***Hope-Strong***

**Worship Series – Week 1**

***Christ Strong Love Strong***

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| **WORSHIP SERVICE OUTLINE**S  Each worship outline contains all elements needed for your worship service. The order of each service presented is only a *suggestion*. No doubt changes will be needed to accommodate the flow and worship style of your corps. The outlines are flexible and allow opportunities to “cut and paste” as needed. If you are blessed with instrumental or vocal music resources, you may find there is more structured material here than needed. Please include the headings of each section in your bulletin. |

**Announcements and Offering**

***Christ Strong***

**Call to Worship:**

William Booth, our founder said these words:

We are a salvation people—this is our specialty—getting saved and keeping saved, and then getting somebody else saved, and then getting saved ourselves more and more, until full salvation on earth makes the heaven within.

We believe in salvation. The world needs it. The worst man that ever walked will go to heaven if he obtains it, and the best man that ever lived will go to hell if he misses it.

Clear your vision. Be skillful. Improve yourself. Study your business. Be self-sacrificing. Halt, stand still and more fully apprehend and comprehend your calling. You are to be a worker together with God for the salvation of your fellow men. What is the business of your life? You are to be a redeemer, a savior, a copy of Jesus Christ Himself. So consecrate every awakened power to the great end of saving them.

Our work is salvation. We believe in salvation, and we have salvation. We aim at salvation. We want this and nothing short of this. And we want this right off. My brethren, my comrades, soul-saving is our avocation, the great purpose and business of our lives. Let us seek first the Kingdom of God, let us be Salvationists indeed.

(*I’ll Stand for Christ*, pages 13-18)

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| **SB#975 – Salvation! O the joyful sound!** | TB-90 – Lift up the banner | HTD8-T11 (3 vs.) |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **SB#509 – O boundless salvation! deep ocean of love** | TB-506 – My Jesus, I Love Thee | HTD2-T3 (4 vs.) |
| **SB#915 – Boundless as the mighty ocean** | TB-400 – Guide Me, Great Jehovah | HTD9-T4 (3 vs.) |
| **SB#923 – God is with us** | TB-394 – Austria | HTD1-T2 (3 vs.) |
| **SB#924 – Hark! The sounds of singing** | TB-190 – Rachie | HTD2-T13 (3 vs.) |
| **SB#943 – We’ve a story to tell to the nations** | TB-922 – We’ve a story to tell | No CD |
| **SB#955 – Hark, hark, my soul** | TB-486 – same  TB-494 – Pilgrims | HTD6-T8 (3 vs.)  HTD5-T16 (3 vs.) |
| **SB#960 – In the Army of Jesus we’ve taken our stand** | TB-692 – I’ll stand for Christ | HTD4-T7 (4 vs.) |
| **SB#964 – Lead on, O king eternal** | TB-223 – same | HTD8-T10 (3 vs.) |
| **SB#971 – Onward, Christian soldiers**  **HC#181 – Onward, Christian Soldiers** | TB-188 – same  HC-181 | HTD2-T10 (3 vs.)  HCD17-T11 |
| **SB#976 – Shout aloud salvation** | TB-823 – same | No CD |
| **SB#992 – Who is on the Lord’s side?** | TB-190 – Rachie | HTD2-T13 – (3 vs.) |
| **HC#153 – Storm the Forts of Darkness** | HC-153 | HCD14-T13 |
| **HC#221 – Servants of God** | HC-221 | HCD21-T11 |
| **SB#960 – In the Army of Jesus we’ve taken our stand**  **HC#271 – I’ll Stand for Christ** | TB-692 – I’ll Stand for Christ  HC-271 | HTD4-T7 (4 vs.)  HCD26-11 |

**Scripture Alive!**

**Option #1 version: Ephesians 1:3-2:10, (NRSV)**

**Leader:** 3Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love.

**All:** 5He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. 7In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace 8that he lavished on us.

