

SERMON NOTES:

Date:20/10/2024

Preacher: Sam Toms

Sermon Title: - Pilgrimage " **Sermon Brief Outline: Ephesians – Identity Fulfilled in Christ**

Bible Reading: Ephesians 1:1-14

Sermon Summary

Identity is one of the most significant aspects of our lives. It shapes how we see ourselves, how we relate to others, and how we understand our purpose. However, the world often tells us that identity is something we must create for ourselves, like building a “subway sandwich” where we pick and choose who we want to be. But God offers something much deeper: an identity rooted in Christ, unshakable and eternal. In this study, we will explore what it means to find our identity in Christ and how we can practically live this out.

Life Group Study Guide: Identity in Christ

Week Theme: Embracing Our Identity in Christ

1. Discussion Starter: What Defines You?

- **Question:** When you think about the question "Who am I?" what comes to mind?
 - Possible answers might include career, family roles, personal achievements, etc.
 - **Follow-up:** How do societal pressures (social media, cultural expectations) influence the way people construct their identity?
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2. Exploring Scripture: Our Identity in Christ

Read Ephesians 1:3-14 aloud as a group.

- **Verse 3-4:** "For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight."
 - **Question:** What does it mean to be "chosen" by God? How does that change the way you see yourself?
- **Verse 5:** "In love He predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ."
 - **Question:** What significance does being "adopted" into God's family have on our identity?

- **Practical:** How does knowing we are adopted into God's family change the way we approach God in prayer or the way we live?
 - **Verse 7:** "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins."
 - **Question:** How does understanding we are redeemed and forgiven impact the way we view our past and our self-worth?
 - **Verse 13-14:** "When you believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit."
 - **Question:** What does it mean to be "sealed" by the Holy Spirit? How does this provide assurance in your identity and future?
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3. The Crisis of Self-Constructed Identities

The world tells us to "find ourselves" by looking inward, but Scripture challenges us to deny ourselves and find our identity in Christ.

- **Read:** Jeremiah 17:9 and Luke 9:23.
 - **Discussion:** Why is relying on our own heart or desires to construct an identity risky, according to these verses?
 - **Application:** How can we practically "deny ourselves" and live out our identity in Christ daily?
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4. Practical Steps: Living Out Our Identity in Christ

1. **Renew Your Mind**
 - **Read:** Romans 12:2
 - **Action:** Commit to regularly renewing your mind by spending time in Scripture and prayer. How can these disciplines help align your identity with God's will rather than the world's standards?
 2. **Anchor Your Worth in Christ's Promises**
 - Reflect on the promises listed in Ephesians 1 (chosen, redeemed, forgiven, adopted).
 - **Activity:** Write down one promise from this passage that stands out to you and meditate on how it affects the way you see yourself.
 3. **Community and Accountability**
 - **Discussion:** How does being in a community of believers help reinforce our identity in Christ?
 - **Action:** Partner with someone in the group to check in regularly about how you're growing in your understanding of your identity in Christ.
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5. Reflection and Prayer

- **Reflection:** Spend a few minutes silently reflecting on the ways you've been constructing your identity outside of Christ. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any areas where you've sought worth from the world.

- **Prayer:** Close in prayer, asking God to solidify your identity in Christ and help you walk in the confidence of being His child, redeemed and adopted into His family.
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Challenge for the Week:

Each day this week, begin your day by declaring one truth about your identity in Christ (e.g., “I am chosen,” “I am forgiven,” “I am loved”). Write it down somewhere you will see it often and let it shape your actions and decisions throughout the day.