

284 Podcast “I am my beloved’s, and His desire is for me

Steve: I had a really interesting experience lying in bed this morning at around 5:30, so we’ll start with that after we pray. I don’t know how much of a teaser that is, but anyway, let’s pray.

Father, thank You for being with us all the time, and thank You for little glimpses that You give us. They’re precious, and we hold onto them, and we value them. And I pray that You’ll help us today as we consider our topic. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Steve: I don’t know what prompted it. I was lying in bed, and I kind of saw my life all the way from the beginning. I’ll just touch on a couple things. My mom raised me to be independent and she used to encourage Sandi and I to let our boys be more independent. She felt like we were doing too much for them.

And as I’ve mentioned before in this podcast, my dad was not a significant part of my life for the first five years. He was home only on weekends, and looking back now, probably pretty tired. That was his time to catch up, regroup for the next week of work, and pay bills and different things. So I’m not sure how present he was, even on weekends.

As people, we are built for connection. We are created to live with other people. We need each other. That’s a fact. Some people say, “No, I’m a loner.” I don’t buy it. We all need connection. If we don’t find what we need at home, we look in other places.

As I looked back over my life, I saw how God had provided people for me to lean on and people to support me and encourage me. I remember my kindergarten Sunday school teacher. I could not leave Sunday school without giving that teacher a kiss. And I remember when our family had driven up the road about a half a mile, and it dawned on me that I had forgotten to kiss her, and I was devastated. My blessed parents turned around and drove me back to the church and I ran through the halls until I found her and gave her a kiss.

I don’t remember a lot about her, but apparently, she was a very special person in my life. As I went all the way through this little overview of my life, and I saw not only friends that God had provided in high school, and in college, I also thought of my many mentors. When I became a Christian, these men played a significant role in my life.

When I got married, I leaned on Sandi more than she knew. She’s been my rock, you might say. She’s steady, she’s steadfast, she’s solid. She’s also very sweet and kind.

However 2012 was a weaning time. I’ve written a book on that year called **Crisis to Christ**. It was the most devastating time of my life. I realize now that one of the reasons it was so difficult was because it was one of the few times I didn’t have people to lean on. I felt like I’d lost my wife and my kids, I felt like I’d lost connection

with my business and ministry, and I was alone in a way that I hadn't been for a long time. But, at the same time, I was learning to lean on God in a new way.

It was as if I had been skating holding on to the sideboards of the skating rink. You and I know what that means. When you first learn to skate, you don't go far from that wall because you can always go back and lean on it. You can hold on to it. But when you first start taking those little baby steps out into the rink all by yourself, boy, you're fragile and you're faltering. And yet, during that year, I felt like I got ahold of my Heavenly Dad's hand. He reached down and held me in a new way, and I started leaning on Him in a way that I never had before.

That's why I also say that 2012 was the best year of my life, because I connected with God in a much deeper way than I think I ever would have before when I had my wonderful support system of family, my church, and my many Christian friends. This morning, I thought of the song, which was written in the 60s, that I learned when I first heard the gospel in 1968, called "He's Everything to Me." The song should be sung at my funeral.

"In the stars His handiwork I see." I could do a commentary on almost every verse, because I love the stars. But, "In the stars His handiwork I see. On the wind He speaks with majesty." I love going outside and the wind blowing. I'm becoming an outside guy now because of my walks with God. I love just being outdoors, because I've connected with God outdoors. And when the wind blows, it makes me think of the Holy Spirit.

"Though He ruleth over land and sea, what is that to me? Till by faith I met Him face to face and I felt the wonder of His grace." That happened in Colorado in 1968. "Then I knew that He was more than just a God Who didn't care, Who lived away up there. Now He walks beside me day by day, ever watching o'er me lest I stray, helping me to find the narrow way, He's everything to me." The chorus was very meaningful. "He walks beside me day by day," especially in 2012.

You've probably read the poem about the footprints in the sand, when the author is looking back at their life, and they notice that in the hardest times, there's only one set of footprints, and they say, "God, how come You weren't there when I needed You the most?" And He said, "That's when I was carrying you."

As I looked back this morning. I saw that He was always walking beside me, but now He walks beside me in a much closer way, and He's helping me to find the narrow way, and He's everything to me. In a whole new way, He is. I thought He was near to me way back in 1968, but He continues to grow and grow and fill my horizon in new ways.

I like that passage that says, "I will set the Lord always before me." I love Him in a way that I've never loved Him before, I see Him more than I've ever seen Him before. So, anyway, that's how my day started. And I got up and I wanted to journal it before I

forgot it, because I don't know about you, but I sometimes get some really good stuff, but if I don't write it down, I forget it.

Last week, we talked about how much Jesus needed to hear His Father tell Him that He was His Son. And we talked about Psalm 2, "Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee."

