

Identity in Christ

Introduction: Identity is very popular today. People want to be known, not as they are, but how they feel or view themselves. Men identifying as women, women identifying as men. Sadly, we have people identifying as Christians when they're the farthest thing from it. That hits closer to home that we really care to admit.

Throughout the first letter of Peter, he writes to Christians to remind them of their identity in Christ. They belong to God and their lives must reflect their identity in Christ. For a few moments this morning, I would like to consider our identity in Christ and why it is so important for us to embrace our spiritual identity.

I. The Family of God:

- A. Throughout the first chapter, Peter emphasizes that we are part of a family relationship:
 - 1. Born again to a living hope: 1:3-4 (more than baptism. Born of God. We look like God and enjoy an inheritance.
 - 2. Conduct ourselves as obedient children: 1:14
 - 3. Reflect the image of God that resides within us: 1:15-16
 - 4. If you address God as Father: 1:17
 - 5. We have been purchased by the precious blood of Christ: 1:18-19
 - 6. We are born anew as God's seed has been placed within us: 1:22-23
 - 7. Since we have been born of God, we long for the seed which we bear: 2:1-3
- B. Peter, then, is reminding Christians that though they are a part of the roman empire, their true allegiance and loyalty lies with God as part of the family of God. Paul then carries the identity concept to that of a kingdom.

II. God's Own People:

- A. We are living stones:
 - 1. Jesus is described as a living stone who is chosen and precious in the sight of God: 2:4
 - 2. We are living stones who are being built up as a spiritual house: 2:5
 - 3. Peter continues to describe Jesus as the chief cornerstone. To those who reject Him, He is stone of stumbling, to those who believe He is precious: 2:6-8
 - 4. All of this builds to Christian's true identity in Christ, which echoes the covenant Israel made on Mt. Sinai: Exodus 19:5-6
- B. A chosen race: Galatians 3:29, Deuteronomy 7:6-7
- C. A royal priesthood: 1 Peter 2:5
- D. A holy nation: cf. Exodus 19:6
- E. A people for God's own possession: Titus 2:14, John 10:27-30
- F. Chosen as heralds: 1 Peter 2:9

III. Identity Matters:

- A. Peter is writing to these Christians about their identity in Christ because they're facing persecution and it will only get worse. History would suggest that these Christians were not being killed at this point, but they were being maligned for the allegiance to Christ: cf. 2:12, 4:4
- B. We live in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. We face a daily assault from the world in an effort to tear us away from Christ and it's only going to get worse.
- C. Peter addresses the real answer to the problem of persecution. We live as exiles in a foreign land: 1:1, 2:11
 - 1. The patriarchs considered themselves to be exiles living in a foreign land: Hebrews 11:13, 16
 - 2. The righteous shall live by faith: Habakkuk 2:4, Hebrews 10:38
- D. The reality is, our identity is rooted in suffering for Christ:
 - 1. The New Testament makes no effort to sugar coat this reality: Acts 8:1, 2 Timothy 3:12
 - 2. Paul states that the comfort that God gives is related to sharing in the suffering of Christ: 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

Conclusion: Our identity in Christ must impact every aspect of our lives. God is not a part of our lives, He is our life. For too many Christianity is just something they do instead of who they are. We must live in a way that reflects that identity. There are so many folks who proudly claim their identity as an American citizen and passionately defend that. If we could have half as much passion about our identity in Christ, we would be far better off as God's people. Let us embrace our identity as God's people and allow that to transform every part of our lives.