

# The Searcher

John 3:1-18

“Well Johnny, what do you want to be when you grow up?”

Remember that question? I hated that question! Because I had no idea . . . I didn't want to be anything . . . I didn't want to grow up! But, life tends to get in the way of that idea . . . so, after I left school, I shifted from job to job and place to place. Searching . . . searching for who I was s'posed to be.

We are the searchers, aren't we? From the day a child is born the pressure is on to be – to be someone. So, the kids have to be taken to music lessons and dance lessons and football and ballet and swimming and debating and chess and . . . you name it – all so they have better chance of being someone. They have to go to uni and get a good job so they can buy a good house in a good suburb and make their parents proud. In the Western world we have access to so much . . . so much information . . . so much technology . . . so many resources . . . so much assistance . . . there's probably an app for it all! But, so many people are still searching.

Searching for being . . . searching for meaning . . . searching for belonging.

And, it's not just young people, but people of all ages. Because life has become more complicated . . . society has become more complicated . . . the old distinctions and roles have changed . . . it's become more and more difficult to know who we are . . . and, to make matters worse, there's always something else to be: we have to be thinner, or smarter, or happier, or taller, or healthier, or wealthier, or prettier, or sportier.

And, the fear is, if we can't be somebody, then we are a nobody: worthless, useless, a waste of space.

Nicodemus came searching. Searching for something . . . I'm not sure he knew what he was looking for . . . was he looking for his identity? Whatever it was, perhaps the good teacher will have a word of wisdom . . . some pointers in the right direction . . . a bit of career advice . . . maybe some inspirational tips.

Well, here's Jesus' 'advice': “No one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above”!

Say what?! No wonder Nicodemus is confused! No wonder Nicodemus doesn't get it. How can this be? He's trying to find himself and Jesus talks about the kingdom of God! What's God got to do with it?

Now, there's a question . . . in all our searching . . . in all the world's searching, we often don't get it either. In all our attempts at trying to be someone, we often forget the most important thing: we already are someone. And, that's got everything to do with God! We already are someone because we are God's creation . . . each one of us.

So, even without the dancing lessons and golf lessons and music lessons and university education and big house and good job and everything else, we already are! We are loved!

“For God so loved the world”, John reminds us. The world! That's not just Christians – that's everyone. Every single human being is God's creation. Each person has a place in God's heart. So, it doesn't matter who we think we are, or who we might want to be, more important than all that is who we already are: we are God's creatures. We are valuable and loved. Whether you are one day old, or 100 years old, you are God's creation. Whether you are thin or fat, or sick or healthy, or black or white, or rich or poor, you are loved by God. You have worth. You are somebody.

The trouble is, we just don't believe it. We don't believe it . . . how can this be?, we ask. That was the trouble from the start . . . Adam and Eve wouldn't believe it . . . they wouldn't believe what God had created was enough . . . so they went searching . . . they went their own way.

Doesn't that sound familiar? We search for meaning . . . for purpose . . . for being . . . we search everywhere but God . . . everywhere but God's kingdom . . . we leave God out of the picture . . . we go our own way.

But, even then . . . even as we search we are still someone . . . because we are still God's creation . . . if only we would believe it. Which is why God stepped in . . . he doesn't want to be separated from his creation . . . he loves the world too much for that. God never leaves us out of his picture. Which is why he sent his Son . . . Jesus came to the world that God loved . . . he came not to give us some important information about changing who we are . . . he came not to teach us the right way to go about things . . . he came not to make us feel good about ourselves . . . no, he came to bring God back into the picture . . . to bring God's kingdom to us . . . to bring us back to God . . . to return us to faith and trust in God . . . so we could stop searching . . . and fearing . . . and worrying . . . so we could just be . . . be who we are.

Children of God. Born from above . . . born again by water and the Spirit. That's how it can be! Not through our striving to be someone . . . but, by God's gracious gift . . . through water and the Spirit . . . they go together. Through the water of baptism the Holy Spirit works faith in us . . . faith to believe we are somebody because we are children of God.

So, before you are a mother, or father, you're a child of God.  
Before you're a worker, you're a child of God.  
Before you're a student, you're a child of God.

Which means we always have a starting point when we're trying to work out the direction our lives, or when we're feeling low, or struggling with issues, and even when we are on top of the world. Our starting point is who we are through water and the Spirit. God's declaration that we are his . . . loved . . . treasured . . . forgiven . . . complete!

So, you may fail, but you're never a failure.  
You may be lonely at times, but you're never alone.  
You may get embarrassed, but you're never a joke.  
You may not love, but you are always loved.

And when you meet somebody who is searching you know where to point them.

Point them to the baptismal font. All you are – and all you can be – is tied up in the water and the Spirit . . . it's here we receive the gift of faith . . . to believe what God declares to be true. In God we find our being. In God we find our meaning. In God we find our belonging. In God we find the end of our search.

In God, we are who we are created to be. Believe it.

Amen.

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