

WHO AM I?
A Study of Who We Are in Christ
August 3, 2008

Characteristic of Completeness: Christian Life

Big Idea: Remember Who You Are

Scriptures: Rom 8:31; Rom 5:1; Rom 8:1-2; John 1:12; 1 John 4:4; Eph 3: 20-21; Eph 1:5; Rom 8:37; Rom 8:38-39; John 10:27-29; Heb 13:5; Rom 6:23; John 15:9; Eph 1:6 NKV; Eph 2:19; 2 Cor 5:17; 2 Cor 5:21; Col 1:13-14; 1 Peter 2:9; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 Cor 1:30; Col 1:13-14; Col 2: 9-10; Eph 4:22-24; Rom 12: 1-2; Eph 4:22-24; Deut 6:6-7; Ps 1:1-2; 2 Cor 5:7; Col 2:6

Intro:

- Good Morning!
- Bob will be back next week

- Today I want to share some truths with Christians ---
 - But first, let me address anyone who isn't a Christian yet:
 - Here's what I want to say to you: There is a God; He has a plan; There is a Heaven; there is eternal life, with Him or not with Him; the Bible says eternal life without Him is Hell, but eternal life with him - in Heaven - will be wonderful beyond our imagination; we have all sinned and fallen short of the perfection required by God for Heaven; But He died for our sins and -- "free gift" -- good news -- :
 - By His death and resurrection for our sins, Jesus Christ alone promises us the free gift of eternal life, if only we will believe Him for it!
 - We invite anyone who isn't a believer yet

WHO AM I? Ask yourself this question as we consider the scriptures --- fairly quick survey -- -- --

I. **God is for you, not against you!**

- a. Rom 8:31 -- What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

[Paul's implied answer is that No One as great as God is against us! Anyone or anything that may be against us—not as big as God, who is for us!]

- b. Rom 5:1 -- Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

- c. Rom 8:1-2 -- Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.
- d. What this means; what it doesn't mean
 - God is for us—One Pastor: write that down with your name: "God is for _____!"
 - He's not mad at us
 - we are at peace with Him
 - free from condemnation; free from the vicious cycle of sin and death
 - God not only loves you, He likes you!
 - Doesn't mean God is going to give you all the things you think you need or want; Doesn't mean you won't have troubles in life
 - Does mean God's on your side, and
 - An intimate, personal relationship with God is possible!
 - God is FOR you, not AGAINST you!

II. You are a child of the King!

- a. John 1:12 -- But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,
- b. 1 John 4:4 -- You are from God, little children, and have overcome them [*evil spirits*]; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.
- c. The Holy Spirit lives inside of you!
- d. Eph 3: 20-21 - [*a prayer by Paul*] Now to Him [*God*] who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

[We are God's children and the Holy Spirit lives and works within us!]

- e. We are Adopted!!

Eph 1:5 -- He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

- f. Do you consider yourself a son or daughter of God? A child of the King!?
- g. More than conquerors! -- Rom 8:37 -- But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.
- h. You are a Child of God, with God the Holy Spirit living inside you! And we have Power and in Christ we are more than conquerors.

III. You are Saved Forever and Eternally Secure!

- a. Romans 8:38-39 -- For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, [*IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE?*] will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- b. Nothing and No One can take away your salvation!
- c. John 10:27-29 -- My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.
- d. Heb 13:5 -- Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"
- e. No one is able to snatch us out of His hand; AND He will never desert us!
- f. Rom 6:23 -- For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. -- And for believers, your Eternal Life has already begun. Are you thinking of yourself as living eternally? Do you have an eternal perspective? We should!
- g. We are saved forever—and eternally secure!

IV. You are unconditionally loved and accepted by God!

- a. The Lord knows our faults - our sins - and loves us anyway!

- b. If you have someone in this life who really loves you UNCONDITIONALLY, you are very blessed.
- c. Do you think God the Father loved God the Son, Jesus, UNCONDITIONALLY? Infinitely? Perfectly? Amazingly? Wonderfully? Just like the Father loves Jesus, He loves us! Think about that! [Repeat - - Just like the Father loves Jesus, He loves us!]
- d. John 15:9 - [*JESUS* - -] Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.
- e. We are Accepted as well as Loved: Eph 1:6 NKV -- to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.
- f. A nice example of God's Love and Acceptance: we are also Members of God's household: Eph 2:19 -- So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,
- g. We are Unconditionally Loved and Accepted by God, Members of God's household, of God's Forever Family!

