

Identity Part 1

Colossians 1:15 - In Adam or in Christ

Picture the scene:

A) A young boy from a third world country where he has lived on the streets in intense poverty – is brought to an orphanage.

B) Conditions are better but still not great – Until he is adopted by a wealthy American family and brought back to the states. **HE IS LOVED!**

C) He is showered with gifts – New clothes - he has his own room, with every toy imaginable

D) But each morning the family awakens to find the boy – **sleeping out on the back porch** – dressed in his old clothes.

Problem: He doesn't know that He belongs, or to whom He belongs and the price they paid to bring him into their family!

Picture a young girl in her 20's – she is pretty but she doesn't think so.

A) She dresses provocatively in order to get the attention of her male fellow workers.

B) She ends up **giving sex hoping to get love** – but ends up being used and abused – not once but several times.

C) But then she meets a guy who really loves her – who isn't put off by her past – to him – she is beautiful in every way.

1) He wants to marry her and spend the rest of his life with her.

D) But she continues to dress provocatively and pursue the attention of other men.

Problem: She does not know how deeply she is loved!

Picture: A young man in his 20's – struggling with stress, he worries a lot – to cope – he drinks – and ends up doing drugs.

A) His poor choices result in him living on the streets.

B) But then his rich uncle who always loved him and had a heart for him dies – and leaves him 20 million dollars – problem is he doesn't believe it.

C) He has always known he never deserved the love and grace his uncle always showed him – and this time is no different.

D) He doesn't **claim his inheritance and continues** to struggle in poverty and addiction.

Problem? He doesn't understand unconditional love and the resources that are at his disposal.

Now in listening to those three scenarios – you might think of the boy, the young girl and the young man –

How sad – Pity – Stupid –

A) And yet many Christians – many people who profess Christ – **struggle through life – and struggle in their walks.**

B) **Struggle with their past – or struggle with a poor self image – or struggle with addictions – FOR THE VERY SAME REASONS;**

C) They do not know: **TO WHOM THEY BELONG – THE PRICE THAT WAS PAID TO OBTAIN THEM.**

D) **THEY DON'T KNOW HOW GREATLY THEY ARE LOVED AND THE RESOURCES THAT ARE AT THEIR DISPOSAL**

E) Therefore they know very little of the **ABUNDANT LIFE** – that is available to them **IN CHRIST!**

Tonight we are beginning a series that is going to take us all the way through the summer – IDENTITY – Discovering your spiritual DNA.

A) The focus of this series is to Discover and unpack who we are in Christ!

B)The Phrases in Christ, in Him, in whom, through Christ – appear in the NT over 200 times in describing the believers connection to Jesus.

C)One of my prayers as we go through this series is that when you are reading your Bible - you would begin to take notice of – the Phrases in Christ, In Him, through Him, - highlight.

D)I want those phrases to stand out to you and become a greater part of your life!

How would you answer the question - Who are you?

A)Some of you would answer in this way – I am a ___ Profession - **Not who you are, it's what you do.**

B)But many people find their identity in what they do.

C)Others of you might answer – I am the **wife** of, I am the **husband** of, I am the **parent** of ____, I am the **son or daughter** of ____

1)Again that is not who you are it is who you belong to or who you are connected to.

D)Still others might answer the question who are you by – associating with a struggle – **My name is Joe and I am an alcoholic**

1)That does not define who you are – simply defines what you have become enslaved to.

Scientist tell us that our identity is connected to a genetic code – known as DNA.

A)DNA is the genetic code that is found in the cells of your Body.

B)This genetic code is comprised of 3 billion letters

It has been determined that 99.9% of your DNA is similar to everyone's genetic makeup.

A)What is uniquely *you* comes in the fractional difference in how those three billion letters are sequenced in your cells.

B)Our DNA is what makes us unique.

1)From eye color, to voice, to height, to health.

C)Our physical characteristics are determined by the tiny strands of this genetic code.

