

“Missing Identity”

Who are you? Merriam Webster defines identity as “the distinguishing character or personality of an individual.” Our identities can have many different aspects and layers. But the key question is, what defines you when everything else is stripped away? What is that most critical thing that makes you, you?

If we are finding too much meaning and value in something that we do, we can feel like we are losing ourselves when circumstances are not going well. **Do we tend to view ourselves largely as successful employees, effective parents, a loving husband or wife, good friends, or even fruitful Christians?** The answer to this question can become evident by our emotions in difficult times as there is so much changing and so many challenges that face us every day.

The reality **is every Christian is united to Christ and our foundational identity is based in Him.** Second Corinthians 5:17 says “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” Galatians 2:20 says “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” And John 15:5 says “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”

But what if we find ourselves forgetting this identity? What if we find ourselves becoming focused on other, lesser aspects of ourselves such that **our identity in Christ goes missing from our conscious thought?** This is why it is so critical to preach the gospel to ourselves over and over again even after we have been saved.

For me, I have “known” this for as long as I can remember. However, a part of me was hung up as I envisioned preaching the gospel only as imagining myself as unsaved and reminding myself how much I needed Christ for salvation. And while this was certainly true, **I was missing a key part of the gospel I can preach to myself as a Christian. It is not just about who I was, but who I am now; the new identity Christ has given me in Him** based on what He has already done. Forgetting to preach this part of the gospel to ourselves on a regular basis can easily result in a case of missing identity.

So **what are some identity truths we can preach to ourselves?** One of my favorite passages on this topic is Ephesians 1. Consider how verse four tell us “he **chose us in him** before the foundation of the world.” God has united us to Christ by His sovereign choice; nothing can change or reverse our belonging in Christ because it does not depend on us. Verse five tell us “he predestined us for **adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ.**” He hasn’t just made us a peasant in His kingdom, but He has brought us into His very own family. Verse seven tells us “**In him** we have **redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses.**” Our greatest problem has already been solved in Christ as we are free from the wrath of God. Verse eleven tells us “**In him** we have **obtained an inheritance.**” This world is not all we have as we share the eternal inheritance Christ has earned. And verse thirteen tell us “**In him** you also, [...] were **sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.**” We are not alone even here on earth as we have been given a companion, God with us, who is with us now as a down payment until the time we are with Christ in His kingdom forever.

I think a common attack of sin and Satan is an attempt to deceive us into believing we are defined by what we do. So my encouragement to us all is to **remember who we are by preaching the gospel to ourselves; recounting our identity in Christ** that will never change or be lost no matter what good or bad things happen here on earth.

Jacob