V. **You are a New Creation!**

- a. More than just a forgiven sinner --
Bumper Sticker: - - - Some truth, but each of us is more than merely a forgiven sinner
- b. Eternal Life has already started for us---this world is not really our home. These words are easy to say but hard to grasp, aren't they?
- c. 2 Cor 5:17 -- Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.
Do you believe that you're a New Creation? Sometimes we feel like the old creation, don't we? What else does Scripture say about us?
- d. 1 Corinthians 1:30 -- But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,
- e. 2 Corinthians 5:21 -- He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

- f. Stay with me here: We are new creations, we're "in Christ," we are the righteousness of God in Christ . . . What else?
- g. Col 2: 9-10 -- For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;
- h. Col 1:13-14 -- For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

He didn't just forgive our sins; He made us Complete in Him, and rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to His Kingdom!

- i. 1 Peter 2:9 -- But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;
- j. 2 Peter 1:4 -- For by these [*referring to God's glory and excellence--from preceding verse*] He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. [*-- Partakers of the Divine Nature: Not saying we become Gods, but we share in God's life because of Christ and the Holy Spirit living in us; and though not Gods, we are changed -- even if we don't realize it*]
- k. He has called us out of darkness, transferred us to His Kingdom, even made us partakers of the Divine Nature . . .
- l. Eph 4:22-24 -- that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,
 - and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,
 - and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.
 - o On the basis of these scriptures, I say to you that the Real You - your true eternal self - is a New Creation, living in God's light and His

Kingdom, and you have been created in the likeness of God and with righteousness and holiness!

Ephesians 1 Paraphrase from Pastor Bob, Personalized:

God has blessed me with every spiritual blessing. I already have all there is to get. I am chosen. I am holy. I am blameless. I am loved. I am adopted. I am pleasing. I am redeemed. I am forgiven. I am enlightened. I am an heir. I am sealed. I am secure. I am important. That's how God made me. That's who I am, complete in Christ.

I pray that I would understand what this really means. There is nothing I have ever done or can ever do that will enhance who I am in Christ. And, there is nothing I can do to detract from it. That's because it doesn't depend on me. It depends on Christ, who is Lord of all.

Now, did all these wonderful things happen to us, as Believers, because we worked for them, or earned them, or deserved them? No! These transformations have occurred because God made them occur! We don't deserve these blessings but God gives them to us anyway!

If we fully understood that God is for us, not against us; that we are children of the King; that we are saved forever; that we are unconditionally loved and accepted; and that we are new creatures, changed forever, living eternally---if we really got hold of these truths, would it change our lives?

Would it make any difference at all? YES, I say it would.

Here we are, now, at the Application portion of the message, the SO WHAT part. Does any of this really matter? It depends. It depends on whether you apply these scriptures and these truths to your lives.

I'll share some applications and suggest some more. Here goes.

1. Suppose you live in fear of failure; or fear of what others may think of you; or you worry a lot, you're anxious a lot. At the risk of sharing, This used to be true of me. I lived with a frequent level of fear and anxiety and worry. But I find that as I learn -- and remember -- who I am in Christ, the fear and worry and anxiety decreases.
 - a. I suspect many of you live with some fear and anxiety. Would it help you to remember that God is for you, not against you? That you are a Child of the

- King? That you are saved forever? Unconditionally loved and accepted?
That God has created and changed you?
- b. Here's the application: next time you find yourself afraid or worrying,
Remember Who You Are in Christ.

And that's the BIG IDEA of this message: Remember Who You Are! This is part of the Christian Life, our Characteristic of Completeness for this week.

2. Here's another Application: I wonder if any of you do things to make yourself look good in the hope that others will like you, accept you, respect you, look up to you? Some of us do this so much that it might be said that we have an "approval addiction" → Another personal confession now: I have spent a lot of my life doing this, seeking approval, craving approval, wanting to be accepted, wanting to be appreciated and admired. It was over 25 years ago that I began to learn about who we are in Christ, and my testimony is that when I forget these truths, when I forget to focus on God and what He's done for me and who I really am, then the old videos and the old thoughts and patterns return. But if I Remember Who I Am, then not so much.