But the Bible reveals that there is something else that connects us

A)The Bible divides men into two categories – you are either **in Adam or you are in Christ.**

B)What does it mean to be in Adam? – **Adam was the first man – created by God placed in the Garden of Eden.**

C)**What does it mean to be in Adam?** Well it means more than being a human being!

1)We are all familiar with the Atom Bomb dropped on Japan in 1945 – Huge damage and devastation.

D)But the Bible speaks of the effects of an even greater Adam Bomb

1)Adam bombed out in the garden – Placed – Ate

Romans 5:12

12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned —

A)Adam ate and the entire human race was affected – Everyone connected to Adam was born into sin - We sinned because we were a part of Adam.

B)The sin nature spread to all of humanity – resulting in Alienation from God - a life marked by death and destruction

C)Death, disease, selfishness, wars, murders and every conceivable evil that we experience in the world today is the result of Adam's bomb.

1 Corinthians 15:22-

For as in Adam all die, {But that is not the end of the story.}

C) There is hope – Jesus was sent to this earth on a rescue mission to redeem lost humanity

1 Corinthians 15:22-

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

A) Jesus left heaven to become a man – **THE LAST ADAM** – went to the Cross – Open door – men to be made right with God.

B) Sins forgiven, guilt removed

C) The Bible says that in Adam we are born into Sin – but through believing in Jesus – **We are born again into Life**

D) Through faith in Christ – born anew – Spirit dead comes to life

1) 1 Peter 1:4 – Partakers of a Divine nature.

When we talk about our spiritual DNA – that is what we are referring to

A) Divine Nature Acquired

B) Two Miracles at Salvation:

1) Christ in the heart – His spirit your life

B) You are placed in Christ! God sees you in His Son!

C) There are profound spiritual implications to that union

Peter also Declared in 2 Peter 1:3

His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him

A) Think of it this way – when Child is born – Beautiful sight

B) Healthy Baby - everything that is needed for living Physically speaking – is given at birth

1) It is all there in that Little Body / Problem is the baby / doesn't know how it all works

C) So the need isn't to find some new body part to stick on / not another eye or nose or 3rd & 4th arm - it has everything it needs

1) The **need - simply to grow** - Learn to use & **appropriate what has been given**

D) The same is true of us – **when we are born again** we are GIVEN all that we need that pertains to **life & godliness**

1) We just need to come to Realize what Has been given to us & **Appropriate it into our lives**

E) Growing into the Head who is Christ

Aaron – Big head – Just needed to grow into it

F) That is what we are going to unpack during this series!

Consider some of the statements connected to our Position In Christ:

In Christ I am

I am blessed beyond measure – **Ephesians 1:3**

I am a Saint – **Philippians 1:1**

I am deeply loved – **Ephesians 1:4-6 / Romans 8:39**

I am a new creation – **2 Corinthians 5:17**

I am accepted – **Ephesians 1:6**

I am approved by God – **Romans 16:10**

I am a possessor of infinite promises - **2 Cor. 1:20 / Eph 3:6**

I am chosen - **Ephesians 1:4 / Ephesians 2:1-9**

I am redeemed – **Ephesians 1:7**

I am reconciled to God - **2 Corinthians 5:18**

I am forgiven - **Ephesians 4:32**

I am free - **Galatians 2:4 / Romans 8:2**

I am no longer under condemnation - **Romans 8:1**

I have been made alive – **Ephesians 2:5**

I am saved – **2 Timothy 2:10**

I am secure – **Colossians 3:3-4**

I am being renewed – **Colossians 3:1-10**

I am complete – **Colossians 1:28**

I am a person with an eternal destiny – **1 Peter 2:9**

I am a masterpiece in the making - **Ephesians 2:10**

I am a partaker of a glorious inheritance – **Romans 8:17**

I am connected to the treasures of wisdom and Knowledge -
Colossians 2:3

I am a part of an incredible and unique family - **Romans 12:5**
/Ephesians 1:6

I am a person with an eternal purpose – **2 Timothy 1:9 /Acts 17:18**

I am a possessor of supernatural power – **Ephesians 1:19-20**

I am created for good works – **Ephesians 2:10**

I am triumphant – **2 Corinthians 2:14**

I am a more than a conqueror – **Romans 8:37**

I am victorious - **2 Corinthians 2:14 / Romans 8**

Before we start diving into these statements – I thought we should spend the rest of tonight – Considering Him.

