

Series Title: At the Crossroad: From false beliefs to Freedom

Sermon Title: Week 8: The identity of Freedom!

Date: 11-24-19

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– **OK.. it's been at least a few years since I've used a reference from my favorite movie... THE MATRIX... scene where NEO is seeing the Oracle- even though he doesn't understand, she is speaking to him about his identity... points to a sign that says...**

† **Temet nosce**

- **Latin "Know Thyself" – know who you are.**
- **LAST WEEK we walked through the two stages of identity common to every human.... SHAME IDENTITY, the empty self, separated from God, that we all are born with- evidenced by the instinct we have, even as children, to HIDE any time we think we've done something wrong or not measured up.**
- **Because we are born with this shame identity, we try to cover it up with our EXTERNAL IDENTITY- developed over our lives, comprised of all the different things WE DO, WE DID, DONE TO US, SAID TO US. This is performance based Identity that seeks to find its affirmation from others.**
- **BOTH OF THESE IDENTITIES, ULTIMATELY, will fail us, because they are based upon things that are temporary, fragile, and beyond our control. It is in efforts to maintain this external identity that the enemy convinces us of the FALSE BELIEFS...**
- **BUT THEN, we saw that IN CHRIST there is another option, the alternative for which God designed us in the first place, and the hope- the NEW LIFE- NEW IDENTITY that Christ came, lived, died, and rose again that we may receive and experience. AT THE CORE of our NEW IDENTITY in Christ –where used to be our spiritually dead human self- now dwells the SPIRIT OF CHRIST- THE HOLY SPIRIT- that every believer receives FULLY when they first place faith in Christ...**
- **TODAY we are looking at what this NEW SELF- WHO WE REALLY ARE –TRUE OF US IN CHRIST- what this looks like, why it is so absolutely incredible, and why it matters so much that we understand. START, as Pete does in book, with analogy of A SEED.**

† **Seeds**

- **Why a seed? A seed ALWAYS becomes what it already is. Favorite seed when I was a kid- ACORN. Mostly threw them at my sister and her friends, but no matter what that acorn goes through, if it is planted, it will grow into an OAK.**
- **BEFORE A SEED CAN GROW, something has to happen. The seed has to die. It dies to being defined by it's shell- so the life already within can grow, bloom, become its new identity, new life.**

**John 12:24** *Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.*

- **Jesus giving powerful spiritual picture- for the new life to come- Life Jesus would describe as ABUNDANT LIFE- the shell has to pass away. He goes on (v25) to say that if we try to save our old life- continue to find source of life in external things- we will actually lose life, but if our life is IN HIM, we will find the Life God created us to receive.**
- **OUR SHELL IDENTITY is our identity of externals. As we explored last week, many of our externals are GOOD THINGS, but THEY ARE TEMPORARY. NOT INTENDED TO BE SOURCE OF LIFE, and they will NEVER SUSTAIN US. They are PERSISHABLE.**
- **CONTRASTED is seed of the NEW LIFE Christ gives us, life that is IMPERISHABLE- identity that is eternal**

**1 Peter 1:23** *For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.*

- **SO-believer... WHO ARE YOU? Contrast identity of externals to the TRUTH OF who you are in Christ.**

✠ Who are you? The identity of externals contrasted with *Identity In Christ*.

- Old me: I am what I EARN. *In Christ*, I am what I am GIVEN
- **External identity is achieved. FB of performance based acceptance.**
- **IN CHRIST our life/identity is received, by faith.**

**Revelation 22:17** *The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let the one who hears say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.*

- Old me: My identity is the FINISH LINE
- **Human condition is that ONE DAY I’ll become who I want to be. If I work hard enough, overcome my problems, gain right social status, relationships- pray enough, religious enough... Then I’ll be who I should be- then I can be at peace with who I am. PROBLEM- we never get there. Finish line always moves. RUN.**

*In Christ, fullness of identity is where I START.*

**Colossians 2:9-10** *For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,<sup>10</sup> and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. **COMPLETENESS.***

- **But wait, doesn’t scripture talk about the christian life as running a race? YES.**

**Hebrews 12:1-2** *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us,<sup>2</sup> fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.*

- **The race we see here is the marathon of the christian life, and our FAITH- the source of WHO WE ARE, is BEGUN and FINISHED by Christ. Christ, our source of LIFE and IDENTITY, is always with us.**
- **CIRCUMSTANCES of life, our externals, are always changing, but CHRIST, as our life, is CONSTANT.**
- Old me: My identity is always CHANGING. *In Christ*, my identity is CONSTANT

**1 Peter 1:23-25** *For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. **(Now Peter describes reality of external identity)** For, “All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord **(Not just scripture, but very presence of Christ In us)** endures forever.”*

