

March 30, 2014

## Our Identification In Jesus #2

Pastor Charles Mendenhall

Our identity - who are we? The challenge or war comes with the new birth and we begin to see ourselves differently because of Jesus. We once were in the kingdom of darkness and now we are put into the kingdom of light. The old man versus the new man, the unrenewed mind wars against the new birth or new creation that we have become. Many people even though they are on their way to heaven, never realize who they are in Jesus, claiming to be old sinners saved by grace, but this is not true, we are new creations. The enemy wants to continually confuse us, causing us to have a confused life style, never knowing who we are, constantly up and down in our daily walk. Identity is always connected to our behavior, we cannot continue to live or deal with our past, or we will find ourselves identifying to the old kingdom of darkness. Changing our identity is through the renewing of our minds. We must know who we are in Jesus Christ.

We are identified with different groups of people, through our names, our culture, our skin color, our speech or the way we dress. Our identity must not come through these things, but eventually our identity must come through Jesus Christ and what he has done for us.

2 Cor 5:17 "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." KJV

2 Cor 5:17 "Therefore if any person is [ingrafted] in Christ (the Messiah) he is a new creation (a new creature altogether); the old [previous moral and spiritual condition] has passed away. Behold, the fresh *and* new has come!" AMP

2 Cor 5:17 "This means that our knowledge of men can no longer be based on their outward lives (indeed, even though we knew Christ as a man we do not know him like that any longer). For if a man is in Christ he becomes a new person altogether—the past is finished and gone, everything has become fresh and new." PHILLIPS

The spirit on the inside of us was dead before we were born again, but when we accepted Jesus Christ, the spirit came alive in us. Paul tells us in Romans, that if we just cry out to God, He will deliver and save us. We are moved into the kingdom of light, it is unfamiliar to us, we don't know what to do or how to behave or what to expect. We have been trained in the kingdom of darkness not forgiving or walking in love. In the new kingdom we learn to forgive and walk in love.

We are new creatures, we are a new creation on the inside and we are something brand new that wasn't before. Our soul and our bodies in order to become in agreement with the new man on the inside must be renewing our mind, it is a continual process, it is like maintenance on a vehicle or a home, and it never stops.

The first three chapters of Ephesians teach who we are in Christ, how we have been made to sit with Jesus in heavenly places, all things are under our feet and we are victorious in Him. He is the head of the body, we are the body and when Jesus was raised, and His body was raised with Him. The balance of the book of Ephesians deal with practical Christianity, walking out this new life and what we have become in Him. Truth is in Jesus, Jesus and the Word are one. The bible is not a religious book, but the covenant that God has made with man. This is where we will find the truth.

Eph 4:20-24 "But you did not so learn Christ! 21 Assuming that you have really heard Him *and* been taught by Him, as [all] Truth is in Jesus [embodied and personified in Him], 22 Strip yourselves of your former nature [put off and discard your old unrenewed self] which characterized your previous manner of life and becomes corrupt through lusts *and* desires that spring from delusion; 23 And be constantly renewed in the spirit of your mind [having a fresh mental and spiritual attitude], 24 And put on the new nature (the regenerate self) created in God's image, [Godlike] in true righteousness and holiness." AMP

When we hear the message of faith, it will always bring a measure of responsibility to us, but many times we do not like responsibility, it can be challenging to not get grace mixed up with works. True change and true actions come as inward change, becoming outward change later. We are saved by grace through faith, not by works. Jesus accepts us just like we are, regardless of how bad we might be or have been. We are predestined to be conformed into His likeness and image.

Col 3:5 "So kill (deaden, deprive of power) the evil desire lurking in your members [those animal impulses and all that is earthly in you that is employed in sin]: sexual vice, impurity, sensual appetites, unholy desires, and all greed *and* covetousness, for that is idolatry (the deifying of self and other created things instead of God)." AMP

Col 3:7-10 "Among whom you also once walked, when you were living in *and* addicted to [such practices]. 8 But now put away *and* rid yourselves [completely] of all these things: anger, rage, bad feeling toward others, curses *and* slander, and foulmouthed abuse *and* shameful

utterances from your lips! 9 Do not lie to one another, for you have stripped off the old (unregenerate) self with its evil practices, 10 And have clothed yourselves with the new [spiritual self], which is [ever in the process of being] renewed and remolded into [fuller and more perfect knowledge upon] knowledge after the image (the likeness) of Him Who created it." AMP

Let us no longer be identified with the kingdom of darkness. Go to another level and be identified with the kingdom of light. God does not remember our past, we are the ones who bring it up. We must learn to let it go and be free because of what Jesus did for us. We are no longer the person we used to be. As we begin to identify our place in Jesus, the things that once controlled us begin to lose their power over us. Deliverance is usually little by little, as we renew our minds. We must break old habits or patterns of behavior and learn new habits along with the fruit of the Spirit.

Gal 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." KJV

Paul taught that the people didn't have any identity, but now that God had chosen them, their identity came through Jesus.

Eph 1:3-5 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will," KJV

God, the Father is viewing us through the finished work of His Son Jesus. We may not appear to be blessed outwardly, but God sees us blessed through Jesus. We are a blessed people, we weren't chosen because we did things right, but we were chosen before the foundation of the world. God is not keeping track of the things we do wrong, the only sin that the unbeliever will be judged for, will be refusing to accept Jesus. We were adopted into the family when we received Jesus as our Savior, this is sonship. Adopted means that we have all the things that go with adoption, a new name, we will take care of and all our needs will be met. We can now call God, Father, Abba or our daddy, terms that sons/daughters can call their father, our identity is not in the past, we have been given new names because of the adoption.

In the Old Testament, the sixth chapter of the book of Judges, a man named Gideon did not know his identity. Because of the people refusing to accept God's blessings, they had allowed their enemies to over run their country. The prophet and then an angel came to Gideon, telling him that he was to be a deliverer, that would help to set his people free. Gideon had trouble believing that he was to be

the one, he had a very low self image, his family was very poor and he was not a leader. But God used him to deliver the people and destroy the enemy around them. (Read the 6th chapter of Judges for the full story). During a process of time Gideon took on a new identity.

In changing identities, no one has changed theirs as much as Paul. Paul said he forgot those things behind and reached forward to those things ahead.

2 Cor 7:2 "Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man." KJV

If we can begin to change our identity from the old life style, into a new life style identifying ourselves with Jesus, through the renewing our minds, there will be no limits of what we can become. Our past will not determine our futures. God's plan and purpose for us has never and will never change. It is one of greatness!