

Self Esteem

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Preacher: Steve Brown

[0 : 0 0] This is the evening service at Holy Trinity on the 26th of August 2001. The preacher is Steve Brown.

His sermon is entitled Self-Esteem and is based on John 3, verses 16-21. Now I look in the mirror and I think to myself, Steve, you're so small.

You're too skinny. You're a weed. You're never going to beat those guys. You're such a loser. I remember walking out onto the track and standing on that line, Kenyans either side of me, Australian champ to my left, Australian record holder to my right, and I think to myself, you're so small.

You're too skinny. You're a weed. You're never going to beat these guys. You're such a loser. You ever looked in the mirror and thought to yourself, gee, I'm a loser.

Maybe not. Maybe you think you're a bit of a legend. I remember going to a party and everyone from school was there and all the guys were after this one girl, Tamara.

[1 : 2 8] Tamara. Now, Tamara was hot. That's what they called her. She had long, blonde hair, blue eyes, luscious, red, juicy, kissable lips.

Of course, she's not as good as Melissa. But Tamara, she looked like Barbie. And all the guys, we were standing in a corner trying to get enough courage to go and talk to her and her friends.

And I thought, well, blow this. I'm going to go make the moves. And after some snappy comments and some wishy jokes, things are looking really good. I've got all the green lights. And I thought to myself, gee, I'm good.

Such a legend. You guys, you ever looked in the mirror, flexed your muscles, strike a couple of poses, and thought, I'm so muscly.

I'm so sexy. I'm such a legend. And I know you have. What about you girls? Have you looked in the mirror and, you know, flicked back your hair, battered your eyelids and puckered up your lips and thought, I'm so beautiful.

[2 : 5 1] I'm such a legend. I know you have. When you look in the mirror, what do you see? What do you see when you look in the mirror? A loser or a legend?

You see, the funny thing is that people often think we're losers just because people say we are. We often think we're legends just because other people say we are.

You see, we really care about what other people think and say about us, especially our friends. Like at the Olympic Dream, just before the race, the 12 of us, the 12 runners, were in the dressing room underneath the grandstand listening to the roar of the crowd to the other races beforehand.

And no one said a word. It was tense. Trying to ignore each other. Trying to concentrate on ourselves.

the other side of the road. And I was looking at the corner of their eyes, seeing who's ready, seeing who was scared. And I was fooling myself, pretending that I didn't care what they thought about me.

[4 : 0 6] But all I knew on that day, I didn't want to finish last and have those guys think that I was a loser. You see, I really cared about how those other runners saw me, what they thought of me.

Like at that party, I'll let you in on a bit of a secret. I didn't go up to Tam because I was full of confidence. I went up to her because I wanted my mates to think I was a legend.

I wanted them to think that I was a stud. I wanted to go to school with my arm around Tam so that everyone at school would think I was an absolute legend.

I really cared about how other people saw me at school. Why? Why did I care so much about whether the runners thought I was a loser?

There's going to be other races. Who cares? Why did I care so much about my mates thinking that I was a legend? Mates should accept you for who you are.

[5 : 1 2] Who cares? But you know, deep down, I do care. I care about what people think of me.

I care about how people see me and perceive me. And I've got a hunch here tonight that every single one of you do too. We're humans. Girls, when you go into the shopping centre and you see the glossy magazines with the skinny rake of a catwalk model on the front, do you think I'm so fat?

Why do you care? Guys, why do we go around flexing our muscles in mirrors?

Why do we hate feeling and looking weak in front of our friends? Why do you care? You see, we care about what people think of us, don't we?

It's obvious. Our self-image is based largely on what other people think about us. Why?

[6 : 2 8] Why should you care so much whether people think you're a loser or a legend? The answer is fairly simple. It's because you and I want to be loved and accepted.

If you don't believe me, did you listen to the teenage dirtbag song by Wirtus? It said in there, she doesn't know who I am and she doesn't give a damn about me because I'm just a teenage dirtbag, baby.

You see, the guy in the song is paranoid. He's paranoid about this hot chick and what she thinks about him. We want to be accepted and we'll do almost anything to get it.

And the funny thing about it too, this is the worst thing about it, it's not just a once-off. We do it all our lives. We try to impress people all our lives. We try to make people love and accept us over and over and over and over again.