**Leader:** With all wisdom and insight 9he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, 10as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

**All:** 11In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance,having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, 12so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory.

**Leader:** 13In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; 14this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God’s own people, to the praise of his glory.

**All:** 15I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason,16I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. 17I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, 18so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, 19and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.

**Leader:** 20God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come.

**All:** 22And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, 23which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

**Leader:** 1You were dead through the trespasses and sins 2in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient.

**All:** 3All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else.

**Leader:** 4But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us 5even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

**All:** 8For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— 9not the result of works, so that no one may boast. 10For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

**Option #2 version: Ephesians 1:3-2:10, (VOICE)**

**Leader:** This letter begins with praise and thanksgiving offered to God. Paul celebrates all the spiritual “blessings” available to all believers in Jesus, the Anointed One. This means that He is the one through whom God has acted to rescue the world. But more than that, He is the Lord to whom we belong and the spiritual place where all believers are presently located. In God’s purpose, heaven has come down to where we live so that we now occupy this wonderful realm where salvation is at work, where God’s truth and beauty are a reality, and where we wait as the rest of His plan is worked out.

**All:** 3Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus the Anointed One, who grants us every spiritual blessing in these heavenly realms *where we live* in the Anointed—*not because of anything we have done, but because of what He has done for us.* 4God chose us to be in a relationship with Him even before He laid out plans for this world; He wanted us to live holy lives characterized by love, *free from sin,* and blameless before Him.

**Leader:** 5He destined us to be adopted as His children through *the covenant* Jesus the Anointed *inaugurated in His sacrificial life*. This was His pleasure and His will *for us.* 6Ultimately God is the one worthy of praise for showing us His grace; *He is merciful and marvelous,* freely giving us these gifts in free! We are forgiven for our sinful ways by the richness of His grace, 8which He has poured all over us.

**All:** With all wisdom and insight, 9He has enlightened us to the great mystery *at the center* of His will. With immense pleasure, He laid out His intentions *through Jesus,* 10a plan that will climax when the time is right *as He returns to create order and unity*—both in heaven and on earth—when all things are brought together under the Anointed’s *royal rule*.

**Leader:** In Him 11we stand to inherit even more. As His heirs, we are predestined *to play a key role* in His *unfolding* purpose that is energizing everything to conform to His will. 12As a result, we—the first to place our hope in the Anointed One—will live in a way to bring Him glory and praise.

**All:** 13Because you, too, have heard the word of truth—the good news of your salvation—and because you believed *in the One who is truth*, your lives are marked with His seal. This is *none other than* the Holy Spirit who was promised 14as the guarantee toward the inheritance we are to receive when He frees and rescues all who belong to Him. To God be all praise and glory!

**Paul:** 15This is why, when I heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus that is present in your community and of your great love for all God’s people, 16I haven’t stopped thanking Him for you. I am continually speaking to Him on your behalf in my prayers. *Here’s what I say:*

17God of our Lord Jesus the Anointed, Father of Glory: *I call out to You on behalf of Your people.* Give them minds ready to receive wisdom and revelation so they will truly know You. 18Open the eyes of their hearts, *and let the light of Your truth flood in*. Shine Your light on the hope You are calling them to embrace. Reveal to them the glorious riches You are preparing as their inheritance. 19Let them see the full extent of Your power that is at work in those of us who believe, and may it be done according to Your might and power.

*Friends*, it is this same might and *resurrection* power that 20He used in the Anointed One to raise Him from the dead and to position Him at His right hand in heaven. *There is nothing over Him.* 21He’s above all rule, authority, power, and dominion; over every name invoked, *over every title bestowed* in this age and the next. 22God has placed all things beneath His feet and anointed Him as the head over all things for His church. 23This church is His body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

**Leader:** 1As for you, *don’t you remember how you used to just exist? Corpses,* dead *in life,* buried by transgressions, 2wandering the course of this *perverse* world. *You were the offspring* of the prince of the power of air—*oh, how he owned you,* just as he still controls those living in disobedience. *I’m not talking about the outsiders alone;*

**All:** 3we were all guilty of falling headlong for the persuasive passions of this world; we all have had our fill of indulging the flesh and mind, *obeying impulses to follow perverse thoughts motivated by dark powers.* As a result, our natural inclinations led us to be children of wrath, just like the rest of humankind.

