

“Enough”

May 3, 2026

Rev. Andy Call

Psalm 34:1-10 (NRSVUE)

- ¹ I will bless the Lord at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
- ² My soul makes its boast in the Lord;
let the humble hear and be glad.
- ³ O magnify the Lord with me,
and let us exalt his name together.
- ⁴ I sought the Lord, and he answered me
and delivered me from all my fears.
- ⁵ Look to him, and be radiant,
so your faces shall never be ashamed.
- ⁶ This poor soul cried and was heard by the Lord
and was saved from every trouble.
- ⁷ The angel of the Lord encamps
around those who fear him and delivers them.
- ⁸ O taste and see that the Lord is good;
happy are those who take refuge in him.
- ⁹ O fear the Lord, you his holy ones,
for those who fear him have no want.
- ¹⁰ The young lions suffer want and hunger,
but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.

There is a narrative of the Christian faith that says that, in the human condition, each of us inevitably finds ourselves in a pit of sin. Some knowingly leaped into that pit, most unwittingly fell into it. But Jesus came into the world to redeem us; he pulls us out of the pit. That is a legitimate way to understand our faith. But while we must choose daily not to go back into that pit, there are some who act as if we are still in it and need to continually call on Jesus to pull us out. That is *not* the message of the Gospel as I read it. The Good News of Jesus Christ is that we have been set free to live with the joy and peace of those who know we have been redeemed, and to help others find the way that Christ offers.

Throughout this series, we will focus on how to live more fully as those who have been redeemed from the pit. This is not a self-help message, as though we can pull ourselves out of the pit or deny that it exists. But neither is it about beating ourselves up for having been in the pit in the first place nor reinforcing any notion that we are still stuck in it. We are not saved through any effort of our own, but entirely by God's action. We are God's beloved not because we have done anything to *earn* that love, but simply because *God says* that we are beloved. There are plenty of voices in the world telling us that we are not worthy or lovable. The church shouldn't be one of them.

It is undeniable that there is much that is broken in the world today. Even if the “pit” analogy doesn’t resonate with you, we all struggle with making sense of the world and our place in it. It is a broken place filled with lots of broken people. Have you noticed that we seem to be surrounded by narcissists? I mean, we have a narcissist-in-chief in the White House, and his behavior is on full display in the headlines and his social media posts daily. But he isn’t to blame for the problem; in many ways, he is more a symptom than the cause. It feels like all around us are people who are self-absorbed and self-important, obsessed with image and power and popularity. We are high on performance, achievement, and competition for attention; and short on patience, compassion, and empathy. Little wonder – we’re living in a generation that has grown up on “a steady diet of reality television, celebrity culture, and unsupervised social media.”¹ In our society, one’s self-worth seems to be directly tied to the number of likes we receive on Facebook or Tik Tok.

Our instincts might tell us that what *these* people need (certainly not us) is a reality check. They need to be taken down a peg or two, cut down to size. But here’s the thing: what we often perceive as narcissism isn’t driven by an inflated sense of self-worth, but the exact opposite. And cutting people down to size only makes the problem worse.

Our attitudes and behaviors are driven more by the culture around us than we realize. And what our culture reinforces more than anything right now is a mindset of scarcity. I don’t mean scarcity in terms of a lack of resources or the inability to meet our basic needs, though meeting basic needs is becoming a growing concern with constantly rising prices and a precarious economy. What I mean by scarcity in this context is a perception of self and judgment of others. Every moment of every day, we are bombarded with messages that tell us we are not enough: *we’re not good enough, not smart enough, not thin enough, not powerful enough, not successful enough, not safe enough, not extraordinary enough*. Even if we think that we are conscious of that messaging and able to resist the impact those messages have on us, over time they affect our sense of self.

