God's works

"Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well." (Ps 139:14b) Just like the psalmist who wrote this psalm, we need to:

- Acknowledge God's power
- Assess ourselves

Acknowledge God's power even in people born with deformities and not functioning properly

You may ask, "Since God fearfully and wonderfully made us, why are there people born with deformities? Why are there people not functioning properly? Why do I have kids with special needs?"

God made us perfect, but human failings cause these deformities to happen. Circumstances, genetic problems, generational infirmities, substance abuse and environmental abuse are some human failings that may result in all these deformities.

- God can still use us for His greater purpose in spite of all our weaknesses and deformities because God is a redeeming God. He created us fearfully and wonderfully, and even though the circumstances around us and human failings have caused us to have challenges, God can still use us for a greater purpose.

Since God has made us special, we need to evaluate and assess why we struggle in life and why we are not accepting who we are.

If you are wonderfully and fearfully made, why do you think lowly of yourself?

- FOPO (Fear of people's opinion)
FOPO – We are always afraid of people's opinion; what people think of and say about us. We think that only when they do not see us, then they will not talk about us.
- FOMO (Fear of missing out)
FOMO – We think we must have this and that. Otherwise, we cannot function properly.

Let us not be afraid of who we are but look into the mirror and accept ourselves. Remember that you are wonderfully and fearfully made, made special so God can use you to be a blessing.

Loving Ourselves is NOT.....

- Lovers of self....(2 Timothy 3:2-4)
- Idolizing oneself, that is self-centeredness

We need to love ourselves rightly in the image of God and His likeness, not following what the world's way of loving ourselves which promotes self-centredness.

Loving ourselves is:

- Self-acceptance: not rejecting ourselves

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- Self-worth: a sense of one's own value as a person
- Self-esteem: confidence and satisfaction in oneself; self-respect

When we know how God sees us as the apple of His eyes, precious in His sight, we will not look down on ourselves. We should love and accept ourselves as we are uniquely created by God, bestowed with His spiritual gifts and talents to serve and bless the community. We need to also understand our self-worth and have a good self-esteem. All these will translate into 3 "S" which will show in how we feel – safe, secure and significant, as a child of God living our lives confidently.

How to Love Ourselves?

Psalm 139:13-18

- Knowing we are created by God (vv.13-15) – gives us safety
God create us to enable us to live our life in this earth without fear. He gives us gifts to enable us to live in safety.
- Knowing we are watched by God (v.16) – gives us security
Where does my help come from? God will not let our foot slip nor not let us fall. We feel secure knowing God is our protector.
- Knowing we are valued by God (vv.17-18) – gives us significance
Knowing we are valued and how God sees us will give us significance in who we are.

In any life group, team you work in and family, if you feel safe, secure, and significant, you will learn to live in harmony. People live confidently when they have these three elements in their lives.

CONCLUSION

Do not despise yourself. Know that you are wonderfully and fearfully created by God who has given you talents and gifts to be a blessing to others. If you do not love yourself, it is hard to love your neighbour and your enemy. If you love yourself, you will be able to love your neighbour and your enemy. 'Loving ourselves' is not being self-centered. Instead, it should be because we love ourselves that we can love others. Let us not fear people's opinion (FOPO) or fear missing out (FOMO) but acknowledge that God has made us special and is watching over us because we are valued by God, so we can have confidence and a good self-esteem to live confidently. Despite our human failings, God still can use us for His greater purpose that glorifies Him.

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C. Testimonies, Prayers and Action

Purpose: Give glory to God, seek Him and embody His Word.

5. Share your personal testimony on how God's love for you has enabled you to have a better self-esteem.

OR

Give thanks to God for creating you unique, with special talents and gifts that only you can use to be a blessing to others.

6. As a group, take turns to acknowledge God's work in each other's life to encourage each other to know in your soul how fearfully and wonderfully you have been made. Surrender all your human failings such as FOMO, FOPO and others to God, and seek the Holy Spirit's empowerment to fully trust in the safety, security and significance that God can give, so you may live your life confidently.

Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

1. Great Things – Phil Wickham <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y4CY3nf1Mvw>
2. How Deep the Father's Love for Us – Stuart Townend
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0CDqG5STPM>
3. Who You Say I Am – Hillsong https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcC1Bp13n_4

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