**Leader:** 4But God, with the *unfathomable* richness of His love and mercy focused on us, 5united us with the Anointed One and infused our lifeless souls with life—even though we were buried under mountains of sin—and saved us by His grace. 6He raised us up with Him and seated us in the heavenly realms with *our beloved* Jesus the Anointed, *the Liberating King.* 7*He did this for a reason:* so that for all eternity we will stand as a living testimony to the incredible riches of His grace and kindness that He freely gives to us by uniting us with Jesus the Anointed.

**All:** 8-9For it’s by God’s grace that you have been saved. You receive it through faith. It was not *our plan or* our effort. It is God’s gift, *pure and simple.* You didn’t earn it, *not one of us did*, so don’t go around bragging *that you must have done something amazing*. 10For we are the product of His hand, *heaven’s poetry etched on our lives,* created in the Anointed, Jesus, to accomplish the good works God arranged long ago.

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| **SB#34 – I believe that God the Father** | TB-360 – Bethany | HTD11-T1 (4 vs.) |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **SB#243 – Before the throne of God above**  **HC#164 – Before the throne of God above** | TB-52 – same  HC-164 | No CD  HCD15-T14 |
| **SB#463 – I have no claim on grace** | TB-161 – Chalvey | No CD |
| **SB#565 – All I once held dear, built my life upon** | TB-725 – Knowing You  HC-89 | No CD  HCD7-T19 |
| **SB#728 – O Christ of pure and perfect love** *(words by William Booth)* | TB-443 – Mozart  TB-447 – St Catherine | No CD  HTD5-T19 (3 vs.) |
| **HC#23- Such Love** | HC-23 | HCD2-T3 |
| **HC#127 – How deep the Father’s love for us** | HC-127 | HCD11-T17 |
| **HC#207 – Grace Alone** | HC-207 | HCD19-T17 |

***First…We Pray!***

[Leader of the prayer time should use the Soul Training guidelines to guide the congregational prayer time. The Soul Training box at the end of this document should be included each week in the bulletin as a separate handout for the congregation to take home each week. List the following condensed version of the Soul Training handout in the bulletin outline for prayer points during the prayer time.]

**Congregational Prayer Time**

**Soul Training – Love Unselfishly**

**Leader:** A Salvation Army corps is made up of people learning how to put the needs of others ahead of their own. If we see others—whether in our family or on the freeway—as merely human, it becomes easy to see them as either obstacles or opportunities to further our own happiness. The key is to put on the mind of Christ and to see others as He sees them: treasures. Then we will naturally move to treasuring them, which makes putting their needs ahead of our own not only possible but likely.

* Love Unselfishly at Home
* Love Unselfishly at Work
* Love Unselfishly at the Corps
* Love Unselfishly in Daily Life

Pray that this week that you will put the needs of others ahead of your needs.

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| **SB#328 – To be like Jesus!** | TB-898 | PCD1-T35/36 |

**Pastoral Prayer**

***Love Strong***

**Message – Love Strong**

**Video - Love Strong**

**RESPONSE**

To be Christ Strong is to love strong! Our mission is to meet people where they are and to love them without discrimination. That is how God loves us. That is the example Christ set for us.

Be honest with yourself. Which people group are you most likely to ignore? Who do you act indifferently towards? Who do you think is unworthy of God’s love?

Confess these judgements to God. Surrender the attitudes of indifference, prejudice, and personal bias to Him. Ask Him to forgive you for looking at people without love. Ask Him to help you Love Strong.

