

Identity Part 9

Ephesians 3:12 - I am Accepted

Intro: It happened one day at Buckingham Palace – A young boy who desperately NEEDED to see the King

A) Came to the Gate was met by the Guards - asked if he had an appointment – **No – so he was refused – He begged - he pleaded - Emergency**

B) **Walked away in tears** – Well-dressed young man came up

C) **That Story is a good illustration of the verses that we are considering tonight**

1) **Final IN CHRIST statement** – Blessings and Benefits that belong to us because we have been placed IN CHRIST

D) **Tonight we are considering 3 verses that all share the same truth and they build upon each other rather nicely**

Eph 2:13

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Eph 2:18 Answers the Question brought near to where!

18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

Eph 3:12 Adds: ***12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.***

Consider first Eph 2:13 – The Phrase Far off was a common Jewish term used in rabbinical writings to describe Gentiles

A) Those who were far away from the true God

B) Jews, on the other hand, considered themselves and their converts to be brought near to God because of their **covenant relation to Him**

1) And the presence of His Temple in Jerusalem.

C) **But in reality the Bible declares that all were separated Sin**

Now in this section of Chapter 2 Paul is building on the fact that in Christ – Both Jews and Gentiles are being fit together as one Body in Christ

A) **No Distinctions of race – no distinctions of background**

B) **In Christ every person, Jew & Gentile alike, is brought near to God by the blood of Christ.**

Bb) **And that nearness is not an external, ceremonial, dispensational, or geographical - nearness**

1) But is a **spiritual intimacy** with God thru Our Lord Jesus Christ

C) **And Because in Christ the great foundational barrier of sin has been removed, every other barrier has been removed as well.**

1) We now can draw near to God!!!

Think about how radical those words must have Sounded to Paul's Jewish ears - The Hebrews relationship to God was one of Distance

A) **When the Children of Israel camped in the wilderness – they would set up the Tabernacle in the Middle of the Camp – put their tents around it.**

B) **The Tabernacle was a tent that set inside of a fenced courtyard – 45 ft. long – 15 ft. high – 15 ft. wide**

1) 2 Compartments Holy Place – Holy of Holies – separated by a Veil

C) **It was there in the Holy of Holies that the presence of God dwelt!!!! The ACCESS into that room – happened once a year – Yom Kippur – Atone**

D) **Now the normal Jewish person – was allowed to come into that fenced area but they could not go farther than the Altar – Sacrifice was offered**

1) After the Sacrifice was offered the priest would wash his hands in a brass washing Basin – **go into the Holy Place – 1st compartment – offer prayers**

E) But he wouldn't go near the 2nd compartment – God's glory dwelt

1) So as a Hebrew, that was as close you could get to God – just inside the fence – **watch the Priest – Sacrifice – go in**

Now let's say that you were a Moabite – you came riding up to the camp of Israel on your camel – Notice this tent inside this fence

A) Ask what is that – you would be told that is the Tabernacle – that is where God dwells

B) *Wow, I would like to see Him / Can't / You have to be a Jew to even enter in thru this fence into the court yard – Bummer*

1) Only those from the tribe of Levi the Priestly tribe actually get to enter into the Tabernacle itself

C) So your distance was even farther – You couldn't even enter into the courtyard

So v. 13 of Chapter 2 tells us what happened to us through Christ – we have been brought near to God

A) V.18 and v. 13 of Chapter 3 tell us about the manner of that Nearness

B) WE NOW HAVE ACCESS TO THE FATHER

B) This word access is used in only one other verse in all of the NT - Romans 5:2

Romans 5:1-2

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

C) In ancient times the word was used to describe the court official who introduced persons to the king.

1) They gave access to the monarch

D) The term itself carries the idea not of possessing access in our own right but of being **granted the right to come to God**

E) We have no right in and of ourselves to come into God's presence.

But once we give our hearts to Christ – We can come to God on the Basis of our Relationship with Christ!