It's never-ending. Their love isn't enough. It wears out. It doesn't last. Their love and their acceptance is not enough.

[7 : 4 4] You see, to have a good self-image of ourselves, we need love. To have a good self-image, we need love that lasts. To have a good self-image, we need permanent acceptance.

So, the big question tonight is, where can we get that sort of love and acceptance, the lasting, the permanent type? Well, the Bible says this, that God loved the world.

Tonight, I want to talk about a God that loves. And this God doesn't just love nice people or good people or people with good grades or people with trendy friends or people with good-looking boyfriends and girlfriends or people with the trendiest clothes.

God doesn't just love people like that. He loves all people. And the Bible says that God loves the world. And when the Bible says world, it doesn't mean a nice, happy, care-bear type of world because God knows the world isn't like that.

And the Bible says that God loves the world. That means they're full of rebellious people desperate with bad self-images, desperate for love, looking in all the wrong places type of world. God loves that type of world.

- [9 : 08] God loves that type of person, you and me. A rebel with a bad self-image, desperate for love, looking in all the wrong places type of person. God loves that type of person, you and me.
- For God loved the world. How do we know? How do we know that's really true? How do we know that God really loves us?
- What's he ever done to prove it? We hear you, Steve, but what's he done? Actions speak louder than words, don't they? What has God ever done to prove his love for us?
- For God loved the world, so, this is what he does, he gave his one and only son. You see, God gave Jesus to us to show us his love and that meant separation from his one and only son.
- It's a bit like the movie Gladiator. Maximus is the greatest general in the Roman Empire and after a great victory, Maximus is asked by the emperor, Marcus Aurelius, what do you want most?
- [10 : 34] And I'll give it to you. And Maximus' simple reply is to go home. I want to go home. I want to be with my family. Maximus had been fighting for more than three years and he yearned for his family.
- He was heartbroken for his wife and his son. But Maximus was the greatest general in the world. He had great victories. He was worshipped and adored by his troops.
- He was a hero of the Roman people, the Roman Empire. But all that didn't really matter to him because Maximus was separated from his family.
- You know, Maximus would pray to the gods to protect his wife and son. He would desperately ask his ancestors in his prayers to watch over them. He'd even carry around small little statues of them in his pocket and every time he thought of them he'd pull them out and kiss them.
- Maximus was separated from his family and separation hurt. Separation was painful. But it gets worse, doesn't it?
- [11 : 51] Much worse. Because Maximus is betrayed and he's going to die. And just before he's going to get executed, he's told that his family will join him in the afterlife.
- And Maximus is desperate and he escapes and he rushes back to the family home to stop this murder of his family. But it's too late.
- It's too late. And he finds them. And his wife and his son are burnt alive, nailed to the cross.
- that was separation to the extreme. Extreme hurt, extreme pain, extreme separation.
- How much more hurtful and painful was it for God to be separated from his one and only son? The son that he'd never been separated from for all eternity.
- [12 : 58] The son that he had the most intimate relationship, more intimate than any human could ever have with another human. And that was just pulled apart, separated.
- Now that's what I call love. You see, God's love for this world, for you and me, sent Jesus from heaven to a world that hated him.
- God's love meant that God experienced separation from his son. God in heaven, Jesus on earth, separation. But it gets worse, doesn't it?
- Much worse. God's love for this world sent Jesus to the cross. God's love meant that God experienced extreme separation from his son as he hung and died on and died on the cross.
- For God loved the world, so he gave. He gave it all. He gave his one and only son. Why?

[14 : 14] It's a bit extreme. It's a bit crazy. Take a listen to this. for God loved the world, so he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

love. Why did God reveal his love like this? Why was it so extreme? It's so that anyone who believes has God's eternal love and acceptance.

Anyone who believes has God's gift of eternal life. Anyone who believes now stands in the right with God. Anyone who believes has God's image.

So when you look in the mirror, you can say, I'm not a loser. I'm not a legend. I'm loved and accepted by the eternal God.

People who believe in Jesus don't need self image. They've got God image. People who believe stop being a rebel with a bad self-image, desperate for love, looking in all the wrong places type of person and they become a son and daughter of God, with a good God image, eternally loved, looking to Jesus type of person.