- **Press a bit deeper here. Our identity in Christ is constant, unchanging, because Jesus is constant, unchanging. BUT, our EXPERIENCE of his presence can change.**
- **Pete uses example of apple tree. Two seeds- one in Nevada desert, the other in Michigan. Desert tree, with little moisture, is scrawny, while Michigan Orchard tree grows, health, flourishes. IS ONE LESS OR MORE OF APPLE TREE? NO! Both 100% apple trees, both same DNA, but one is HEALTHY because it is rooted in GOOD SOIL.**
- **In our lives as believers, it is possible to be like that desert apply tree, spiritually unhealthy, bearing very little fruit, because we plant ourselves in shallow soil. We aren’t spiritually nourished.**
- **What is it that nourishes us?**
  - **GOD’S WORD. SCRIPTURE!**
  - **FELLOWSHIP OF BELIEVERS.**
  - **WORSHIP. PRAYER. GRATITUDE**
  - **SERVICE, GENEROSITY. KINDNESS HELPING OTHERS.**
  - **Integrity, obedience.**

- **PHILIPPIANS 4.** “whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things!
- **KEY!! THESE THINGS DO NOT MAKE US A BELIEVER. THEY don’t increase our identity- they don’t give us MORE of CHRIST! BUT they are gifts of God for our growth- to become DISCIPLES. They are the rich soil God provides to enable us to grow, flourish, into the fuller expression- experience- of who we already are IN HIM.**
- **Leads to the GREAT TRUTH OF NEW COV...**

- Old me: My identity is all about ME.

- **Even if I’m naturally caring, generous person, my old identity is still just drawn from myself, and self-centeredness is defining characteristic of humanity**
- **BUT!!!! IN CHRIST**

**In Christ, my identity is in UNION with CHRIST**

- **We are often taught that we are to live our life FOR CHRIST. But that’s not a new testament concept. Four times. BUT, IN CHRIST... almost 100 times.**
- **“IN”- Greek concept- inseparable from, connected together, sharing life- mother and baby in womb. UNION. This is the image the GOOD NEWS TR gives**

**Galatians 3:26-28 (GNT)** *It is through faith that all of you are God's children in union with Christ Jesus. <sup>27</sup> You were baptized into union with Christ, and now you are clothed... with the life of Christ himself. <sup>28</sup> So there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free people, between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ Jesus.*

**2 Peter 1:4** *Through these (Glory and Goodness) he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature **(God's nature – identity- is shared with us)***

**Ephesians 2:10** *For we/YOU are God’s handiwork/MASTERPIECE, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

- **Hear God saying... I CREATED YOU! YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL, YOU ARE MINE. I created you for a purpose, to express my life, my goodness, through you in the unique way I’ve created you. YOU DON’T BECOME MINE BY PERFORMANCE, RATHER, YOU AND I WILL WORK TOGETHER AS EXPRESSION OF WHO I’VE ALREADY MADE YOU TO BE.**
- **REALITY!!! Everything about life in this world tells us that we ARE what we DO. Do well, are well... BUT!**

- When our Identity is In Christ, what we DO flows from who we ARE

- **SO! BELIEVER! DO YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE!**

✠ **The glorious truth of who I AM in Christ!**

- **For every blank- write you name.**

**I, NAME, am a living temple of the Living God.**

**Romans 8:19** *Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?*

**I, NAME, am an essential part of Christ's body.**

**1 Corinthians 12:27** *Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*

**I, NAME, am a New Creation!**

*2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!*

**I, NAME, am indwelled by Christ, He is my life.**

*Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.*

**I, NAME, am God's creative masterpiece!**

*Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand for us to do*

**I, NAME, am in the presence of God, right now.**

*Ephesians 2:6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus*

**I, NAME, am chosen, holy, and dearly loved by God.**

*Colossians 3:12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved...*

**I, NAME, am chosen, royalty, holy, and God's special possession!**

*1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

**I, NAME, am chosen, holy, and blameless.**

*Ephesians 1:4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.*

**I, NAME, am free from condemnation, sin, and death**

**I, NAME, am alive in Christ and have no fear of death!**

*Romans 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.*

**I, NAME, am complete, I lack nothing.**

*Colossians 2:9-10 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, <sup>10</sup> and in Christ you have been brought to fullness.*

- **EACH DAY THIS WEEK. Stand before mirror, and outloud, say these statements. Take time, look up scriptures, read them in context. SEE THIS TRUTH!**
- **When we see this, a common response is “this seems prideful! I can’t say this about myself!” REALITY is that it is prideful to say we are anything other than who God says we are.**
- **The reason this won’t lead to pride, arrogance, is when we know that all of this is true of us because CHRIST is the author, sustainer, source, of life, NOT US, and nothing around us. HE IS THE SOURCE, AND HIS IS THE GLORY.**

✠ **In Christ, I AM because HE IS!**

- **And because of WHO HE IS, IN HIM, IN CHRIST, the TRUTH OF YOUR IDENTITY IS THAT you are God’s masterpiece, and you are worth BEING, KNOWING, and LOVING.**
- **DO YOU BELIEVE IT!?**