

Sermon - At the center of your identity

Colossians 1:1,2

G'Joe

5 insights from the book of Colossians

1. Letter written by Paul and Timothy to a church Paul hadn't met. Written from prison.
2. City off the beaten path... Major Roman trade route had bypassed Colosseum which led this to be a forgotten or lesser city
3. Paul addresses cultural nuances and cultural temptations with the gospel...
4. Making maturing and multiplying disciples is seen throughout this book. (new one this week)
5. At the Center of it all is Christ and His Gospel!

Col 1: 1Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, 2To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

Intro questions: *What were you known for growing up?*

- Family / community / people group / company you were connected to.
- Something about you physically?
- Something you were naturally good at / skilled / gifted?
- Things you did or did NOT do... Your moral stance
 - All these can be both + and -....

The world says that your ID is what you are known for! NOT SO with Jesus...

I want to give you a different category: Your ID vs. things you are IDENTIFIED BY are different

- ID is where we find our deepest value! Your Identifiers can change and if you look for them to be WHO You are, you are in trouble...
- When your ID becomes your IDENTIFIERS you put a crushing blow on yourself or others to hold your value / sense of being intact!!
 - If your ID is that of an athlete, your ID is achieved...
 - If your ID is that of being good looking you spend SO Much time and energy and effort only to realize that someone prettier or stronger or in better shape?
 - If your ID is in being a member of family, a good parent or good child etc... then your ID is achieved through your kids performance OR others acceptance of you.
 - This often happens subtly and without realizing it. Your ID becoming your IDENTIFIERS

The world will also say this: **Your identity is SELF - created / Self - declared / Self - sustained**

"Self is the new God, the new spiritual authority, the new morality. But this puts a crushing weight on the self—one it was never designed to bear. It must discover itself. Become itself. Stay true to itself. Justify itself. Make itself happy. Perform and defend its fragile identity." - John Mark Comer, Live No Lies, p. 118

IS THIS WHAT COL 1:1,2 is all about??! Is this what Paul is saying is that he's an apostle? Is this self-created / self - declared / self - sustained IDENTITY as an APOSTLE?? Is HIS APOSTLESHIP an IDENTIFIER or His deep IDENTITY?

Along with Paul, what about this church? When you see they are SAINTS and FAITHFUL... Is this their ID? They are the righteous / saintly Ones / the others churches... Does Paul write the other churches letters that starts with... to the idiots at Galatia or those who are NOT living right?!

MY answer is this while the term apostle was a role in the NT and a function that I would say still exists today, for Paul this was rooted deeply in HIS IDENTITY as One who was CALLED by God to be an apostle - His role is wrapped up in His called by a Caller!

*** ID and CALLING GO hand in hand!!**

*** HIS ID was created / DECLARED / and SUSTAINED BY HIS CALLING to be an apostle...**

1. Within this text... BY THE WILL OF GOD Col 1: **1**Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, **2**To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.
2. Another intro from 1 Cor 1: **1**Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes, **2**To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: **3**Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. FOR PAUL His CALLING and His IDENTITY GO HAND IN HAND...
 1. His calling is SO DEEPLY CONNECTED TO THE CALLER!!

9God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

This got me thinking more about calling and Identity, which led me to Paul's conversion...

What exactly are we called? What does it mean to be called?? What are you and I called to???! What I realized is that there are two parts to our calling... and really therefore two parts to our IDENTITY... they GO hand in hand!!

Read with me... Acts 22:1-16

Our calling and identity are built around the two questions Paul asks Jesus: *Who are you LORD? What do you want me to do?*

LORDSHIP:

Abraham Kuyper (Dutch politician and theologian) "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, 'Mine!' " I would add this "There is not a square inch in your entire life in which Jesus doesn't call and say MINE! Not your \$\$\$ / your body / your sexuality / your future / your relationships...

Is this also what's going on with the CHURCH - these saints and faithful brothers? Is Paul talking about their performance or their POSITION before GOD?

There was this other church that Paul knew FAR better... in a wealthy and worldly city called Corinth

- *Issues that the Corinthian church... YET hear how Paul addresses them...*

1 Cor 1: **1**Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes, **2**To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: **3**Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Pauls not saying their ID is built around their performance; it's built on their POSITION before GOD! CREATED DECLARED and SUSTAINED BY GOD!!! further ...

9God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

WHO ARE YOU LORD??? Second part...

WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO???

- These are two questions that GO Hand in hand... WHat DOES The LORD have you to do???
- His authority is an AGAPE authority
- His commissioning is a communal call to be with Him!!

“Christian worldview / religion is the only one that your ID is RECEIVED NOT achieved... “- Tim Keller

Have you received this new identity in Christ as Lord? Is there any area you haven't given to him? Who is your Lord and what does He want you to do?