[15 : 45] When you believe you become a friend of God, you stand in the right with him. People who believe experience God's eternal love and acceptance. People who believe experience God's gift of eternal life.

People who believe experience God's image God's image. For God loved the world so he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

But of course there's a flip side isn't there to this because if you don't believe you will perish. it goes on to say indeed God did not send the son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Those who believe in him are not condemned but those who do not believe are condemned already because they have not believed in the name of the only son of God.

Most people here would have seen The Matrix. It's a great movie. If you haven't seen it I'm going to spoil it for you. It's not that bad. No I won't but it's a good movie.

[17 : 06] Go see it. It's fantastic. In The Matrix the hero is Neo and there he is. He stands in a dark room with Morpheus his mate, his friend.

But he doesn't know that at the time. And Neo while standing in this room with Morpheus has a huge dilemma. Prison or freedom?

Condemnation or salvation? Ignorance or belief? An elaborate computer program or the real world?

Morpheus stands there in front of him with an outstretched arm with two tablets in it in his hand.

He holds two pills. One represents prison, the other freedom. One represents condemnation, the other salvation. The other one represents condemnation, one salvation, one ignorance, one belief.

[18 : 12] one of them will condemn him to an elaborate computer program forever. The other will bring him into the new real world.

And you think to yourself, big choice. But this isn't a choice. You see, Neo is already over here.

He's already condemned. He's already imprisoned in the computer program. Neo is already trapped in the fake world, a mirage, a prison.

And he stands condemned already. He stands condemned already. And the only way out is to believe that he's already there. to believe that he's already condemned, to believe that he's already in prison, to believe that he's already trapped.

Once he believes, he only has one option, doesn't he? To pick freedom, to pick salvation, to pick belief, to pick the real world.

[19 : 33] It's not about choice. it's about belief. Neo needs to believe and tonight you and I need to believe.

The Bible verse said those who believe in him, in Jesus, are not condemned. But those who do not believe are condemned already because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

Tonight you and I need to believe that we stand condemned already. And if we don't believe, we'll just continue to be a rebel with a bad self-image, desperate for love, looking in all the wrong places type of person.

You won't experience God's gift of eternal love and acceptance. You won't experience God's gift of eternal life. You won't experience God image.

You'll just keep your old self-image. You'll just remain condemned to that old self-image. And one day God's going to ask you questions.

[20 : 44] He's going to say, why didn't you accept my love? Why didn't you believe in the pain of separation that I and my son went through? Why didn't you believe?

When he asks these questions of you, it'll be too late. You'll be condemned and you'll perish. Tonight, why didn't you believe in God's giving love?

Believe in the love that costs God so much extreme pain and separation. Accept it and believe. Believe in God's one and only son. Believe in Jesus. Believe in him and you will not be condemned to self-image.

Believe in him and receive God image. When you go home tonight, take a look in the mirror and ask yourself, am I a loser?

Am I a legend? Or am I loved and accepted by God? Do I believe in Jesus? I'm going to pray right now.

[22 : 02] God's one and only son, the Lord Jesus. If you want to receive God image tonight, then you can simply pray this prayer with me.

Now I'm going to put it up on the screen and I'm going to read it out to you before we pray it so you know what we're going to pray. It says, thank you God that you love me.

Thanks that you don't see me as a loser or a legend. Thanks for giving Jesus to prove your love for me. Thanks that you experienced extreme separation from your son Jesus so I could have God image.

Because of this, I can have your eternal love and acceptance. I can have your gift of eternal life. I can have God image. help me to always believe in Jesus.

Amen. It's a pretty simple prayer. But if you feel like you want to do that tonight, then I'd urge you to pray it with me.

[23 : 15] I'll repeat it slowly and you can repeat it after me. So let's bow our heads and pray. Thank you God.

that you love me. Thanks that you don't see me as a loser or a legend.

Thanks for giving Jesus to prove your love for me. Thanks that you experienced extreme separation from your son, Jesus.

So I could have God image. Because of this, I can have your eternal love and acceptance.

I can have your gift of eternal life. I can have God image.

[24 : 22] Help me to always believe in Jesus. He through the- He