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| **SB#499 – It is Jesus I need, it is Jesus indeed** | TB-703 – It is Jesus | No CD |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **SB#707 – I need Thee every hour** | TB-680 – I need Thee | No CD |
| **SB#743 – As we come in prayer before You** | TB-379 – South Shields | HTD10-T13 (3 vs.) |
| **SB#750 – Father, I know that all my life** | TB-111 – Spohr | HTD10-T14 (3 vs.) |
| **SB#766 – In the secret of Thy presence**  **HC#35 – In the secret of Thy presence** | TB-371 – same  HC-35 | No CD  HCD2-T15 |
| **SB#786 – Silently now I wait for Thee** | TB-827 – same | ? |
| **HC#205 – Closer Still** | HC-205 | HCD19-T15 |
| **HC#236 – Lord, I need you** | HC-236 | HCD22-T16 |

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| **SB#335 – Great God, your love has called us here** | TB-442 – Melita | HTD9-T11 (4 vs.) |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **SB#349 – Yet once again, by God’s abundant mercy** | TB-494 – Pilgrims | HTD5-T16 (3 vs.) |
| **SB#355 – Beautiful Lord, wonderful Savior**  **HC#112 – The Potter’s Hand** | TB-867 – The potter’s hand  HC-112 | HCD10-T12 |
| **SB#371 – I will offer up my life in spirit and truth** | TB-894 – This thankful heart | No CD |
| **SB#418 – Every day they pass me by** | NTB-797 – People need the Lord | No CD |
| **SB#467 – If human hearts are often tender** | TB-17 – How much more | HTD1-T13 (3 vs.) |
| **SB#511 – O Jesus, Savior, Christ divine**  (William Booth) | TB-416 – Pembroke | No CD |
| **SB#603 – Lord, I would be available to serve where there is need** | TB-765 – My destiny | No CD |
| **SB#699 – Every promise we can make**  **HC-207 – Grace Alone** | NTB-640 – Grace alone  HC-207 | HCD19-T17 |
| **SB#935 – There are people hurting in the world out there** | NTB-886 – They need Christ  HC-203 | HCD19-T13 |
| **SB#1006 – In Christ there is no east or west** | NTB-116 – St. Peter  NTB-70 – Fewster | No CD  HTD3-T13 (4 vs.) |
| **SB#1013 – When I needed a neighbor** | TB-770 – Neighbor | No CD |
| **SB#1006 – In Christ there is no east or west** | TB-116 – St Peter | No CD |
| **SB#463 – I have no claim on grace** | TB-161 – Chalvey | No CD |
| **SB#526 – What can wash away my sin?** | TB-288 – Nothing but the blood of Jesus | No CD |
| **HC#154 – Moved with Compassion** | HC-154 | HCD14-T14 |
| **HC#178 – Speak, O Lord** | HC-178 | HCD16-T18 |

[Luke 21:25](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2021:25-36&version=NIV#en-NIV-25852) : [2Pe 3:10, 12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2Pet%203:10,%202Pet%203:12&version=NIV)

[Luke 21:26](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2021:25-36&version=NIV#en-NIV-25853) : [S Mt 24:29](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matt%2024:29&version=NIV)

[Luke 21:27](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2021:25-36&version=NIV#en-NIV-25854) : [S Mt 8:20](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matt%208:20&version=NIV)

[Luke 21:27](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2021:25-36&version=NIV#en-NIV-25854) : [S Rev 1:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Rev%201:7&version=NIV)

[Luke 21:28](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2021:25-36&version=NIV#en-NIV-25855) : [Lk 18:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2018:7&version=NIV)

[Luke 21:31](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2021:25-36&version=NIV#en-NIV-25858) : [S Mt 3:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matt%203:2&version=NIV)

[Luke 21:32](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2021:25-36&version=NIV#en-NIV-25859) : [Lk 11:50; 17:25](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2011:50,%20Luke%2017:25&version=NIV)

