

SONG: WHO YOU SAY I AM

READER 1 - Sin separates us from God and

READER 2 - enslaves us to the voice of shame

READER 3 - The voice says to us:

READER 4 - You are not smart, attractive, or thin enough,

READER 2 - not strong, funny, or tough enough,

READER 3 - not talented, rich, or good enough,

READER 1 - In fact, you are no good at all.

READER 3 - You deserve to be rejected, abandoned, and forgotten.

READER 4 - Prove that you're worth something!

READER 2 - Prove it. Earn your acceptance.

READER 1 - Run after success and popularity.

READER 3 - Run after power. Run after status.

READER 4 - You have to because...

READER 2 - You are worthless.

READER 1 - You....are....

ALL - Unlovable.

READER 1 -If people really knew who you are...

READER 1 - what you thought, what you did...

READER 2 - They wouldn't love you.

READER 4 - In fact, no one really loves you even now.

READER 3 - You are truly alone in this world.

READER 2 - You are nothing. Nothing special at all.

READER 1 - You are just another person among billions.

READER 4 - Your life is just one more mouth to feed.

READER 3 - Your needs are just one more problem to solve.

READER 1 - You are a burden.

READER 2 - You are a nobody.

READER 4 - And yet...

READER 1 - There is another voice calling

READER 4 -Can you hear it?

READER 3 - For God...so loved...the world

READER 2 - It is the voice that says,

READER 1 - with all the tenderness and force that love can hold:

ALL - *"You are my beloved child"*

READER 2 - Long before he laid down earth's foundations,

ALL - he had us in mind,

READER 1 - he settled the focus of his affection on us

READER 4 - to be made whole and holy by his love.

READER 3 - Long ago he decided to adopt us into his family through Jesus Christ.

READER 2 - With great pleasure he planned this!

READER 4 - He wanted us to enter into the celebration of his lavish grace

READER 1 – hand in hand with his beloved Son.

READER 3 - Because of the sacrifice of the Messiah,

READER 2 - his blood poured out on the altar of the Cross,

ALL - we are a free people—

READER 1 - free of the penalties and punishments chalked up by all our sin.

READER 4 - And not just barely free, either.

ALL - *Abundantly* free!

READER 4 - For the joy set before him,

READER 2 - Christ endured the cross despising its shame

READER 3 - He purchased for us the freedom to see ourselves through his eyes

READER 1 - He enables us to see ourselves as chosen

READER 2 - But we must repent and believe this Good News

READER 1 - It is only when we rest in our chosenness

READER 4 - That we can join Jesus on mission

READER 2 - in calling out the chosenness of others.

ALL - We are chosen

Song: GOOD GOOD FATHER

READER 1 - To rest in our chosenness we are in desperate need of a blessing.

READER 2 - *A real* blessing.

READER 4 - It is not the blessing of material provision or good health

READER 3 - We all have these needs...but we need even more.

READER 1 - A real blessing goes far beyond our circumstances.

READER 2 - It is not the blessing of simple words of praise that we need.

READER 1 - We all need encouragement...but we need even more.

READER 4 - A real blessing goes far beyond our virtues and vices.

READER 3 - It goes far beyond affirmations of our unique talents or good deeds.

READER 2 - A true blessing is the continual reminder

ALL - I am...a beloved...child of God.

READER 1 - And you were also included in Christ

READER 4 - For when you heard the good news and believed it

READER 2 - You were marked with a seal

READER 3- The promised Holy Spirit

READER 4 - And His Spirit testifies with our Spirit that we are his children

READER 1 - This is not a status you can earn,

READER 2 - This is the deep, unchangeable truth of who you are.

READER 4 - Your greatest need today is to know that, by grace

READER 3 - You are God's beloved daughter or son.

READER 1 - By His Spirit you can call out to God as your Daddy

READER 2 - Remember how precious you are in the Father's sight.

READER 4 - You are deeply loved. You are held by God as a mother holds a child.

READER 3 - It is not enough to be chosen! We need to be REMINDED.

READER 1 - Even Jesus needed reminders—

READER 2 - He received the blessing at his baptism *and* at the transfiguration.

READER 1 - His Father said twice;

READER 3 - *"This is my Son, my beloved, who brings me*

ALL - *Great Joy!*

READER 1 - We need these reminders of blessing, from God and from each other,

READER 3 - because the voices of the world are loud and persistent in our ears.

READER 4 - And when I am forever catering to the way of the world,

READER 2 - always busy, always scrolling, always moving

READER 3 - never still...then how will I hear the blessing?

READER 1 - And if I cannot hear the blessing for myself...

READER 4 - then how will I ever be a blessing to others?

READER 3 - How will I remind others of their chosenness and blessedness,

READER 1 – if I don't carve out the time and space to hear this blessing for myself?

READER 2 - In each day, there are two paths.

READER 1 - I can choose to live at the unlivable pace of this world.

READER 4 - Or I can choose to slow down, look around,

READER 3 - and listen for the blessing...with ears and heart wide open.

READER 2 - God's children are blessed to be a blessing.

READER 1 - It is only when I stay connected to my deepest blessing,

READER 2 - That can I bless others at their deepest level of need.

ALL - We are chosen.

READER 1 - We are blessed.

SONG: SONS AND DAUGHTERS

ALL - We are broken.

READER 3 - There are many words for it:

READER 4 - We are isolated and ignored, lonely and love-starved.

READER 1 - We are insecure, anxious, afraid, and even terrified.

READER 2 - We are confused,

READER 3 - abused

READER 4 - empty.

READER 1 - jealous

READER 2 - discontent

READER 3 - betrayed

READER 2 - rejected.

