

I want to begin by asking you a question and I want you to notice two things when I ask it. First, your emotional reaction to the question. Second, how you would answer it. Here's the question: Who do you think you are? That's an intense question, isn't it? It can sound interested or accusatory, make us introspective, defensive, or discouraged. It's loaded. But it's a question we need to answer because how we answer it influences everything. That is not an overstatement.

What you think of yourself determines how you live your life.

Identity is a major topic of conversation these days. While much of the world looks inside themselves, relies on external identifiers like material success or demographics, or is stuck in past mistakes and family of origin, we believers have a different source. Our Maker has an answer, and His voice is the one that matters. His answer comes through the victory accomplished by Christ. The gospel says who we are and how we should live in light of that. However, there is another voice that inserts itself to answer that question falsely and derail our lives. We have an enemy who lies to prevent us from living into the salvation Christ has made possible. Thankfully, God gives us a piece of armor to thwart his attacks and stand firm.

[Ephesians 6:13-14a, 17a] ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand therefore... ¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation.

This morning we look at the last piece of armor, the helmet of salvation. Roman soldiers wore a *galea*, a metal helmet that covered their head, neck, and part of their face. Without it, they wouldn't last long in battle. It makes me think of taking my helmet off in football game. That wouldn't go well.

For the believer, we too are exposed without a helmet. What the brain is to the body, our mind is to our soul. Our mind is the control center of our lives and God gives us a helmet made of our salvation to protect it. **If the mind is good, the soul is good.** Romans 12 says "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind." The word mind is *nous*, and it means perspective, and God gives us the helmet of salvation to define that perspective.

This is not the only place the helmet of salvation shows up in Scripture. In Isaiah 59, God himself wears it as a sign of victory. When we put it on, we put on the victory, rescue, and protection that comes from the good news of Jesus. When we put it on, we let God answer the question "Who do you think you are?" One way he might answer it is this:

You are not who you once were.

You don't have to live like you once lived.

Your eternal destiny is not what it once was.

Now, that may be an odd way to define our salvation, but I present it that way because the devil attacks us by trying to convince us nothing has changed. God would disagree. So, this morning, we are going to consider how four different voices answer the question: the lies of Satan, and the truth from each member of the Trinity. When we listen to them, we put on the helmet of salvation, and are empowered to stand firm.

First, our Heavenly Father:

[Ephesians 1:3-6a] 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.

One of the great lies of Satan is to attack your self-worth. He accuses us of being an unlovable nobody, that we are unimportant, that no one cares for us, that we are on our own. He will take you back to your past and reinforce the messages given to you by parents, friends, teachers, etc. I remember counseling a lady who grew up with an emotionally abusive father who told her she was worthless, and she couldn't believe a perfect Heavenly Father could possibly think any different himself. Satan used that to rob her of any sense of worth and hijack her life. But that, and everything else the devil says, is a lie.

Satan may say you're a nobody, but God says you are a somebody. In fact, before time began, he had you in mind, knew you, chose you, and prepared to draw you to himself so that you could be with him forever. If you are a follower of Jesus, you are an adopted son or daughter of the King. In love, God makes you his own. And you are spoiled. God doesn't hold back. He pours out his blessing, starting primarily with himself. God is the Gospel, he is the greatest treasure we can be given, and he gives all of himself, and we can be that close to him because he has made us holy and blameless and worthy to be in his presence for all eternity.

Satan wants you to doubt that. He tells me I am a fraud, and everyone is going to figure it out one day. When I listen, when I take off the helmet, I forget what God says about me, strive to achieve, and see everyone as a conduit to my success. What is it for you? What are the lies? How are you responding? Are you striving to earn God's love? Are you in a relationship that you are using for affirmation, but you have no business being in? Have you isolated yourself or closed yourself off to everyone because you don't want to be rejected? None of that is true. When the question is asked "Who do you think you are?", the Father says "Mine!"

So what about the Son. What does Jesus have to say about us and our salvation?

[Ephesians 1:6b-10] 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.

Here Satan attacks by accusing us of being damaged goods. Your past is unforgivable, unovercomable. Nothing can make up for the unforgivable things you've done. They define you and own you. I remember a woman I knew a long time ago who had had an abortion when she was a teenager and could not get past it. She said, "God can never forgive me for that." Satan wants you to believe that, to believe you are beyond redemption, to cover you up with shame because he knows shame makes us hide. He wants you to believe you are still owned by your sin

and can't help yourself. He wants to get you to say "It's just who I am." But Jesus would disagree.

The moment you were conceived you were enslaved to sin and death, and there was a price tag attached to your soul. You know what it said? The blood of Christ. It was a price none of us could afford to pay, but it's a price Jesus willingly and joyfully paid for us. For the joy set before him, Jesus endured the cross. You know what that joy is? You. And through his sacrifice he paid for your sins. Jesus has paid our debt in full. God sees them no more. They are cast as far as east is from west. They no longer define you or control you. **That means the devil has nothing to use against you because God no longer holds anything against you.**

And you were not just saved from sin and death, but to a new life. Salvation takes care of our sins so we can live a life of purpose with and for God. I feel like a church should have a mission built around that! But to live a life of purpose puts a target on our back, so we have to put on the helmet to be free of the power of sin in our life and free to live with and for Christ.

