

Sermon: Who AM I?

Scripture: 1 Peter 2:9-10 and 2
Corinthians 5:20

There is a really good movie called the “Bourne Identity,” starring Matt Damon. It’s about a top-secret military project of the government in which governmental officials change the identity of selected individuals without their full consent so that they can use them to accomplish their military purposes.

One of these individuals is named Jason Bourne. Jason begins to have flashbacks of who he really is. When the government discovers that he is beginning to remember his past identity, they do everything in their power to kill him to protect the highly secretive project from being leaked to the public.

This movie is filled with action and suspense, it also deals with a basic question that many are struggling to answer. That question is, “Who am I?”

I have concluded, after conversations, watching, and observing the lives of others, and even looking at my own life. Each of us at one point or another have allowed outside influences to shape our identity. External influences like individual experiences, relationships, culture, media, and the world around us. In error these things or so we thought gave us a sense of identity.

If we examine ourselves it would be safe to say that all these things have had influence on us. These things have shaped who we were or are at one point or another.

Let me say it again this way.

We are constantly defining or redefining who we are by experiences, relationships, culture, media, and the world around us..

A wise person once said that if you don't know who you are, someone will tell you.

I believe that the marketing industry has tapped into this realization. So, they strategically kraft commercials and advertisements to help us define who we should be. But only according to their standards, NOT God's.

Remember the commercial, Choosy moms choose Jiff? That's to say, if you are a smart mom, a choosy mom, then you will choose Jiff.

What about the Levi advertisement that pushed the message: If you are *really* country, then you'll wear Levi Jeans.

Or, If you are *really* wealthy, you'll drive a Lexus.

All these things are alluding to answer the big question. Who am I?

Striving to give a sense of identity.

Often, we feel pressured to define ourselves by our financial status, education, jobs, appearances, and/or even the people we are connected to. Most of us care about what people think or are saying about us. Many of us try to live up to the expectations of others. We do this as a means of fighting to establish our identity.

But what happens to our identity when we experience failure?

What happens to our identity when we can no longer live up to the expectations of others?

What happens to our identity when situations and circumstances of life turn for the worse?

What happens to our identity when we become burned out in our jobs or place of service?

If our identity is wrapped up in the things mentioned earlier than the very foundation of our identity is shaken and altered, resulting in one scrabbling to redefine one's self by something or someone else.

But this struggle for identity is nothing new to God. As a matter of fact, Peter struggled with his identity and it was only after he discovered it in Christ, he became confident and clear to know who he is.

So, I want to encourage you with these words, “you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”

Paul, says in 2 Corinthians 5:20: “You are God’s Ambassadors.”

What does all this mean?

You are chosen by God therefore your identity is found in HIM!

That was good!

That was a great opportunity for every disgruntled, discontented, dissatisfied, and displeased person trying to find their identity to give God praise.

If you didn't know before. Now you know. Our identity is found in God!

I invite you to **write that down** and make it personal: **“My identity is found in God!”**

A couple of months ago, I got a new phone. Because I've had an iPhone before I didn't read the instruction manual that came with the phone. So, there were a lot of functions to the new phone that I was not familiar with.

Which meant that my phone was not being used to full capacity because I didn't read the manual.

Here's what I learned and many of you already know this. When you buy a new product or service it comes with an instruction manual or a booklet that says read this first. These books are filled with descriptions of the product or service. Valuable and important information like how to assemble the thing and how to care for the product. The manual is the heart (purpose) of the manufacturer concerning the product.

It's the manufacturer's intention of what the product is capable of. It tells us what each button, screw or tab is for.

But most of the time what do we do? We ignore the manual. Push or toss it to the

side and just start tinkering with the thing.

Sometimes we try to put the thing together by looking at the pictures to find that we have extra screws, or we just start using the product or services without learning about the product or service. Okay, maybe that's just me.

But the reason the manufacturer gives us the manual is because the successful use of the product or services protects the reputation (or the Name) of the manufacturer. They are the authority of the product they produced. Therefore, they know and understand the intention and the full potential of the product or services in which they produced. Because they are the ones that created it. They are the authority.

When the manufacturer or the authority tells us something, we can count on it. They are the ones who put their name on the thing. They know and understand the purpose in which they created the thing. They are the authority.