A)In order for us to fully grasp our position in Christ –we need to understand the greatness of who He is!

Col 1:15-18

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

B) His Person, His Preeminence, His Power

V. 15 He is the image of the invisible God

A)The Greek word translated “image” is *eikon*, from which we derive our English word *icon*. – It means “an image or representation.”

The writer of the book of Hebrews – “He is the express image of His person.” Hebrews 1:3

A) Phrase was used describe Exact representation / it was used in the Greek Language for the impression made a stamp on a seal

B)The design on the dye was reproduced on the wax.

C)AFFIRMATION OF HIS DEITY

1)Christ not only was God manifested, He was God in substance.

2) Jesus is the perfect, personal imprint of God in time and space.

However, the meaning goes even beyond this because **being the *eikon***, the image, of God also carries the idea of revealing the personal character of God.

John chapter 1:18 ***No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.***

A) Hebrews 1:3 - He is the brightness of God’s glory!

A)Brightness means "the outshining"; or "the RADIANCE " Jesus on earth was the outshining of the Glory of God.

B) So when the Bible says that:

God is love

God is light and in Him is no darkness

God is holy

God is all knowing

God is all Powerful

God is ever present

God is mighty to save

God is just

God is righteous

C)All of the descriptions of God that are found in the Bible – Jesus is the outshining of that.

John 1:14

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Perfect combination of Love and Justice!

A)Woman caught in adultery – You who are without sin can cast the first stone.

B)Woman where are your accusers – Go and sin no more

C) Everything He is - we have been placed into:

D) That is who Jesus is – Important that we realize in coming to Jesus – God’s goal for you is NOT:

1) To make you a better version of yourself

No, His goal - Romans 8:29 – Conform us into the image of His own dear Son!

A) As we grow into the Head - Mold our hearts into – His heart

B) So His Person – He is the exact image in heart and character of the invisible God

2nd His Preeminence Col 1:15

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

A) Now the Jehovah’s Witnesses and other cults will use this verse to erroneously say that, because Jesus was the firstborn, He was created, and therefore not eternal

B) It says He is the firstborn – not of all creation – but **over all**

1) This idea is supported by the Greek language

C) It is important to note that the Greek word ‘prototokos’ translated ‘firstborn’ here isn’t referring to First ‘in chronology, but first in priority.

D) It is used this way in other places God refers to Jacob and Ephraim as firstborn (Exodus 4:22, Jeremiah 31:9), even though both had older brothers,

1) The Nation of Israel was called by God His firstborn receiving that status over nations that were far older.

Jesus was not the first man – He is the most important man! Here is why?

A) v. 18 *Jesus is the Head, the firstborn from the dead.*

B) Now once again the term firstborn: isn’t speaking of First in Chronology

1) Others had risen from the dead — like Lazarus, and the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7).

C) Even in the Old Testament, there was the widow’s son in the day of Elisha (II Kings 4).

Jesus was not the first to rise from the dead – Not First in Chronology but First in Importance – See those others who rose - they all died again.

A) Jesus alone has priority, has preeminence, He is the Firstborn from the dead because He alone rose never to die again.

B) Redeemed this world – Purchased with His blood – Rose again to lay claim to it.

C) He lives – He has ascended to the right hand of the Father!