Brené Brown quotes activist Lynne Twist. See if this resonates with you:

For me, and for many of us, our first waking thought of the day is “I didn’t get enough sleep.” The next one is “I don’t have enough time.” Whether true or not, that thought of *not enough* occurs to us automatically before we even think to question or examine it. We spend most of the hours and the days of our lives hearing, explaining, complaining, or worrying about what we don’t have enough of.... Before we even sit up in bed, before our feet touch the floor, we’re already inadequate, already behind, already losing, already lacking something. And by the time we go to bed at night, our minds are racing with a litany of what we didn’t get, or didn’t get done, that day. We go to sleep burdened by those thoughts and wake up to that reverie of lack.... This internal condition of scarcity, this mindset of scarcity, lives at the very heart of our jealousies, our greed, our prejudice, and our arguments with life.²

Trying to measure ourselves against others or against some kind of ideal standard is an exercise that is always doomed to fail. First of all, the standards we try to emulate are most likely inaccurate. We tend to view people based on their best public moments or see the curated version of themselves they post on social media. But that’s only a partial picture at best, a projection that overlooks their struggles and doubts or the just plain *boring* aspects of their lives. But also, we are not meant to be measured against anyone else. You were made to be *you*. As the saying goes, “It’s better to be authentically yourself than a poor copy of someone else.” What we need to be is who God *made* us to be – nothing more, nothing less. God wants us to be the best version

of ourselves. But we can't do that by beating ourselves up or comparing ourselves to others or measuring ourselves by unrealistic standards.

How can we become more aware of this scarcity mindset and push back against its detrimental impact on us? Brené Brown says that the opposite of scarcity isn't "more than you could ever imagine." It's not about convincing ourselves that we can do more or be more. The opposite of scarcity isn't *abundance*; it's *enough*. You can face uncertainty and take emotional risks when you are grounded in a core conviction that *you are enough*.

This conviction is at the heart of our God-given identity. When God created humankind, God called us "very good" (Genesis 1:31). The psalmist affirmed, "I praise (God), for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:13). But one of the sins that has plagued us throughout time is forgetting who we are and whose we are. We try to create a sense of our own worth, measuring our value against self-imposed standards or the standards others impose upon us, standards that are often unrealistic. And in striving to be something we are not; we drive ourselves further and further from the hope that God has for us.

Throughout his ministry, Jesus made a point of seeing people for who they were, affirming their God-given value, and helping them to live into God's hope for them. Three examples:

Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10). Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector. Tax collectors were regarded with even more disdain in Jesus's time than they are in ours. They were agents of the Roman government who exploited their own people to support the empire. *Chief* tax collectors had a reputation for enriching themselves by collecting more than was required and pocketing the surplus. So, Zacchaeus was seen as a villain in his community. But he had heard about Jesus and wanted to get close to him, or at least to see him. Being short in stature, he climbed a tree to get a better vantage point when Jesus was passing through. Jesus looked up into the tree and saw him. Instead of berating him or questioning his vocation, Jesus called him to come down and visited his home. Zacchaeus was so moved by Jesus's kindness that he committed to giving back every penny of overage he had collected and gave half of all he owned to the poor.

The woman at the well (John 4). Jesus and the disciples passed through Samaria on one of their journeys, a highly unusual detour. Samaritans were despised by Jewish people, and the feeling was mutual. At a well in the center of a village, Jesus engaged in conversation with a Samaritan woman, which was doubly scandalous. Jesus intuited that the woman had been involved in serial relationships, but he saw her as more than that. He helped her to realize her *spiritual* thirst and pointed her toward the hope he offered. Through her witness, many people in that village came to believe.

Peter. Peter was the most impulsive disciple, the most emotional and headstrong disciple. But he was also the most passionate and committed disciple. Time and again, his impulsiveness caused him to get ahead of himself and, more often than not, to miss the point of what Jesus was doing. Sometimes, his words and his actions make us cringe when we read them. Most of us would have gotten frustrated and given up on him as ever being capable of being part of the team. And yet, Jesus saw in Peter what Peter never could have seen in himself. Peter was the one Jesus called his rock, the one on whom he would build his church, a reluctant but effective leader who would go on to accomplish more in ministry than any of the other disciples.

The good news of the Gospel is that God is and has always been at work in you. You are fearfully and wonderfully made in God's very image. You are God's handiwork, God's masterpiece (Ephesians 2:10). You are loved and valued in God's eyes – not because you are perfect, but because you are who God made you to be. When we embrace the fullness of God's

love and grace, we are set free to live with all the joy and wonder God invites us to experience and to share. God wants us to be the best version of ourselves we can be, but God does not want us to be someone we are not. “See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God, and that is what we are” (1 John 3:1). When you rest in who God says you are, God’s purpose can be accomplished in a way only you can do. *You are enough.* Thanks be to God. Amen.



2537 Lee Rd., Cleveland Heights, OH, 44118 | 216-321-8880 | cotsumc.org