READER 3 - trapped,

READER 2 - frustrated,

READER 3 - angry,

READER 1 - bitter

READER 4 - brokenhearted,

READER 1 - oppressed,

READER 4 - obsessed,

READER 1 - depressed.

READER 4 - ashamed.

READER 1 - addicted.

READER 2 - overwhelmed and

ALL - exhausted.

READER 3 - Do you ever notice how often your body is tense?

READER 4 - Do you ever notice how you keep your guard up with others?

READER 1 - Or how seldom you have the feeling of being completely at ease?

READER 2 - We do not feel safe or at home in this world.

READER 3 - And we know well what it is to be broken.

READER 1 - But God demonstrates his love for us in this

READER 4 - That while we were still sinners

ALL - Christ died for us

READER 1 - Just as we claim and reclaim our chosenness and our blessedness,

READER 3 - we have to claim and reclaim our brokenness.

READER 4 - We must not avoid suffering as an obstacle to joy

READER 2 - We must look at our brokenness squarely in the eye and claim it.

READER 1 - All of our lives must be placed under the truth of the blessing,

READER 4 - even the broken parts.

READER 1 - All parts of life, the ups *and* the downs,

READER 2 - are opportunities to say YES to being the beloved children of God.

READER 3 - Again, each day presents us with two paths...

READER 1 - the path of the curse and the path of the blessing.

READER 4 - We can place our brokenness under the curse.

READER 1 - We can say, "See, I always thought I was alone in the world!

READER 2 - I always thought I was no good!

READER 3 - Now I *know* it's true...just look...The facts of my life prove it!"

READER 1 – Or...we have the choice to place it under the blessing.

READER 4 - It is not easy to put our brokenness under the blessing.

READER 3 - And it does not necessarily make our pain less painful.

READER 2 - But it does open up a door to the possibility of joy.

READER 1 - What seemed intolerable

READER 2 - now becomes a challenge.

READER 4 - What seemed a reason for depression

READER 3- now becomes a source of purification.

READER 2 - What seemed a punishment

READER 1 - now becomes a gentle pruning.

READER 4 - What seemed a rejection in one place

READER 3 - now becomes a pathway to deeper intimacy in another.

ALL: Broken glass can shine so brightly.

READER 1 - Just as bread must be broken to be given, so must our lives.

READER 3 - When we share a meal with friends, when we “break bread together”

READER 4 - This is a beautiful and intimate way to share life with each other?

READER 1 - The breaking and the giving are so clearly ONE when we eat together.

READER 3 - At the table we can fully and finally understand that

READER 2 – Jesus was chosen, blessed, broken, and given

READER 1 - so that we can be chosen, blessed, broken and given as well.

SONG: Broken Vessels

READER 4 - We are chosen

READER 1 - We are blessed

READER 2 - We are broken

READER 3 - We are...given

READER 1 - The voice of the world would have us focus on our talents—

READER 2 - the world would say that our talents prove our worth.

READER 4 - The more talented we are, the more people will love us.

READER 1 - But few people are talented.

READER 2 - And all talents eventually fade into obscurity

READER 3 - But all people are gifted, with rich and enduring gifts.

READER 4 - The best gifts we have are not what we can DO, but who we ARE—

READER 1 - the gift of our own small, precious life shines through all that we do.

READER 2 - Like shattered pieces of pottery in a beautiful mosaic, humanity

READER 3 - would be incomplete without our unique piece in the picture.

READER 4 - What is the greatest gift I have to give?

READER 1 -The overflow of Christ's love, joy, and peace, through me.

READER 3 - The greatest gift I have to offer others is life lived as the beloved!

READER 2 – Those willing to share this life with others will be the most helpful

ALL - It is more blessed to give than to receive

READER 1 - All of life finds its fullness and significance in being given for others.

READER 4 - Greater love has no one than this

ALL - That someone lays down his life for his friends

READER 1 - We loved you so much

READER 2 - that we were delighted to share not only the gospel

ALL - But our lives as well

READER 3 - because you had become so dear to us.

READER 4 - When we share our lives, we become channels through which Jesus,

READER 1 – the bread of life, will feed the world

READER 2 - Bread that is chosen and blessed

READER 3 - Will be broken and given.

READER 4 - The miraculous feeding of large crowds still happens today

READER 1 - We may be insignificant in the eyes of a world.

READER 2 - But the potential for multiplication in our little lives laid down

READER 3 - is beyond anything we ourselves can imagine!

READER 1 - With the Spirit of the Father inside us

READER 2 - our few years on this earth become like tiny seeds

READER 4 - planted in a very rich soil...the harvest will be abundant,

READER 1 - And so once again, there are two paths.

READER 4 - How different would our life be if we believed

READER 2 – that every little act of faithfulness, every little bit of joy and peace,

READER 3 - will multiply exponentially as long as there are people to receive it...

READER 1 - and even then, there will be leftovers!

READER 4 - Every little movement of love we make

READER 2 - will ripple out into ever widening circles

READER 1 - With such a living hope we can be free from despair and resentment

READER 2 - Hate will lose its power to destroy us

READER 4 - Our lives gain meaning infinitely beyond their earthly existence

READER 3 - You and I would no longer even fear death but live toward it!

READER 2 - Only after Jesus was crucified and risen

READER 4 - did his disciples grasp the truth He had proclaimed

READER 1 – “Unless a seed dies and is buried it remains alone,

READER 2 - but if it dies it will bear much fruit”

READER 3 - If we live as the Beloved, our brief journey in this world

READER 4 - will continue to give life to people throughout all times and places.

READER 1 – “Therefore be imitators of God as beloved children

READER 2 - and walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us

READER 3 - A fragrant offering and sacrifice to the Father”

Communion

THE WONDERFUL CROSS (WHEN I SURVEY)