



#1, Identity: *I Am*

1 Peter 2:10, Eph. 1:1-11, (Phil. 3:1-11)

Once you were not a people, *but now you are the people of God*;
once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

1 Peter 2:10

- **Once we were nothing – we had no identity and no future!**
 - I believe that knowing our identity is the basis of a fruitful life!
 - I really believe that knowing one's true identity is the one thing that changes everything else in our lives!
 - **Life flows out of who we are...!**

Ephesians 1:1

- **In the opening lines of his letter, Paul paints this incredible word picture of who we are.**
 - The apostle Paul was one of the most religious people on the planet.
 - **You can read his impressive religious résumé in the book of Philippians!**
 - When it came to his performance for God, Paul was an over-achiever!
 - But look at his words...

Philippians 3:7-9

I once thought these things were valuable...

But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him...!

- **I want to draw your attention specifically to the word “rubbish” in verse 8.**
 - The Greek word used by Paul is *skubala* and it's the word commonly used in that time to describe manure/ dog dung.
 - I know it's raw, but Paul, under God's inspiration, wrote that his *performance* for God was nothing more than a pile of _____!
 - **Paul is saying that when he was moved by God's grace, he stopped focusing on his performance and began locking into God's goodness for his identity!**

Ephesians 1:1b

- **There are two words in verse 1 that have changed the world!**
 - We are defined by who we are in Christ!
 - These two words are the summary, essence, and totality of our identity!

We are not defined by what we do or fail to do for Christ!

The problem is that we don't understand *who we truly are* and then we *get discouraged and define ourselves* by any number of things *other than Jesus!* We have to get our value from what the Word of God says is true about us! (Ephesians 1:3-11)

Now why is this message about identity so important...?

- **Because, we are all required to ask and answer the question of, "who am I?"**
 - This question is possibly the most far-reaching, belief-revealing, life-shaping, and identity-forming question that we will ever answer!!
 - **We've all been filling in the blank ("I am _____") all of our lives, but we seldom stop to ask whether we've used the right word to describe ourselves.**
 - Paul says, "I AM... IN CHRIST" and that changes everything!!!
 - *I want to ask you today to stop filling the blank and ask Jesus to fill in the blank...!*

Okay, please allow me now press into your soul a little deeper...!

- **How does the description of yourself compare with who you've led others to believe to be true about you?**
 - How does it compare with who you would like to be?
 - In other words, are you pretending to be someone that you're not!?
 - Are you putting up a false front to cover up the deficiencies and weaknesses you see inside yourself?
- **This is called the gap in-between our persona and our identity!**
 - Our persona is how we want others to see us.
 - Our identity is how we see ourselves.
 - I believe many live today with an "identity crisis" not because they've lost it, but because they've either never found it or, they have created a gap in-between their identity and their persona!
 - **How does what you believe about you compare with God's assessment of you?**

I want to leave you with 4 pointers to help you develop your identity in Christ!

- #1: **Move PAST your PAST.**
Remember your past without remaining forever tied to it!
- #2: **Start CHANGING and stop COMPARING.**
An identity that is informed by inadequacy is a dangerous thing.
- #3: **Embrace FAITH and not the FACADE!**
Don't perform and please in the hopes of proving something!
- #4: **Accept LOVE into your LIFE.**
Jesus frees you to no longer believe what you believe to be true about you!

Romans 8:38-39

*For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God **in Christ Jesus** our Lord.*

I am _____.