

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE? PART 2

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18.2.17

We started talking last week about how we all have a "vision" of ourselves ... who we are. We have a personal identity ... who we see ourselves as.

We may have a positive view ... feel good about ourselves ... in control ... progressing well through life. List a number of achievements and rewards. Or not! For most people ... their view of themselves sort of developed more or less accidentally. Almost at random.

Perhaps parents were very supportive ... maybe their school teachers were very encouraging. But then ... for a lot of people ... maybe not. Ultimately ... we all are influenced ... as to what we think of ourselves ... by our home life ... school ... our friends ... our co-workers ... Church experiences ... the congregations we have been in. Do we live lives of quiet desperation?

And how we see ourselves affects how we relate to other people and even to God Himself.

So. Rather than being completely dependant on the random/accidental influences ... that made us who we are ... last week we started to look at what the Bible says we are. What does God say about us? He should know!

Now just turning to a few verses here and there ... over the course of an hour ... isn't going to make a lot of difference ... to overcome decades of (possibly) seeing ourselves in a very negative way ... (LSE ->MFT ... low self-esteem means friction and trouble). ... The Apostle Paul says in Romans 12:2 that we believers need to be transformed by the renewing of our minds ... that's likely to take time and effort.

So. What does God's Word say about who we really are? If that's not who I think I am ... I take time to reflect on what God's Word says ... and think it through ... over and over. Until I eventually see myself as God sees me.

SONS OF GOD

1 John 3:1-2 (NKJV)

1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called *children of God!* Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

2 Beloved, now we are *children of God*; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

The Universe's greatest Being calls us SONS ... DAUGHTERS. It puts us in a very special category. We are sons and daughters right here and now ... which should mean something.

Romans 8:8-9 (NKJV)

8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

Romans 8:14-15 (NKJV)

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship by which we cry out, "Abba, Father." (We are able to call God ... Abba Father ... not just a religious title ... but who God is ... Abba Father)

But also:

HEIRS OF GOD

Romans 8:16-19 (NKJV)

16 The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

17 and if children, then *heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ*, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. (*the whole creation is waiting for that time when the sons and daughters of Almighty God are finally revealed*)

We are heirs of God. One day ... heirs inherit. What? It says "All things" in the Book of Hebrews (some translations say, "Universe").

Galatians 4:6-7 (NKJV)

6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "*Abba, Father!*"

7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and *if a son, then an heir of God through Christ*. (We are sons or daughters ... and also an heir of God and joint heir with Jesus Christ)

And also:

THE BELOVED OF GOD

God loves those who are "The Called" ... in a very special way. Close ... personal ... real. Or is it ... just words on a page?

Ephesians 3:14-19 (NKJV)

14 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,
16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory,
to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,
17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you,
being rooted and grounded in love,
18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the
width and length and depth and height—
19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you
may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Paul is praying that this is something that we will come to understand. So special ... it needs Revelation ... special understanding ... spiritual insight. Almost "beyond comprehension"! It tells us that this love is utterly different to anything that we have come across ... a special love ... supernatural.

We can see the degree that the Father loves you and me in the following verses.

John 17:20-23 (NKJV)

20 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;
21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.
22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:
23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

John 17:25-26 (NKJV)

25 O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me.

26 **And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."**

How can that possibly be right? God loves us ... as He loved Jesus. We are the Beloved of The Father. The preaching of God's love is to The Called ... not to the world.

John 19:26-27 (NKJV)

26 When Jesus therefore saw His mother, **and the disciple whom He loved** standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!"

27 Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.

John describes himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved. Jesus loves all of His disciples. We are too! "I am the disciple whom Jesus loved". It is true of us!

Moving on. What else does scripture say we are?

A FRIEND OF GOD

Not just some "legal relationship". We have a close and friendly relationship.

John 15:12-17 (NKJV)

12 **This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.** (We should have the same affection and love for each other as Christ has for us)

13 **Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.**

14 **You are My friends** if you do whatever I command you.

15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but **I have called you friends**, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.

16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

17 **These things I command you, that you love one another.**

The Dictionary definition of a friend: A person attached to another by feelings of affection or personal regard.

These are not just empty words. Jesus sees you as a friend. Friends are typically good company. Affection. We look forward to spending time together. Not only are we a son and daughter ... an heir ... we are also friends.

And. God's a faithful friend. Not a fair weather friend.

Proverbs 17:17 (NKJV)

17 **A friend loves at all times,
And a brother is born for adversity.**

A friend loves at all times. That's what God's word says. Would we expect Jesus ... as our friend ... to do any less than this Proverb's friend? The answer is, "No".

Friend implies personal closeness ... openness ... affection ... enjoyment of each other's company. Friends help each other.