Again the writer of Hebrews puts it this way:

He is the HEIR OF ALL THINGS! Hebrews 1:2

A) Huge for us when we study in a few weeks – In Him we have an inheritance

B) Possessors of great Spiritual blessing and Destiny

C) Inheritance of a Street person – Whoopi – even me – Sad

D) Jesus – that is something to get excited about

1) Inheritance that we can tap into now!

E) Look at further in a few weeks

His Power:

verse 16. *For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.*

A) Now we read in Gen 1:1 “In the Beginning, God created the Heavens and the Earth” and He created them, by His command, out of nothing.

B) There was nothing, and God spoke, and the Universe sprang into existence.

1) What Paul is telling us here is that the One who did that was Jesus Christ.

C) The Apostle John tells us the same thing in *John chapter 1:3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.*

D) There is no doubt that the Creative force of God is none other than Jesus Christ, everything that was created was made by Him

1) And nothing was created apart from Him.

The extent of His Creation is Dazzling

A) It includes all things in heaven and on the earth.

B) Our Sun's diameter is 864 thousand miles across. That means that you could put 1.3 million planets the size of the earth inside of it.

1) But that is nothing - the star called: **Betelgeuse** is way huge

C) The Earth is 24,902 miles in circumference. It's pretty Big. Jupiter is 278,760 miles in circumference. Pretty Huge.

1) The Sun is 2,720,625 miles in circumference.

D) **Betelgeuse** is 675,444,000 miles in circumference.

1) And then to think that our Galaxy, the Milky Way contains hundreds of billions of Stars just like it,

E) And then our universe contains billions of galaxies. Folks, the Fact that Jesus spoke the heavens into existence **should blow your mind.**

FEEL SMALL?

The world doesn't revolve around you

Christ is Creator of all! The heavens and the earth and all that is in them

A) Did you know that there are 800,000 catalogued insects, with billions in some of the species—all created by Christ.

B) Why? Cock Roach - Stink Bug – Huge Spiders

1) Opportunity for MEN TO BE HEROS - Lowest dude can kill a Spider - There are no limits to his Creativity that is seen in Creation

C) Jesus is not just the Creator of the Universe – He is also the Sustainer

1) His Power is seen in how it holds it all together

Hebrews says

His Power: upholds all things by the word of His power!

A) Word upholding: signifies to carry or support – actively sustaining.

B) People picture ATLAS – straining under the weight of the world.

C) That is not what it says about Jesus' Sustaining Power - Done by His Word !!!!

Not sweating - straining - not tired - not muscles

D) Calming the storm at sea – the disciples were in a panic – Lord don't you care that we are going to perish?

1) Peace be still! – Calm – sea became like glass

Who is this guy that even the wind and the waves obey Him.

A) Jesus is holding it all together by His word!

B) Think – He can handle what is going on in Your life? My Life

C) That is the beauty for those who are IN CHRIST TONIGHT

1) He can hold you together too!

But Christ is not only the Creator & Sustainer of creation, but He is also the end, the goal: “all things were created by him and for him”

A) This is an astounding statement. The Greek philosophers taught that everything needed a:

[1] Primary cause – which is the **Plan**.

[2] Instrumental cause - which is the **Power**.

[3] Final cause - which is the **Purpose**.

B) When it comes to creation Jesus is the:

Primary cause (He Planned it)

Instrumental cause (He Produced it),

Final cause (He did it for His own Pleasure).

C) You and I were made for Him

1) You and I find our ultimate purpose and existence in Him

That is why People reject Christ and embrace Evolution.

A) Not scientific reason – More faith to believe in Evolution

B) Design points to a Designer

1) Car - A nice dinner

C) People embrace evolution for spiritual reasons – not scientific

1) No Creator – No one to answer to.

Bible says – Jesus is the Creator – the sustainer

A) Made by Him and for Him – that means you.

B) In Him – All we need for life and godliness

C) All that matters tonight:

IN ADAM – SIN – SEPARATED

IN CHRIST – BLESSED

We'll unpack this and break this down in the coming weeks