--I find it helpful to remember -- and this is one of the fill-in-the-blank sentences on the outline you have -- that "THE TRUEST THINGS ABOUT ME ARE WHAT GOD SAYS ABOUT ME, NOT NECESSARILY WHAT OTHERS SAY OR I MAY FEEL. "

--What others say about us—may or may not be true and accurate---often is not

--our feelings---will fool us and lead us astray

--God's Word: the truth about us

--And I can tell you that it's better to Trust God and Follow Him, than to live for the approval of others!

--Also, remember: God already approves of you!

3. Here's an application: you might memorize "The truest things about me are . . ."
4. A related application: Study God's Word to learn what God says about you, and let it sink in deeply! Begin to see yourself as God describes you.
5. Another: A friend who was a new Christian about a decade ago: wanted to sin less and was feeling defeated because he wasn't. He tried. Didn't work.
- a. Most of his efforts---his self-efforts---to improve his behavior, to sin less, were unsuccessful
- b. Now, however, as he grows in Christ and in his understanding of who he is in Christ, he finds it easier to resist certain temptations

- c. My friend is learning to Remember Who He Is in Christ, and his actions are conforming more to who he really is
6. Another Application: Lust - this is an issue for many men, I'm told. Some women too. I've even heard that some people channel surf the TV -- or the internet -- looking for certain kinds of people or certain activities to look at. Statistically, this is undoubtedly true of some of us here today. If we're tempted to do that sort of thing, how about stopping and thinking about Who We Really Are. Maybe your personal application ought to be something like this: every time I'm tempted to _____ (*you fill in the blank*), I will try to pause and Remember Who I Am in Christ. Maybe the fleshly me wants to watch these things, but the Real Me is created in the likeness of God and in Righteousness and Holiness, and doesn't want to do that.

Some more Applications to consider:

7. Study Ephesians 1 and find the truths that Bob has stated in his paraphrase
8. Review Bob's Eph 1 Paraphrase every day this week and think about how these truths apply to your life
9. Study the scriptures listed on your outline, and think about how they apply to your life
 - a. Renewing your Mind --- putting God's Word into your brain!
 - For example, regarding fear: The real me is not afraid; and doesn't need to be afraid
 - 2 Tim 1:7 --
 - Phil 4:6-7 --

Don't get cocky, by the way . . . We're still going to sin, as long as we're confined to these fleshly bodies. God calls us to be humble in our selves but confident in Him. But we can, by Learning and Remembering Who We Are, become more authentic, more like our true selves, and more like Christ.

When you are tempted to sin, to lie, to lust, to worry, to fear, to have road rage, to seek approval, to seek acceptance, to envy, to be jealous, to put others down to make yourself look better, to manipulate, to focus on externals or appearances rather than what's on the inside, to focus on "performance" rather than on God's unconditional love and acceptance, then you need to Remember Who You Are!

Now you think about that this week.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, Thank you for these truths; thank you that we can trust You completely. Help us this week and beyond to Remember Who We Are. Help us to

understand that the truest things about us are what You say about us, not necessarily what others may say or we may feel. Help us to remember that you have changed us and made us new. When we are facing issues and temptations, help us not to react the way we used to, but help us to Realize Who We Are Now and Act Like Our true selves. In Jesus' precious Name we pray, Amen.

PASTOR BOB'S EPHESIANS 1 PARAPHRASE:

"Dear Christians:

God has blessed you with every spiritual blessing. You already have all there is to get. You are chosen. You are holy. You are blameless. You are loved. You are adopted. You are pleasing. You are redeemed. You are forgiven. You are enlightened. You are an heir. You are sealed. You are secure. You are important. That's how God made you. That's who you are, complete in Christ.

I pray that you would understand what this really means. There is nothing you have ever done or can ever do that will enhance who you are in Christ. And, there is nothing you can do to detract from it. That's because it doesn't depend on you. It depends on Christ, who is Lord of all."

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All Praise and Credit to Him!