

# RANSOMED HEART

LOVE GOD. LIVE FREE.

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June 2019

Dear Friends,

A very happy June to you!

I love summer; it's my favorite time of year. The world is so brimming with life. It's warm and beautiful, the flowers are blooming, all the earth seems washed with color and radiance. The grass is green, the trees are leafed out, our hummingbirds are back from their winter in Costa Rica!

Summer is when nature seems happiest.

And there's something so reassuring about beauty in abundance, life abounding, all nature at play. I need to be reminded that life and goodness win.

If you watch any news at all, if you are involved in the lives of even a handful of people, you know that brokenness and struggle are always trying to have the last word. Hardship and heartache are always trying to steal the show, rewrite the story. They are real, no question. But they are not the major theme. They are the minor theme. The major theme is life, beauty, redemption, and the goodness of God.

And we need to be reminded of that. Often.

Which is one of the reasons God sends us summer in its glory.

I talked to three different people today, who were all trying to sort out something in their story. Two people yesterday. And two the day before. And none of these were clients; they were just regular folks in my world. It reminded me how often we are looking for understanding, interpretation, for some clarity or redemption in our stories.

We need reminding that our life has meaning, that our story makes sense. That we are not an accident, we are not forgotten. We need reassuring that our story is not out of God's keeping.

If you'll look around, you can see the desperate search for meaning in people's lives. Mostly by trying to make small stories seem like big stories. If you watch any sports at all, you'll recall the anthems and graphics used at the top of the show. Dramatic music plays while epic footage montage unfolds, followed by the monumental graphics making it seem like this is one of the most profound things taking place in the world. And yet, all it really is, is a group of adults chasing a ball around a field.

I think you also see the search in the tattoo craze. They used to be something only sailors came back with from overseas. Now they're as common as flip-flops. But they are permanent, stained into your skin for the rest of your life. The tattoo is not like going out and buying a new pair of shoes. I think we see here a glimpse of the search for permanence, stability, identity. Meaning.

Human beings crave meaning. When we lose the meaning of our lives, we lose our way. Our footing. Our perspective and orientation. We may not be able to interpret what's happening in our stories right now; often, interpretation takes some time. But we can hang onto the truth that our lives are filled with meaning, and that meaning is secure because there is God. And he is good. And we belong to him.

So let's return to a few of the scriptures that remind us of the value of our lives in the eyes of God. Scriptures that speak of the deep and profound meaning we have in him:

For you created my inmost being;  
you knit me together in my mother's womb.  
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
your works are wonderful,  
I know that full well.  
My frame was not hidden from you  
when I was made in the secret place,  
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.  
Your eyes saw my unformed body;  
all the days ordained for me were written in your book  
before one of them came to be. (Psalm 139:13-16)

The very hairs on your head are all numbered. (Luke 12:7)

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. (Ephesians 2:10)

What do these scriptures make clear? First that you are not here by accident. You were planned on. Wanted. Needed, even.

You are intimately known, and have been all your life. You were carefully and very intentionally crafted. There isn't a detail of your life that escapes the attention of your loving God and Father.

You are, in fact, a masterpiece. Yes—there is brokenness and struggle. But you are being renewed in Christ in order for you to fulfill the things he has for you to do. So that you can rejoice in the purposes of your life. Which means, your life has exquisite meaning.

Reread these passages again, out loud. But put your name in them. "You created my inmost being; you knit me—David, Anne, Sue—together in my mother's womb...I—David, Anne, Sue—am God's masterpiece. He has created me anew in Christ Jesus, so I—David, Anne, Sue—can do the good things he planned for me long ago."

I think this will do your heart great good.

Offered in love,

John 