A) Now my parents live in Oceanside – When I go to my parents' house

B) I don't knock – I just walk right in – if the door is locked – **I have a key – Once inside – I go to the Frig – Help myself**

C) I have that Privilege based upon my relationship to them as their son

1) I am welcome in their home at any time for any reason – in fact if you talk to them – I don't take advantage of that Privilege enough

Now if you showed up at my parent's house and walked right in – raided the Frig- They would probably call the Police

A) You don't have those rights – because you are not their son – **you are not related**

B) You could be a really nice person – wouldn't matter – **you could be a millionaire**

1) Still wouldn't matter – you could work for the President

C) See, it's not about **what you do** / or **who you are** / or even about **how nice of a person you are**

1) What matters is – who you are related to

D) You are not related – therefore you can't enjoy those type of Privileges

Now let's say you showed up to their house - knocked on the door and said – I am visiting from wherever – Rob told me to come here – Help

A) My parents are very generous people!

Aa) They call me to see if your story checked out! If it did they would invite you in

1) Help you – My mom would over feed you

B) They would totally make you feel welcome and accepted because of your Connection to me

C) Which is exactly the point that Paul is emphasizing in Chapter 3:12 *in whom (In Christ) we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him*

D) It is a wonderful and glorious access that can never be taken from us – **But, We need to use it**

The Writer of Hebrews expressed it this way in Hebrews 4:16 *“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”*

A) It is an invitation *to come boldly* – come any time – come Frequently

B) Come at will – Come get help for your needs

C) Now I want us to Consider **3 things about coming to this throne:**

#1 The Throne of Grace: Not judgment, condemnation

A) Not a place going to get *thrashed on, or ridiculed*

Not going to hear: *“I told you so!” - “You should have listened”*

B) In Bible times it was very hard to come before the throne of some of the rulers – needed special pass

1) Only by invitation – no women

C) Story of Esther with **King Ahasuerus** who reigned over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, from India to Ethiopia- Powerful Man

1) *A woman would be killed for approaching the King unannounced*

D) **Esther risked her life for the sake of her people.**

In the ancient world – the throne of a King was a scary place – Didn’t know what to expect – very intimidating!

A) But concerning the throne of God – for the believer in Jesus Christ

B) God wants us to know that it is a throne of Grace – A place to receive mercy = not getting what we do deserve.

C) Grace – getting what we don’t deserve!

Ephesians 1:7-8 *“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us.”*

D) *Which He made to Abound!* = to exceed a fixed # – more than enough

Listen close: It is never wise to play games with God

A) What I mean is to fool around with sin – believing that – “Oh God will forgive me.”

B) Galatians 6:7-8 *“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.”*

C) Reaping what you sow is not just a physical truth
Spiritual Principle – {Don’t MOCK GOD!

But for the person who is genuinely struggling with things

A) OR for all of us – who have times when our flesh gets the best of us.

B) We need to know – it is a throne of Grace – we are coming before a father who loves us – wants to help us.

C) Earthly fathers desire to take care of their kids – our heavenly father – Perfect!

1) Abounding grace.

D) How much is available? More than you can count – more than enough!

1) More than you can use up!

Charles Hodge "*God gives from an unlimited treasure house, Grace is unlimited favor, an overflowing abundance of unmerited love, inexhaustible & freely accessible through Christ*"

E) He gives Grace to meet our present & future needs & Mercy to cover our past failures & sins

So it is not a throne of Judgment but a throne of Grace

A) Now that is for the believer in Jesus Christ or for the sinner who realizes His sin & comes to Jesus – Throne of Grace

B) But for the unbeliever – for the person who continues to reject Christ – continues to live on own merit – or live in rebellion to God

1) Throne of Judgment – *What did you do with my son?*

C) That person will find that they are Condemned – No grace

1) No mercy – their sin of rejecting Christ – will sentence them to Hell

D) How can a loving God send people to hell – He doesn't – people choose to go there of their own free will – Jesus says – *over My dead body*

E) But for the Believer in Jesus – person who comes to Jesus – throne of Grace

#2 We can Come boldly - We have access!

A) This phrase come boldly not only speaks of being able to approach God

B) But that we can come with the Confidence – knowing that we are welcome in His Presence

C) But the Phrase come boldly also refers to the idea of Freedom of speech!

1) It speaks of one coming before a king – feeling free to pour out his heart

D) That is something that God longs for in His Children and so appreciates

We read the gospels and notice how Jesus always responded in a positive way to those who came pouring out their hearts

A) He was moved by that mixture of faith and desperation

B) Jarius' daughter – Man with Demon possessed son – Centurion's servant – Syrophenician woman.

C) When is the last time that you poured your heart out to the Lord?

1) When is the last time you were that Desperate? GOD LOVES THAT

D) Why pray – God knows everything anyway?