[Luke 21:33](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2021:25-36&version=NIV#en-NIV-25860) : [S Mt 5:18](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matt%205:18&version=NIV)

[Luke 21:34](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2021:25-36&version=NIV#en-NIV-25861) : [Mk 4:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%204:19&version=NIV)

[Luke 21:34](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2021:25-36&version=NIV#en-NIV-25861) : [Lk 12:40, 46; 1Th 5:2-7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2012:40,%20Luke%2012:46,%201Thess%205:2-1Thess%205:7&version=NIV)

[Luke 21:36](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2021:25-36&version=NIV#en-NIV-25863) : [Mt 26:41](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matt%2026:41&version=NIV)

**Benediction**

20Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, 21equip you with everything good for doing his will,and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13:20-21)

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| **Vocal Benediction – HC#193 – Soldier’s Hymn** | HC-193 | HCD18-T14 |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **SB#934 – The world is needing us** | TB-877 – same | No CD |
| **SB#959 – I’ll go in the strength of the Lord** | TB-433 – In the strength of the Lord | HTD4-T8 (3 vs. – Intro to each verse; extended ending) |
| **SB#819 – O church, arise, and put your armor on** | TB-777 – O church, arise  HC-202 | HCD19-T12 |
| **SB#954 – God’s soldier marches as to war** | TB-53 – God’s soldier | HTD4-T3 (3 vs.) |
| **SB#971 – Onward, Christian soldiers**  **HC#181- Onward, Christian soldiers** | TB-188 – same  HC-181 | HTD2-T10 (3 vs.)  HCD17-T11 |
| **HC#202 – O Church, arise** | HC-202 | HCD19-T12 |
| **HC#277 – We have caught the vision splendid** | HC-277 | HCD26-T17) |

***Hope-Strong***

**Worship Series – Week 1**

***Love Strong***

***By Commissioner Barry Swanson***

**Scripture: Ephesians 1-2:10**

**Title:** **Love-Strong**

**Key Verse:** Ephesians 1:3: “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ”.

**Key Word:** Identity

**Aim:** A Hope-Strong life requires that I find my true identity in Christ.

**Introduction**

With many people today, for a variety of reasons, it seems that hope is in short supply. When hope is gone, so is the future.

For this reason we are beginning a sermon series that focuses on what it means, and what it takes, to live lives that are “Hope-Strong”. The mission of the church (including The Salvation Army) is to bring hope to people by introducing them to the gospel/good news of Jesus Christ. This message of love, mercy, grace, peace and forgiveness of sin is in reality the one and only entry point to everlasting hope. In the process of serving others we must take time, and be sure that we are living with a biblically based foundation for our identity as God’s chosen people, being “always ready to offer a defense, humbly and respectfully, when someone asks why you have hope” –I Peter 3:15 (Voice).

The book of Ephesians will be our source of truth and instruction. Paul’s timeless words are as current today as they were the day they were written. John Mackay has called it “the most contemporary book in the Bible” while John Stott has written, “it promises community in a world of disunity, reconciliation in place of alienation and peace instead of war”. Together we are offered the blessing of hope promised in the apostle’s opening greeting: “Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 1:2). Listen up. This is for you!

1. Adoption- A Special Relationship (Ephesians 1:4-6).

The fact that God has “blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ” has real life implications, family being one of them. Biological reproduction is a beautiful, miraculous experience, but the decision of parents to adopt a child not of their own blood is, in some ways, an even deeper conscious expression of love. We need not be nervous about the word “predestined”. It reflects the decision of a Father to love his child- no matter what. Isn’t that what love is? Our Father chose us for adoption in a pre-creation state. Our acceptance moment is described in verse 13a: “And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation”. Mysterious? Of course it is. The mind is overwhelmed at the enormity of it. Let us be comforted: “When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of God’s possession- the praise of his glory”. (verses 13b-14)

1. Redemption- Forgiveness Through the Blood (Ephesians 1: 7-8)

Another spiritual blessing that helps form our identity and offers us hope is redemption. The word itself means “deliverance by payment of a price”. This is exactly what Christ did through his death on the cross; blood for blood. Our debt was paid in full as a result of God’s lavish grace.

