

This sermon is based on chapter four of the “Someone Like You” book (pg. 41)

This message is focused on how every person is a masterpiece designed in the image of God. We are wonderfully made and called to advocate for the voiceless.

Written by: Joe Boyd

Introduction

Hey, thank you so much for joining us today for the fourth week of our series, Someone Like You.

We’re excited because this series is called Someone Like You since it is written, created, and designed for someone like **you**. And so today, we’re going to be talking about a central idea that you’re going to find in the book as you’re reading along and diving deeper in your small group.

Here’s the idea: **every person is a masterpiece**. That every person is created by God and our worth is found in God because he created us in his image. And there are no exceptions to that rule, that we are all created in his image, and that we are a masterpiece. We also know that dignity is something that is not **earned**, but it is **declared** by the creator.

If you think about it, the worth of anything is often determined by the one who created the thing. And you and I are created by God, and God has a plan and a purpose and dignity for each and every one of us.

As we’ve been working on this series, I’ve gotten to know more about these organizations, and I’ve become a really huge fan of Carissa Carroll, who founded Jack’s Basket.

Jack’s Basket creates and delivers gift baskets to families who have babies born with Down syndrome. With the help of hundreds of volunteers across the country, and through international shipping, they’ve actually delivered over 12,000 baskets to celebrate these babies. They also work with the medical community to help doctors, nurses, and other healthcare workers deliver unexpected news without bias or negativity. So they’re changing the narrative.

All of this was driven by experiences Carissa had after the birth of her son, Jack. Her family learned a new medical term when Jack came into their life, and the term was trisomy 21. I'm going to let her share a little bit more about their story and how Jack's Basket got started.



Show the week four sermon video here, available for streaming or download by following this QR code. Length: 5 minutes 36 seconds

What an incredible story. You know, when I think about that, I think there are three things that God would want us to take away from this story of Jack's basket and dive into the Scripture and pull out three things that really help us to better understand what it means to be a masterpiece.

Point Number One: We Are Wonderfully Made

We are wonderfully made. Think about that. That you and I were created by God.

In the Bible, it talks about us being a masterpiece. That word masterpiece in the Greek is the word that we use for a poem, *poiema*. It means that we are unique. There is no one else like you. You are created as a one of a kind, in fact, in Psalm 139, verse 14, it says, *"I praise you because I'm fearfully and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful. I know that full well."*

And make no mistake about it, **God doesn't make mistakes.** Not with me, not with you, not with anyone. God has a plan for everything that he's doing

People think that God won't give you more than you can handle. That's simply not true. But God will never give us more than **he** can handle. And that's why we have to rely on him. Because he is the artist. He is the creator. He is the one that made us, and he's the one that understands the plan.

And so when we think about that, I think about our value and our worth. Imagine for a moment if somebody were to give you a Van Gogh painting. An original. It's a one of a kind. I mean, it's incredibly valuable. But as you received it, you notice that there was a slight tear in the canvas. I mean, would you just throw it away?

Would you reject it? No, because the value of it is not diminished just because it has a tear. No, the value is in the one that created it. It's not found in the flaw. It's found in the uniqueness of the creation. And God made each and every one of us unique. Each one of us has things that are different from one another.

Share a story of someone with unique qualities who has made an impact on others. It could be someone you know, someone from your congregation, or even a well-known speaker such as Nick Vujicic.

The beautiful thing is, God works in our differences and our imperfections to bring out his beauty, because he's the artist that creates the masterpiece. What we know is that you are not a mistake. You're a masterpiece. We all are. And when we see the diversity of people, we discover how creative our God really is. That brings us to our second point.

Point Number Two: We Want to Celebrate the Image of God in Every Person

We want to celebrate the image of God in every person. We want to see that God has created this value in each and every person, and that it can really transform lives. And that's why we want everyone to experience grace. Look at what it says when you go back to Genesis chapter one, all the way to the beginning of the Bible in verse 27, it says, "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."

And so when I realized that if God's the one that made us, and we're made in his image, who are we to question the value or the worth of ourselves or anyone else? God is the one that establishes the value, and **your value isn't based on what you do. It's based on whose image you carry.**

I got to thinking about that as I was reading this chapter, and it sort of struck me... there's an image that is on every one of our US bills, and this particular bill is a fifty.

(Take out a fifty-dollar bill for this illustration.)

And as I think about it, its value is literally written on the currency, but **our** value is written in the heart of God, whenever he created us and brought us into existence.

Now, you might get this fifty when it's brand new, but another person might get it when it's crumpled, when it's been stepped on, maybe it's a little dirty, might even have a little tear in it. But the amazing thing is that no matter what it's been through, it's still worth the full \$50.

And no matter what challenge you and I face in this world, our value is not found or diminished in what we've been through, but by the one that created us. And God created us in his image. And he's the one that establishes the worth. As we dive into this, I think it's important for us to remember that **every person that we meet is an image bearer of God.**

Now, they may not all act like God, but the truth remains. And that means that the coworker that drives you absolutely crazy? Created in the image of God. The person who cut you off in traffic tells you you're number one? Created in the image of God. The person that lives next door and is always letting their dog get on your grass? Created in the image of God.

Every person is created in the image of God. And so our job as followers of Jesus is to see what God created, the inherent value, the dignity that he has placed in each and every person, and help them experience grace and help them become more like the one in whose image they're made.

