

Anytime you turn on the television, it's very difficult to avoid seeing a commercial, especially when commercials, on average, take 8 minutes out of a half hour long television program, and 16 minutes out of an hour long program. If you actually sit through the commercials, you most likely will end up seeing ads for brand new, shiny cars, face creams that either zap away acne or reduce aging, deodorants to help you smell better (which isn't a bad thing), a variety of foods that are irresistible followed by products that will help you lose weight, online dating sites that are guaranteed to help you find a mate, and stores that have the best deals. And finally, you're back to your program for another 5

minutes before the next round of commercials. If you happen to change the channel during the commercials, simply open a magazine or go on a website where there are ads on the side of the screen, sure to get your attention.

The bottom line is, these ads claim that you want to have a better life than you already have. They want you to buy into a life where you have more money, more possessions, more cars, more friends- more More MORE! And if what the commercial or ad is trying to sell doesn't phase you, perhaps the flawless people promoting the product will. I really want to know how many doctors out

in the real world actually look like a model, like they do in the commercials?

These ads fuel our self-obsessed society by stating the claim: "You are lacking in your life". You are not good enough, pretty enough, talented enough, do not own enough. You are not worthy of love and happiness unless you purchase whatever is being advertised. If you buy it, then you'll feel happy and worthy in life.....UNTIL.....

That moment of happiness wears off. You realize that **what you had just given into** did not fill the sense of need or rid you of the sense of lack. You are disappointed once again and then turn to find something that will make you feel better. You begin the

spending cycle all over again, or worse, you begin to **truly** feel like you are lacking in life, that you aren't good enough. This can lead to a negative self image and that can lead to depression or worse, substance abuse, overindulging in food, settling for someone who doesn't value you, or whatever...hoping you will at some point feel that you'll be acceptable.

This morning, we hear a promise from Jesus: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" and "I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord." For those of us who are told constantly by society that we are insufficient, and have actually felt

that way, we are left to question, why? Why would the good shepherd, Jesus Christ, lay down his life for **US**?

Why?

The answer is this, and listen intently: Jesus laid down his life for us because we ARE enough, no matter what we are told. We are enough! Jesus did not die in order to bring judgment on this world, or to make some sort of payment to God. Jesus came down to us so that he would reveal that God loves the whole world, no exceptions. We know this through the well known verse from John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son"...we know that verse so well. Jesus came to us, to tell us that we are ALREADY loved so very

much, that we are enough, that we don't need special products, cars, ipads, diet pills, a reputation, a high status job, a list of achievements or anything else to be deserving of God's love. God's unconditional and neverfailing love? We've got that already!

It's hard for us to believe it, I know. After all, we live in a society which seems to value possessions, beauty and success all too highly. We are talking about a billion dollar industry that works hard to keep these values alive. So therefore, we feel pressured to give in to that belief that we are not worthy of love and acceptance unless we have earned it. But deep down, we know it's all a lie and know we need to look to the Good Shepherd who has

told us the words we need to hear "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep...and you ARE worth it because I love you."

It is hard to believe at times, which is why it is so important for us to listen to more of Jesus' message: "I lay down my life for the sheep...I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd." This is important because Jesus is saying that he didn't come just for his disciples, the chosen few, but he came for all of us. And so, we are summoned to hear and believe this message of acceptance and love and share it with each other and all those we meet.

This is good news. Good news that society tries to stifle. Good news that is hard to believe because of the advertising industry and because of a society who's eager to accept it even though it's false. And because it's hard to believe, we need to keep reminding ourselves and others the truth of the Good Shepherd, who gave his life out of God's love and acceptance for all of us. This love is greater than anything of this world. It's all we need. We are accepted. **WE ARE WORTH IT!**

An important phrase that I want you to remember is...."You are a beloved child of God, and you are enough." Repeat after me...you are a beloved child of God, and you are enough. Say these words throughout

this week as a reminder to yourself, but then repeat them to your family, your friends, and colleagues, even a stranger you meet. Because as a body of Christ, we are called to remind each other of God's promises and remind each other of Jesus' message of love, acceptance and grace. It's all we need in this world. Don't let anyone or anything else tell you otherwise. "You are a beloved child of God, and you are enough." AMEN