It is a ridiculous understatement to say that the idea of redemption is complicated. It brings all of God’s attributes (like love, grace, mercy, and holiness) to bear on our sin, yours and mine. Many eloquent and profound attempts have been made to describe its meaning, but perhaps Elvina M. Hall, in her simple gospel song said it as well as anybody could:

“Jesus paid it all,

All to him I owe;

Sin had left a crimson stain,

He washed it white as snow.”

1. Revelation- The Mystery of His Will (Ephesians 1:9-10)

Our identity as people of hope is sealed by the fact that his mysterious will has been revealed to us. It was by God’s pleasure that we should be given this revelation: that under Christ he is bringing all things in heaven and on earth into unity. That is our purpose, our destiny, to join with him in this cosmic action.

This should serve as a warning to us to be in a constant state of readiness. He is positioning his church to play a major role in this dramatic final act of human history. When that day comes, I pray The Salvation Army will still be on the front lines, a beacon for all to see.

Psychologists tell us that identity is formed as a result of many different life factors. Also that a person undergoes a “crisis” of identity when one or more of these factors are challenged. If your sense of self is built on anything *other than* Jesus Christ and his deep, personal love for you, then I hope and pray this would be a crisis moment for you. May God’s word establish your identity in Christ: Christ-Strong/Love-Strong.

[The Soul Training box below should be included each week in the bulletin as a separate handout for the congregation to take home each week.]

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| ***Soul Training***  A Salvation Army corps is made up of people learning how to put the needs of others ahead of their own. This is peculiar behavior in our world. It shows that we are maladjusted to the narratives of this world that tell us to “look out for number one” and that say “winning is not everything—it is the only thing.” It shows that we are maladjusted to self-seeking, racism and aggression. How do we live this out? Where do we live this out? It begins, I think, by changing the way we see other people. If we see others—whether in our family or on the freeway—as merely human, it becomes easy to see them as either obstacles or opportunities to further our own happiness.  The key is to put on the mind of Christ and to see others as He sees them: treasures. Then we will naturally move to treasuring them, which makes putting their needs ahead of our own not only possible but likely. We live and move in different circles, and have different relationships with the people in our lives: family and friends, co-workers, fellow Christians, and strangers and acquaintances. It is easier, for example, to treasure my family, but that does not mean I do it well. It is harder to treasure the person who is being rude in the hardware store, but that does not mean it is impossible. This week, engage in several ways to treasure the treasures all around us.  LOVE UNSELFISHLY AT HOME   1. When deciding where or what to eat, ask the others in your family where they would like to go. Go where they want to go, or eat what they want to eat. 2. If you are married or have a roommate, ask how the other person is doing, and really listen. Even if you have other things to do, practice putting his or her needs—even if it is an emotional need—ahead of yours. 3. If you have children in your home, give them the honor of choosing how to spend one evening this week—any way they want.   LOVE UNSELFISHLY AT WORK   1. Take time to visit a coworker and ask them if they could use some help. 2. Make coffee or tea for others, or bring some treats…serve others.   LOVE UNSELFISHLY AT THE CORPS   1. Park farther away from the sanctuary, rather than closer, to leave the space for others. 2. Sit up near the front of the sanctuary or in the spaces where people seldom sit, leaving room for others in the more desirable seats. 3. Offer to do some needed chores, such as folding bulletins or cleaning the parking lot.   LOVE UNSELFISHLY IN DAILY LIFE   1. When driving, be on the lookout for opportunities to let people in to your lane. 2. When shopping, be mindful of others as you navigate through the store, and allow others to cut ahead of you in line.   (Adapted from *The Good and Beautiful Community*, Following the Spirit, extending grace, demonstrating love, pages 80-82) |