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What is Your Worth?

By The Rev. Rachel Rickenbaker

The question of identity is prevalent in our world. We even see it played out in popular TV shows and movies. In the recent Disney computer-animated musical film release, *Encanto*, many of the characters face questions around their identity. Who am I? How do I relate to others? What is my purpose?

One of the catchiest songs is sung by the title character's sister, Luisa. She is known for her brute strength and is often called and relied upon to physically move large things for her family members and neighbors. In her song, "Surface Pressure," Luisa sings about how her purpose is tied up in her strength alone. At one point, she sings, "Under the surface, I'm pretty sure I'm worthless if I can't be of service!" And then, "Who am I if I can't carry it all?"

It might just seem like a song that easily gets stuck in your head (as I can attest – my daughter knows all the words!), but there's much truth in it. The voices of the world constantly tell us we need to work harder, climb higher, and aspire to our purpose. If we don't figure out and attain that perfect niche

for ourselves, then we are told we will be unhappy, incomplete, and worthless.

As Christians, we know that our identity is not wrapped up in what we do, but instead in what Christ has done. But do we truly believe that? We, like much of the world, fall prey to defining our worth by our actions. If we can't do something, we may find that we feel worthless. Perhaps we feel like if we can't do all and be all, then no one, including God, will find us valuable.

Why bring up this topic in Lent? Because Lent is a time that we are again reminded of just how much God has done for us. In this season, we are shown again on full display just how far God's love goes. Theologian Chad Bird writes, "If you've ever wondered how far the Lord would go to make sure you were his own, peer down into the manger. Look up onto the cross. There's your answer."

Our identities lie first and foremost in Christ Jesus and what he has done for us, in the Incarnation, by his life, death, resurrection, and ascension. Jesus didn't go to the cross that we might have to work harder and drum up some sense of purpose for ourselves. He went to the cross that we would no longer be bound by our sin; he rose again, that death would lose its power over us, and our identity in him would be restored forever.

St. Paul writes

"...Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his" (Romans 6:3-5).

We have been united with Christ forever, and we are his children forever. Nothing can take that status away. What, then, is your worth? To God, you are worth everything, even His Son's very life given for your sake. You are precious, beloved, and valuable beyond measure. Before anything else, that is who you are.