What came to mind when I said sin from your past? Have you put on the helmet and let Jesus forgive it? For the sake of those struggling in this area, would you raise your hand if you are a sinner? Look around. You are in good company, and we are all here because we are just as bad off as you, we are just as desperate as you, all sinners in need of a savior. But if the Father knew you and chose you before time began, Jesus knew he came to save you specifically. When Jesus answers the question "Who do you think you are?" he answers, "Worth the cost". **You are so valuable to Jesus that he says you are worth dying for.** Greater love knows no one than this, that someone would lay down his life for his friend. That's what Jesus did for you because that's what Jesus thinks of you.

Finally, what does the Holy Spirit have to say about us and our salvation?

[Ephesians 1:13-14] ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Satan attacks us by trying to make us feel insecure. He makes us question the promise of heaven, that either it isn't real, God won't come through, or we're not really saved. He gets us to take our eyes off God and put them on present circumstances and troubles. Here comes monkeypox! Satan wants to steal that security from us so we begin to lose hope, feel exposed, and live in fear.

All of what the Father and Son say and do regarding our salvation is secured and guaranteed by the Holy Spirit. I reserved a cabin in Oklahoma in March and, at the time of reservation, I made down payment that guaranteed the cabin would be available to me when it was time. The Holy Spirit is the down payment that guarantees our eternal reward.

When you trusted in Christ you were sealed with God's Spirit. In biblical times letters were sent with a wax seal and an imprint unique to the sender. These seals identified ownership, protection (because if you broke the king's seal and weren't the intended recipient, you died), and genuineness. When you became a believer, God put his seal on you...not to keep the juices in,

but to declare you now belong to him, to seal you with his protection, particularly in times of spiritual warfare, and to testify that you are a genuine Christian.

[Romans 8:16] ¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

If the devil ever tries to get you to believe you are not saved, the Spirit is there to testify otherwise. Once you belong to God, you always belong to God, and his Spirit reminds us of that when the accuser comes to say it's not true. I'm always so moved and encouraged when I meet a fellow brother or sister in Christ who is close to the end but at total peace because they know where they are going. They are firmly wearing their helmet! The Bible says over 300 times "Do not fear" because if you belong to God, you have nothing to be afraid of. You are his, your eternity is secure, and the troubles of this life are temporary.

So how do we put on the helmet?

Tell your story. In warfare we have to know our enemy and what tactics he might use. Satan is crafty and wants to leverage your past to destroy your present. He wants to take you back to hard times, painful times, to tell you nothing has changed. The accusations you received, the rejection you felt, the pain you experienced he wants you to continue to be owned by it. We have to tell our stories to discover what those moments are and what agreements we have made. We have to determine what we are believing to be true even though God says it's not. This is not easy. It can be painful. It may take counseling, and we can help you find one. It will take a lot of prayer/prayer rooms. Tell it to yourself to start. And ask God to give you the courage to tell another loving believer. God has an invitation for you when you do.

Live into God's story. Your story is not the final chapter. God is authoring a story and you can be part of it. It tells you who you are now. But to live into the story you must know the story. God has given us his Word to answer the question "Who do you think you are?" If we don't read it, we're forced to make it up on our own. But when we do, in it are the words of life. Every time you read this book to ask God to help you answer that question, you are putting on the helmet of salvation.

Preach the Gospel to yourself and others...often. You want to put on the helmet of salvation? Tell the story of salvation to yourself and to others. Preach it constantly. The devil is persistent but God's Good News endures. We need each other when the attacks come. I was so encouraged at our Covenant Member Gathering last Sunday because everyone who shared what God was up to in their lives shared about the community they are a part of. We can't fight this battle alone. Oftentimes, we need someone to put the helmet on our head for us.

So, who do you think you are? I have the answer for you. **You are who God says you are.** And so, this morning, we are going to close by sitting in what God says about you. Noah will play over us and I want you to focus on the text on the screen. On it will be the answer God has to that all-important question. On it will be the good news of the Gospel. On it will be the glory of our salvation. Let God speak into your hearts and cover your minds. He wants to meet you in this moment.

God says you are:

Loved

**Fearfully and
wonderfully made**

A child of God

Saved by grace

Bought with a price

Chosen

Adopted

Born of God

Born again

Friend

Child of light

At peace with God

Reconciled

Forgiven

Justified

Declared righteous

Holy and blameless

No longer condemned

Sealed and secure

Set apart

Complete

Free

Comforted and counseled

United to the Lord

Rooted in Christ

Seated with Christ

Joint heir with Christ

Christ's ambassador

**Commissioned,
empowered, and sent**

Salt and light

A bearer of fruit

A temple of Holy Spirit

**A member of Christ's
body**

A living stone

A holy priesthood

A Kingdom citizen

A citizen of Heaven

Destined for glory