

## *What is Our Identity in Christ?*

1. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines identity as, “The distinguishing character or personality of an individual.”

2. That definition begs an obvious question. What is my identity? I expect most of us have been in a conference breakout group and had the moderator say, “Introduce yourself.” What are the most frequent replies?

3. Now let’s change the scene to the pastor’s office. What would you say to his question, “What is your identity in Christ?” Before you answer let’s look at the following passage from the Bible.

a. Isaiah 43:1 states, “But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: ‘Fear not, for **I have redeemed you**; I have called you by name, **you are mine.**’”

b. What is your identity in Christ?

c. What does it mean to redeem something or someone?

d. How does Isaiah 43:1 compare with the Merriam-Webster definition of identity?

5. In 2 Corinthians 5:17-20 Paul explains, “Therefore, **if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation**. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. <sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and **gave us the ministry of reconciliation**; <sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> Therefore, **we are ambassadors for Christ**, God making his appeal through us.”

a. Note: Corinthians 5:17 is the founding verse of AIC. Verse 17 says that a believer is a new creation. What was the old creation?

b. Why did the old creation need replacing?

c. According to verse 18 who is the source of our new creation?

d. Verse 20 tells us that, “We are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.” What does it mean to be an ambassador? According to the second half of verse 20, how are we to be used by God in his plan to advance His kingdom?

6. 1 John 3:1 says, “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that **we should be called children of God; and so we are**. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.”

- a. The first half of verse 1 is more of a forceful statement than a question.
- b. Why don't more people know God?
- c. What does 2 Corinthians 5:20 (above) say is God's strategy for combating this problem?

7. 1 Peter 2:9-12 speaks directly to our identity in Christ, "But you are a **chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession**, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, I urge **you as sojourners and exiles** to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. <sup>12</sup> Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation."

- a. These words were, of course, originally directed to the Jewish nation and the Hebrew people. But they can and should be applied to all believers. We know this because, as we just read in John 3:1, "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God." **So we, as children of God, are heirs to the promises of God.**
- b. A Jewish idiom is to express emphasis by repeating a word or phrase. What is Peter emphasizing in verse 9 where he wrote, "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession?"
- c. According to verse 9 what is the purpose of God calling us out of darkness into his marvelous light?
- d. Verse 11 calls us "sojourners and exiles." What does this mean in terms of how we are to view our time and our lives here on this earth?
- e. How does that fact that we are sojourners and exiles here on earth speak to our identity in Christ?

8. Our true identity in Christ is not just some minor issue in the Bible tucked away in a few obscure places. Our identity in Christ is a major theme in the Bible occupying the most prominent locations. Consider the following passages recorded as the very beginning of the Bible and at the very end of the Bible.

- a. Our identity in Christ is stated in the very first chapter of the Bible in **Genesis 1:26**, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'"

b. Our identity in Christ is summed up in the last chapter of the last book of the Bible by John. **Revelation 22:14**, “Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.”