

The Struggle is Real: A Positive Identity

Colossians 1:1-2

Introduction

Tony Evans tells the story of a man who went to a psychiatrist one day. When the doctor came in, he asked, “What can I do for you today? What seems to be the problem?”

I have a problem. Every single time I go to the grocery store, when I pass by the dog food section, something in me tells me that I need to open up a can of Alpo and eat it. Something in me tells me to, “pick it up, open it, and start chowing away.”

The doctor said, “Well this is a little different from anything I’ve ever dealt with before. How long have you been dealing with this problem?”

The man said, “ever since I was a puppy!”

This man was certainly confused about who he was. And there are a lot of Christians walking around today who are confused about who they are and what they are to be attracted to.

TT - Paul’s greeting in our text reveals three things in our lives that influence our identity:

I. Your Name - v. 1 - "Paul..."

What does your name bring to mind for those around you?

Saul of Tarsus - While on his way to Damascus to arrest and extradite Christians back to Jerusalem, Saul was confronted by the very One whom he was persecuting ([Acts 9:3-9](#); [22:6-11](#); [26:12-18](#)). What followed was one of the most dramatic conversions in church history. Saul of Tarsus became the apostle Paul, an ardent missionary to an unbelieving world and a fine example of faithful service in the face of fierce persecution ([Acts 14:19](#); [16:22-24](#); [2 Corinthians 11:25-26](#)).

Abram and Sarai - Genesis 17

Jacob - from deceiving to devout Gen 32

Simon - John 1

Is your name written in the Lamb's book of life? Revelation 21:27; Philippians 4:2-3

'And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are **written in the Lamb's book of life.**' Rev 21:27

'I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, **whose names are in the book of life.**' Philippians 4:2-3

Paul does not address this greeting with his old name. He addresses this group as Paul! God has given you a new name as a Christian and doesn't hold it over us (Is. 43:25)

Hymn: A New Name in Glory

I was once a sinner, but I came
Pardon to receive from my Lord.
This was freely given, and I found
That He always kept His word.

In the Book 'tis written, "Saved by grace."
Oh, the joy that came to my soul!
Now I am forgiven, and I know
By the blood I am made whole.

II. Your Calling and Vocation - v. 2 - *“an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God...”*

Your vocation will reflect whether or not you are operating in your identity

Mark 1:16-20 - can you imagine how miserable the disciples would be if God had called them to fish for men and they kept on fishing for fish?

Eph 4:11-12; 16 God gives His people gifts and vocations to build up His church:
apostleship for Jesus

Prophecy - spokesperson for God; God’s message publicly proclaimed;

Ministry - service; waiting tables; deacons; “table-waiting” (typing, ushering, setting up, janitorial, envelopes, copies, sound and media)

Teaching - mentor, systematically leading a group, sunday school, vbs,

Exhortation - encourager, advisor, counsel, soul-winning, cards

Giving - super giving, sacrificially giving above and beyond the tithe,

Ruling - Gift of leading, tasking, organizing,

Mercy - bedside manner, hospital, homebound, rescue mission, pantry, jail ministry

Adrian Rogers -

Young lady was bringing a group of christians their dessert on a platter when she got to the table she dropped it all on the floor

Prophecy - “that’s what happens when you aren’t careful

Mercy - “don’t feel bad that could have happened to any one of us”

Service - Let me help you clean this up

Teaching - It fell because you had too much on this side of the platter

Exhortation - let’s serve it next time this way

Giving - Let me buy some more dessert generously tips the waitress

Ruling - you mop, you get the dust pan, you go put this order in, ...

the will of God -

Rick Warren says, Satan wants to distract you from God’s will for your life when it comes to identity. He uses:

The pressure of others

The hurts in your life

The media - you should be this; dress like this; talent

Shame - “you don’t matter”; “you’ll never be forgiven for that”

III. Your Family - v. 2 - *“Timothy our brother...faithful brethren...God our Father”*

Being welcomed into a family begins with a birthday. Being born into God’s family begins with a birth as well.

John 1:12 - 'But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: ‘

Ephesians 2:19 'Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; ‘

Are you connected to your family? Are you just related to your family or do you have an actual relationship with your family? We’ve all played with legos. You learn quickly that if the legos don’t connect there won’t be much productivity.

Timothy our brother - Can others identify your identity!

Hebrews 2:10-12 - Does Jesus identify you?’

For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. ‘

God is our Father - He is going to take care of us! All of Matthew 6 Father is mentioned 10X

Closing: What is Your Standing - v. 2 - *“saints and faithful....grace...peace...”*

- Are you a Saint or a Sinner? - declared holy by God? Ephesians 1:4 - God chose you before everything else.....You are God’s holy people! - Valuable when you are owned by God!
Is. 43:4 - you are honored and precious in my sight
- Are you Faithful? - How is this measured?
- Have you trusted the Grace of God? - Grace is choosing you when you don’t really deserve it. God accepts you in His grace! 1 Peter 2:9 God has CHOSEN you HIMSELF’ But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: ‘
- Do you experience His Peace? -
- From the Lord Jesus Christ - He gave His life for you - 1 Cor. 7:23

What determines value? Who owns it and what someone is willing to pay for it.