

Who Are You?

Holy & Blameless

Pastor James Bell

Ephesians 1:3–12 ESV

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. 11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.

We have spend the last couple weeks highlighting on our identity of being blessed and chosen. A work that could have and still is only because of what Jesus has done for us on the Cross. And because of His priceless gift to us, we become what we could have not been. We receive what we do not deserve. And His grace, His empowerment identifies us as this list here in the first chapter of Ephesians. This is purposed to keep us reminded of who we have been called and destined to be as His ambassadors that brings Heaven to Earth.

As the first two identities seemed to be so beneficial to us we come to the part of scripture that usually does not adhere to comfortable to the “Christian” of todays society. When these types of messages are spoken about behind the pulpit they usually are refereed to be a church that is affiliated with Pentecostal or Charismatic Churches. While that is true to an extent, we as the body of Christ cannot neglect the full counsel of God’s word. We cannot read the parts we like and exclude the parts that we don’t like. Jesus stated in John 12:47-48

John 12:47–48 NLT

47 I will not judge those who hear me but don't obey me, for I have come to save the world and not to judge it. 48 But all who reject me and my message will be judged on the day of judgment by the truth I have spoken.

The gospel is the barometer of how we will be judged. So when we ignore parts of the gospel that doesn't tickle our ears, we must be aware that it is still the standard of God. And if we ignore this call to righteousness then our hearts are beating to different rhythm than the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our heart, wills, motives, and intentions have not aligned with Heaven. Wow Pastor! I cannot believe that you just said that! I didn't, but the word of God has already declared this in the book of 2 Timothy 4:3-4

2 Timothy 4:3–4 NLT

3 For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will reject the truth and chase after myths.

Ephesians 1:3–4 ESV

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

And this leads us to the next characteristic or word that places our identity in Christ. Holy and blameless. But let's first look at the word of Holy. The Greek word is:

hágios: Holy: Purified, Atonement, Consecrated, Devoted, Abstaining from Earthly Defilement, Set apart from common to sacred.

If we look carefully at each word, it paints a picture of what we have been called to be identified as but even deeper than that, the process of Holiness. The overall picture is painted by this one scripture.

2 Corinthians 7:1 NLT

1 Because we have these promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit. And let us work toward complete holiness because we fear God.

So cleanse ourselves from somethings? All things that defile our body or spirit. This is a double edge sword here because the Spirit of God made is crystal clear that we are to guard both our body and Spirit. And work towards. This means it is a process. This process happens with our full cooperation and obedience to the word of God. Not just the parts we like but the fullness of His word. So here is what the full cooperation and obedience to God's word looks like.

Romans 6:1–9 NLT

1 Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? 2 Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? 3 Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? 4 For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives. 5 Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. 6 We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. 7 For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. 8 And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him. 9 We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him.

When each of us turned 16 we became eligible to get our drivers license. Which means that we agreed to the regulations set forth by our state to abide by every word that was written to keep us and all others with us or around us safe. Our agreement meant that we understood the privileges and the consequences of our actions. So when the posted speed limits says 55 does our drivers license give us permission to exceed this sign of limitations? Some will say that its not wrong unless I get caught. Fair enough with that argument. But what does our attitude look like when we see the blue lights in the rearview? What is our attitude towards the officer as they are issuing us ticket for breaking our agreement?

This is almost the same logic that Paul is speaking here. Should we continue to sin? Knowing that when we accepting Jesus as our Lord, that it would be okay to break our covenant with Him? So what happens with habitual offenders? Do they not loose their driving privileges? What happens when we continue to sin? We have ultimately chosen to walk away or give up the gift of salvations. We didn't lose it...we walked away from it.

Pauls firmness continues with verse 6 and 7. The laying down our sinful nature is how sin loses its power within and over our lives. Jesus chose to give up His life so that we may have life. But giving up His life ment that He had to die. The proof of resurrection

could not manifest until death took place. So how can we expect a resurrected newness within us unless we die to self and our sinful nature. This is conscience effort on our part by allowing His grace to be in operation within our lives. We have all seen a person that has been transformed from their likeness to the likeness of God. It only happens when they die to sin. Verse 7 is so beautiful! When we died to ourselves, to our sinful nature, to our dreams, to our ambitions, to our goals, to our wants, to the ways of this world, to sin, then sin loses its power and we are no longer slaves to sin. It's simply logic but it will cause certain death. Jesus died for sin so that we could die to sin. This is the gift given to us. A call to holy. The Spirit of God declares in Hebrews 12:14

Hebrews 12:14 NLT

14 Work at living in peace with everyone, and work at living a holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord.

Notice the word work? This means it's on our part to cooperate. It means it's a condition of the promise. Our part of the covenant.

Those that are not holy will not see God! Is this declaration a statement of now or when we stand before God? It is a right now declaration. Because we will all stand before God when we are judged and see Him as He is. Without holiness we will not see the manifestation of God as He has intended for our right now lives.

The characteristic of Holiness that we are identified as is not a call or a doing of ourselves but because it is the likeness of God. It is His likeness and image that we have been called to and not of ourselves.

Leviticus 11:44 NLT

44 For I am the LORD your God. You must consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy.

Leviticus 19:2 NLT

2 "Give the following instructions to the entire community of Israel. You must be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.

Yes Pastor but that's old testament. Then look carefully at 1 Peter 1:15-16

1 Peter 1:15–16 NLT

15 But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy.

16 For the Scriptures say, “You must be holy because I am holy.”

God has not given us a command without giving us the power to accomplish it. You should be holy or you must be holy? And why should we be holy? Because He is holy. This is the empowerment that is given with the command. And it is accomplished when we die with Christ. The part where sin loses its dominion over us.

As we circle back to our flagship scripture in Ephesians 1:4

Ephesians 1:4 ESV

4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

Blameless: without spot, without blemish, without fault, without wrinkle, without defect.

It's most prominent meaning is found in Leviticus 21. It speaks of being disfigured or deformity. But we all should have this understanding of the logic of the Old Testament and the New Testament. This Old Testament is a typology of the New Testament. The New Testament address the attitude of the heart while the Old Testament is the picture that symbolizes the New Testament. And this typology of the commandment of rejecting the disfigured or deformity represents the reality of what is deformed. The disfigurement shows the contrast of its reality verse the likeness and image that purposed to be. The deformity shows that it is not like what it came from. In the new testament it shines light on the heart of man. It shows if our heart is in the likeness of sin or righteousness. And we have been called and chosen to be without blemish. If blemished then it should be obvious that we have not died to self. But in the Western Church and within society the new normal is that God accepts me with my faults. While this is true, let's be extreme. When we become saved we become without fault or blemish. This is called Positional Holiness.

Colossians 1:22 NLT

22 Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.

And while this is counsel of God's word, we must look at the full counsel. So let me give you an example. The speed limit is 45 but in the school zone the speed limit changes to 25 during school hours. This would be the fullness of truth.

2 Peter 3:14 NLT

14 And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in his sight.

These things to come is the awaiting of the Lords return. While waiting we are to make some effort. We are to make effort when it's convenient. We are to make effort when its favorable... No, we are to make every effort to be found living pure (Holy) and blameless (without blemish/defect) in His sight. This is Practical Holiness.

We become positional before we become practical. And way to may "Christians" have accepted the positional part of Holiness but has neglected the practicality of Holiness. They like the part that makes them a beneficiary but not the part of having to live in His likeness.

So the boldness of this series entitled "Who Are You?", is to keep us reminded of who we are because of what He did!

Let me pray with you today!