God is the authority on who we are. He is our Creator. He gives us the correct information. He is the one we should be listening to about who we are. Both Peter and Paul discovered that and shares that information with us. Not only them but all throughout the Bible men and women discovered that God is the Authority. And as believers in Jesus Christ, He informs us of who we are. The purpose in which we are created.

Write this down: “I Am chosen by God”
... in an instant we went from nothing to

something, from rejected to accepted" (1 Peter 2:9-10, The Message). Most of us spend our entire lives trying to earn acceptance. We sought it from our parents, peers, partners. We sought acceptance from people we respect and people who got on our nerves. Our desire to be accepted influenced our style of clothing, the cars we drive, the houses we live in, and even the career path we chose.

Why are we so driven by acceptance? Because we love the feeling of acceptance. We love to know that someone has chosen and accepted us. And when we are rejected it leaves us baffled and confused.

Remember playing sports as a kid? When I was growing up, we used to play

sports like football, kickball, basketball and sometimes baseball. We would divide up into teams. Usually the two best players would be the captains and they would pick their teams. I remember thinking "I hope I get picked by this team, because they are the winning team." If you were chosen by that team, remember how great you felt to be chosen by the best player? On the other hand, remember how bad you felt when they got down to the last two or three and you still were not chosen? That feeling of rejection lowers a person's self-esteem.

Isn't it good to know that you are chosen by God!

He calls us "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people."

You are chosen!

Paul the apostle says it like this in **2 Corinthians 5:20** *“You are an ambassador of Christ.”*

Write this down: “I am an ambassador of Christ.”

Ambassadors are very impressive people. They have clearly been chosen very carefully. They have all been trained in the art of diplomacy. They are skilled at representing their country both by how they act and what they say.

Each week it has been my prayer that we are doers of God’s word and not just hearers.

So, hear me and let’s put some action to it! **Write this down: “As an**

Ambassador, it is important how I act and what I say.”

So, let us start acting like God says we should and saying things that line up with God’s word.

To be an ambassador is an immense privilege. An ambassador is ‘a minister of the highest rank sent to a foreign court to represent the... sovereign or country.’

The Greek word translated as ‘ambassador’ is *presbeuo*. It shares the same root as ‘presbyter’, which is one of the words used to describe church leaders. Whether you are in a recognized leadership role or not. Remember that we learned a couple of weeks ago that we all have our sphere of influence, therefore, you are an ambassador of

Christ. You represent HIM. I'm talking to the believers.

As an Ambassador you are extended extraordinary privileges and responsibility of representing Jesus in this world. You are God's representative on earth. The question then becomes, *"How are you representing HIM?"* Do people love to see you come or go?

Do you bring life to situations or death by your negativity?

We are called as ambassadors to be a blessing to one another, our communities, our cities and to the uttermost parts of the world. We are blessed in order to be a blessing to the whole world.

That we may proclaim the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

But there are times when things seem not to connect between knowing these truths about who God says we are and living them out. This can be affected by how we see ourselves, life experiences and the ways we allow the world to define us.

If we are going to live out the fullness of our new identity in Christ, we must believe what God says. If there is a problem with that, we must identify what it is that is keeping us from doing so.

This changes from one person to another.

False beliefs can wedge its way between the identity that God gives us, and the one that we give ourselves. This can be a result of life experiences that cause us to

feel impure and guilty. We see ourselves that way, so we believe God sees us that way. We, then, create and live out of an identity that God never intended for us too. Our beliefs and our actions line up with the flawed beliefs we carry, which are contrary to God's.

Write this Down: “I believe God!”

According to Ephesians 1,

- . We are Accepted not Rejected.
- . We are free and not in bondage.
- . We are God's own covered by His Grace, not condemned under the law.
- . We are adopted as His own, not orphaned left to fend for ourselves.

We are God's

chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that

we may proclaim the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light; we were once were not a people but are now the people of God, covered by His mercy.”

We are God’s Ambassadors.”

Sometimes, the lie is connected to a very real, painful experience. So, I want to encourage you to invite God into the place of brokenness. Surrender the lie over to Him, pray that He will help you believe the truth about who He says that you are.

A chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people.

For the next 30 days.