Share a story of someone who doubted their worth or ability, and how you or someone else helped to restore their confidence and identity in Christ.

And that is our job as followers of Jesus, that we would help people discover their identity in Jesus and be more like Jesus, and discover that God's bringing us all together in this incredibly orchestrated plan to reflect His heart in the believers of the world. You and I get to play a critical part in having value and recognizing the worth that God has already established in people. And that brings us to point number three.

Point Number Three: Advocate for the Voiceless

Advocate for the voiceless. I think Carissa has done an amazing job based on her own personal experience of receiving no news, to unclear news, to finally somebody being encouraging and saying, "Good news! Your child is here." Isn't that amazing? And discovering that through Jack's basket they have an opportunity to speak and advocate for those who can't speak for themselves.

Look at what the Bible says in Proverbs 31, verse eight. It says, “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute.” See, that’s incredible that you and I get to be advocates. We get to be champions for people that are created in the image of God, but maybe don’t have a voice or a platform to speak for themselves or declare their worth or their identity.

So what does that look like in our everyday lives? I think about the environments that we’re in, the legs of the race that we run, like at home. If we’re parents, it’s about speaking dignity into our kids, calling out their worth and letting them know that they’re created by God. And God has a purpose and a plan for them. And we should never question why God gives us this child or that child.

The story of Jack’s Basket is one of triumph, but it’s also filled with tragedy. And the tragedy is that, just like Carissa said, oftentimes when doctors deliver the news to families that their baby has Down syndrome, they devalue the worth of that child’s life.

One story in particular, there was a mother named Lisa who got a call from her doctor after she’d gone in for a genetic screening. And what she heard was a total shock.

He said, quote, “I’m sorry, I have some bad news. Your blood results indicate that there is a 93% chance your child will be born with Down syndrome. Abortion and adoption are options. One in two babies born with Down syndrome have a heart defect. If you’d like further information, you can reach out to me.”

No mention that the baby was healthy and growing. No, excitement about learning the gender. Just bad news and a negative outlook for the future.

See, it was a foregone conclusion that this child’s life would be a burden. That this child’s life might not even be worth living. But that clearly contradicts the message of God that **each** of us are created in His image, beloved by Him, and we are masterpieces.

So Lisa brought that baby girl into this world, and she’s been blessed ever since. Her daughter is a beautiful, beautiful person, and Lisa would **absolutely** say, “She makes me better.”

God designs all kinds of different kids, with all kinds of unique qualities, and it's not for us to judge which of them are valuable, or assign some kind of worth to them. We simply ask God, how can we best raise this child to reflect **you**, the one who created us in **your** image?

Also, as we consider how to be a voice for the voiceless, think about the work environment you're in, or the school environment that you're in. Not everybody benefits from a family that's supportive or environments that build them up. We get an opportunity to speak God's truth and potential and grace in each and every person that we meet.

And what about in our community? We have an opportunity to speak life into people and encourage them and give them the hope that we have. We have an opportunity to partner with organizations like Jack's Basket to bring celebration and good news to people whenever they're learning new medical terms, and they don't know what that means. All they know is that they need someone to say, God's with you, and this child is a gift, and God's got a plan because this child is a masterpiece. And God placed this child in your family, and that is the fabric and the canvas where he is painting out his story for your lives.

Share examples of how you and/or someone in your congregation advocates for those in need.

So the takeaway for this one is that you and I, **we need to be the voice for those who can't speak for themselves.**

Today, I want to encourage you to recognize that you are a masterpiece, and so are the people that are around you, and that God has a unique plan and story for all of us. But he's calling us to take this journey together. Today you might be sitting here and saying, "I'm just not sure. I'm not sure if I even know my worth."

And I want you to know that God says, without a shadow of a doubt, that you were created in his image, and that you are worth it. The value and the worth of anyone or anything is often found in the price that someone's willing to pay for that thing. And I want you to know that your life, your worth, is determined literally by the life of Jesus.

Jesus looks at us and the thought of us being separated from him, not being a part of his family, breaks his heart to the point that he chose to die rather than be separated from you and I. Sin separates us from God, who's holy, who's without sin. But because Jesus died on the cross, he pays the price for our sins so that we can be forgiven.

He erases that blemish. He erases that separation and brings us face to face. He adopts us into his family. He never asks what was wrong with us when he invites us to be a part of his family, he says, "These are my kids, whom I love. They're masterpieces. They're one of a kind." And he paid with his life for you and I.

When we admit we have sinned and we're broken, and that Jesus is the one that heals us and adopts us into his family, God graciously welcomes each and every one of us into a relationship with him, and we are forever reunited with him. It will never be taken away. We'll never be separated. And the amazing thing is that in heaven there is no pain, there is no suffering.

Our earthly bodies, which have defects and challenges, are restored and we're created as new beings, and we are seen in our truest, most authentic selves. We are with God in the clearest image of his creation. So today I want to invite each and every one of you to speak life and dignity into the people that are in your homes, in your schools and work, and in our community.

I want to invite every one of our believers to partner with organizations like this, and partner with helping people celebrate the lives that God's created. But for people that are here today, and maybe you've been sitting on the fence for a while and you've never put your faith and trust in Jesus, I want to invite you to receive the greatest gift that's ever been offered: the gift of life, dignity, and value found in the salvation that can only be found in Jesus Christ.

And so I'm going to invite everybody to close your eyes, bow your heads, and pray with me.

(Close with prayer.)