1) It is good for us to express our hearts to Him and to verbalize our need and dependency.

E) Sometimes He waits until we do that to move or act!

Our father wants us to know that we are welcome and we can come with confidence – He loves us! And wants to hear us!

A) Never too busy! – Never out of touch.

B) Sometimes people will say: I didn't want to call you – I know you are busy.

C) I work hard to not give off that idea – Never want to appear too busy for people.

D) But the truth of the matter is I am limited – I am one person – over 1500 adults call this church home.

1) Sometimes I am late in responding – or I might have to depend upon another Pastor to step in.

E) Hospital visits – 6 times in 10 days – recently

But that is the beauty of God – He is Omnipotent – Omni-present

A)He wants us to come to Him boldly – knowing that He loves us – and is ready to respond.

B)Never interrupting him. Never a bother

1)Never have to wait – never take a number

C)He is never juggling appointments – or responsibilities

1)HE IS GOD – HE IS THAT AMAZING AND POWERFUL!

D)So precious Brothers & Sisters – COME TO HIM!

D)**The Lord will not get all bummed out if you don't use the right words**

1)So 1st Throne of Grace, 2nd Come boldly – Kids pouring hearts out

#3 At the Throne – You will receive Help in your time of Need!

A)Timely Help or well timed Help – God hears when we come and He always responds to the needs of His Kids

B)Well timed help? – That is a hard one – because I am sure many of you have had experiences

C)God seemed silent – or timing seemed Slow!

Important note: God is the Creator of every human being.

A)But He is not the father of every human being – He is only the Father of those who are in Christ.

B)So the question that gets asked often is – Doesn't God hear everyone's prayers?

1)Believer and unbeliever – alike

C)Answer is **Yes He hears every prayer** – Believer or unbeliever

D)But He only obligates Himself to answer the prayers of His Children – those who are believers in Jesus – **Always answers Yes / No / Wait**

E)Must understand that God's delays are not God's denials!

God always answers prayer: Yes/ NO / Wait

A)Sometimes – He waits for the situation to get right He sees what we can't.

B)Sometimes He waits for us to get right!

1)Time for our hearts to change and mature.

C)Sometimes He waits for others to get right!

But the timing of His response is always Timely

A)Sometimes we don't see it at first – but eventually we will – Even if it is in Heaven.

B)**Right now we see thru a glass dimly – but then we will see all things clearly!**

C)He gives Timely Help – Always responds

James 1:5-8 “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”

D)My prayer for you – for us – as Church – that we would be a praying Church

1)Take advantage of the Access

E)We would be a worshipping Church: Access

Jesus made this clear – story in Luke 11 – persistent friend – If that friend gets up – because you are bothering him

A)What do you think your heavenly father will do – **who is never bothered when you come**

B)Ask and you will receive / seek find / Knock opened / keep on asking / seeking / knocking – Keep coming to the Throne – **He never wearies**

1) Goes on to talk about Them being fathers but evil - You give good gifts

.....Father gives Holy Spirit to those who ask

C) Some times our biggest problem is that we aren't persistent – we ask once or twice – wait a day or two maybe a week

1) If we don't get an answer – we move on!!!

Why does God want us to be persistent in coming?

One He likes to spend time with us

A) Another reason is there is something wonderful that happens in our hearts when we come to God over a period of time

B) There is a growing sense of **DEPENDENCY** that is being communicated – **God I can't accomplish this without you**

C) See I think if we were honest – most of the time – we come to the Lord bringing our problems – **Presenting them to him**

1) When we do that – in the back of our minds is this thought – if God doesn't answer – if God doesn't respond – I Know what I am going to do

D) We have a **BACKUP PLAN** – already in our heads - I think sometimes God doesn't answer for that reason – He knows that we have a backup plan

But when we come to the Lord over & over again – keep coming / asking / knocking – what we are saying is Lord there is no other Plan

A) Communicates a heart of Desperation & Dependency – and God loves to respond to that Kind of Heart {Timely help – just in time

B) As we move into this New Year – I pray that we as a Church would take advantage of the access to the Father we have because we are In Christ

C) It would be the mark of our fellowship – Come boldly – worship – prayer – Come often {Many Prayer opportunities

D) I pray for us as individuals that we would – be persistent in seeking the Lord – as a mark of our Complete Dependency upon Him

1) Lord no backup plans – You or nothing