



To be known and loved

October 18, 2020 by The Revd Philip Cochrane

***To be loved but not known is comforting but superficial.  
To be known and not loved is our greatest fear.  
But to be fully known and truly loved is, well,  
a lot like being loved by God.  
It is what we need more than anything.  
It liberates us from pretense,  
humbles us out of our self-righteousness,  
and fortifies us for any difficulty life can throw at us.<sup>1</sup>***

This quote from Tim Keller, a New York based Pastor, helped inspire this contemporary song, performed by Tauren Wells. The context of the quote is about marriage, but it surely has a wider and contemporary application to the human condition.

Pre-COVID, it used to be said that the world suffered from another epidemic – one of loneliness. Study after study<sup>2</sup> have shown that people feel lonely, even when they are among people. You can be married and alone; you can be single and feel alone... and social media has kept things superficial – we are only known to the extent we share things. Comforting but not much else....

I believe there is something deep within us which was created to be known...and loved. I am struck by the Genesis Creation account where one of the consequences of human wrongdoing was Adam and Eve hid from God (Genesis 3:8). Before, we had this deep intimacy between the Creator and Creation, now it is corrupted and I think we have been hiding ever since.

We are deeply conflicted – longing to be known and loved, but frightened that if we are known, we may not be loved. I invite you to reflect on Tim Keller's quote and review your life to see if it has resonance. I know it does for me. The song I found helpful, especially the conclusion:

***It's so unusual it's frightening  
I'm fully known and loved by You***

It may be worth journaling around this, asking for God's light to reveal those things which enable you to experience the love of God and others; and also what gets in the way. What changes could you make to risk being known more? If it is the same as for me, some may distance themselves if you do, but others will continue to love you and accept you as you are...and that feels like balm to the soul!

Lyrics: Known

It's so unusual it's frightening.  
You see right through the mess inside me,  
And you call me out to pull me in.  
You tell me I can start again,  
And I don't need to keep on hiding.

*I'm fully known and loved by You.  
You won't let go no matter what I do,  
And it's not one or the other.  
It's hard truth and ridiculous grace  
To be known fully known and loved by  
You.*

*I'm fully known and loved by You.*

It's so like You to keep pursuing.  
It's so like me to go astray, ooh,  
But You guard my heart with Your truth,  
The kind of love that's bullet proof  
And I surrender to Your kindness, oh.

*I'm fully known and loved ....*

How real, how wide  
How rich, how high is Your heart  
I cannot find the reasons why  
You give me so much  
How real, how wide  
How rich, how high is Your heart  
Now, I cannot find the reasons why  
You give me so much

*I'm fully known...*

It's so unusual it's frightening  
I'm fully known and loved by You

Ethan Hulse / Jordan Sapp / Tauren Wells Lyrics ©  
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<sup>1</sup> Timothy Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage: Facing the Complexities of Commitment with the Wisdom of God*

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736\(18\)30142-9.pdf](https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736(18)30142-9.pdf);

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/neilhowe/2019/05/03/millennials-and-the-loneliness-epidemic/#6b90bbd47676>