I want to take it up a notch today and focus on the fact that not only does God make us His son, He makes us His **beloved** Son. There are a couple hymns that have found their way into my heart, but we'll start with some Scriptures. "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine." Song of Solomon 6:3. Song of Solomon 7:10 says, "I am my beloved's, and His desire is for me." This is God's heart for all of His children. He draws us nearer to Him and we continue to know Him more, grow closer to Him, lean on Him more, until He becomes everything to us.

We really are everything to Him, which is hard for us to take in and perhaps one of the main reasons we have children. My sons now are 41-33, and they're always my sons. They're mine, and I love them, and I love being with them, I love interacting with them, and it gives me a little microcosm of what my Heavenly Father must think about me. He wants us to know that we belong to Him, that we are His and He is ours, and His desire is for us.

1 Corinthians 3:23, the context is these believers were debating, "I belong to Peter, I belong to Paul, I belong to Apollos," and Paul clears the air, and says, "You are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Christ belongs to God, you belong to God, you are Christ's.

Perhaps you know the song, "I belong to the King, I'm a child of His love, I shall dwell in His palace so fair. For He tells of its bliss in yon heaven above, and His children in splendor shall share." Here's the chorus: "I belong to the King, I'm a child of His love, and He never forsaketh His own. He will call me someday to His palace above. I shall dwell by His glorified throne." That one sentence has been reverberating in my heart - "I belong to the King. I'm a child of His love."

Here's another song. "Loved with everlasting love, led by grace that love to know, Spirit breathing from above, Thou has taught me it is so. Oh, this full and perfect peace! Oh, this transport all divine! In a love which cannot cease, I am His, and He is mine."

I'm not going to read all four verses, but I am going to read the last line of the next three verses. "Since I know as now I know, I am His, and He is mine." May God help us to know in our heart of hearts that we are His, He is ours, and we belong to Him. Third verse. "Things that once were wild alarms cannot now disturb my rest. Closed in everlasting arms, pillowed on the loving breast. Oh, to lie forever here, doubt and care and self resign, while He whispers in my ear, I am His, and He is mine. His forever, only His! Who the Lord and me shall part?"

As we know from Romans 8, nothing can separate us from God's love. "Ah, with what a rest of bliss Christ can fill the loving heart. Heaven and earth may fade and flee, firstborn light in gloom decline, but while God and I shall be, I am His, and He is mine."

That's the message for us all to get ahold of today, that we belong to the King, that we are His. We belong to Christ. He belongs to us. It says in Lamentations, "The LORD is my portion, therefore I will hope in Him." That's Jeremiah, that's his bottom line. When everything around him was falling apart, he kept coming back to this truth: "Nope. I belong to the King. I belong to the King." When everything else was falling apart. "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine."

I have never appreciated hymns like I do now. As you sing truth, your body, soul, and spirit are all unified. Your emotions are involved, your soul is involved, your mind is involved, your heart is involved, it's the most synchronized that we get. We can read stuff, and our mind can be other places, but when we are focused on singing God's praises, those truths, somehow, find their way into our being differently.

God was talking to Job. "The LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: 'Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?'" Fourth verse. "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements?" Then He says, "On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone," and the seventh verse, "When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" Isn't that a beautiful picture? So while God was laying the cornerstone for the earth and sinking its bases, the morning stars were singing, and all the sons of God were shouting for joy. I think that's a beautiful thought.

Moses, laid the foundation for the children of Israel. He taught them God's law, which God taught him. He built the tabernacle exactly how he saw it in heaven, exactly how God passed on to him. He was very careful about that. But it was David that instituted the giving of thanks and singing hymns. Moses gave the law, the temple, and the tabernacle, etc., but it was David that instituted praise. There are very few people that knew God as well as David or loved God as much as David. And the Psalms are a testimony to the singing of truths and how they enhance our relationship with God, because they certainly enhanced David's walk with God and flowed from His relationship with God. Okay, let's pray.

Father, thank You for this truth. I don't know how to say it very much, but You don't just love us – You belong to us. You don't just call us to come to heaven and live eternally, but You call us to Yourself, and You keep beckoning to us, and You keep gently knocking at the door of our hearts and inviting us to go deeper with You. And I thank You for the hard times. I thank You for all the mentors that I've had that were there. I thank You for You Yourself, by Your Spirit, holding my hand and carrying me.

And thank You for becoming everything to me. Thank You for 2012, a hard year, but a good year when I learned to lean on You in a new way and hold Your hand. I pray that this truth, that You are ours and we are Yours, I am His and He is mine, I pray that somehow, by Your Spirit, You will convey that truth into all of our hearts of hearts, the deep recesses of our being. Make us know that we belong to You, that we are Your children, that we are, because of Jesus, we are pleasing, we're adopted, and we're part of Your family. We worship You, Dad. We love You, Father. We commit ourselves to You today. In Jesus' name, amen.