An old hymn from years ago "What A Friend We Have In Jesus" ... have lyrics that are maybe a little sentimental (?) ... but worth

acknowledging to ourselves ... "I am a friend of Jesus". Do we see ourselves as a friend of Jesus? A friend of God?

Many churches ... over the generations ... have focused on people as sinners ... unworthy ... worms ... whom God just tolerated. You need to repent! It's quite common for ministers to carry on in this way. No way!! The people in the audience are: Sons!! Heirs. Beloved. Friends of Christ.

Not through our own efforts ... or personal merit ... not because of parents ... or where we were born ... or our job or our education. Only because we are Christ's. We're "in Jesus" ... "In Him" ... "In Christ" ... we are washed ... cleaned ...reconciled ... brought near ... because we are joined with Jesus. That makes us NOT "Sinners" ... but in God's eyes ... "righteous". We are the Righteous brothers ... or the Righteous sisters.

THE RIGHTEOUS OF GOD

Who are we? The righteous brothers and righteous sisters.

2 Corinthians 5:14-16 (NKJV)

14 For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died;

15 and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

16 Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.

We shouldn't look at ourselves as just "according to the flesh". That's not how we should see ourselves ... or look at other people. This applies to those who are ... "In Christ".

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 (NKJV)

17 **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**

18 **Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ,** and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

21 **For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

The ministers may stand up there and call us sinners and tell us we need to repent again and again and again. Trying to dominate the people of God. That is not the case!! We are a new person. Not an old sinner. The past is old history ... washed away.

Scriptures often use the term "Justification". If God checks our personal history ... what we've done ... it is CLEAR! "No record here of taint and sin here satan!!" But ... only if we are "In Him".

Well over 100 times ... the New Testament describes believers as being "In Christ" or "In Him". If we're believers ... that's where we are ... our position.

When God The Father sees us ... He sees us "In Jesus" ... not just us in our weaknesses ... all of our flaws showing. We're "In Jesus" ... "In Him" ... similar appearance.

If we are not "In Him" ... then we are still "in Adam" ... still sinners facing death. If you are in the "Adams family" ... you are facing death!

Romans 5:1-2 (NKJV)

1 Therefore, having been *justified by faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, (*justified ... religious term.*

Dictionary: to render righteous or declare righteous)

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.

Romans 5:1 (NET)

1 Therefore, since *we have been declared righteous by faith*, *we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*, (*God is not hostile towards us*)

Romans 5:1 (Voice)

1 Since we have been acquitted and *made right through faith*, *we are able to experience true and lasting peace with God* through our Lord Jesus, the Anointed One, the Liberating King.

We're not righteous because we do a list of things ... "perform" ... pray for an hour a day ... read the Bible for an hour a day ... fast for one day per week ... give 30% of our income ... visit widows and orphans ... etc. They maybe good things ... but we are not part of a performance based religion.

Romans 5:9-10 (NKJV)

9 Much more then, *having now been justified by His blood*, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, *having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life*.

Romans 5:17 (NKJV)

17 For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, *(talking of Adam)* **much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.**

(AMPLIFIED) ... **"reign as kings in life** through the one Man Jesus Christ". *(Not just struggling along ... down out and shot at avenue)*

(PHILLIPS) ... **"live all their lives as Kings"**

We are all pretty familiar with our failures. Perhaps some very vivid memories of things that have gone wrong ... stick with us. We see ourselves as unworthy of God's love and goodness? That's not how God sees us. And we should be endeavouring to see ourselves as God does!

Philippians 3:1-9 (NKJV)

1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.

2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! *(Talking about the dodgy Jews of the day ... in opposition to God)*

3 For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,

4 though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so:

5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee;

6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the *(Judaism)* law, blameless.

7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.

8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, **that I may gain Christ**

9 and be found **in Him, not having my own righteousness,** which is from the law, **but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;**

That's how we should see ourselves. Our righteousness is genuine and real and we don't produce it ourselves! It's a gift. This being the case ... we should never have any sense of condemnation.

Romans 8:1-2 (NKJV)

1 **There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,** who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. *(If you aren't "In Christ" ... then you are condemned)*

2 **For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.**

(MSG) ... believers ... **"no longer have to live under a continuous, low-lying black cloud".**

And that's despite the fact that we will still do wrong all too often "in the flesh".

Romans 7:14-25 (NKJV)

14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.

15 For what I am doing, I do not understand. **For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.**

16 If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good.

17 **But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.**

18 **For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.**

19 **For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.**

20 **Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.**

21 I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good.

22 **For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.**

23 **But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.**

24 **O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?**

25 **I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!**

So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

Paul has a battle ... his desire is to do good ... honour God ... but he fails all too often. But God/Jesus will deliver ... so ... therefore ... in the meantime ... there is no condemnation (Romans 8:1).

Consider:

Hebrews 10:19-23 (NKJV)

19 **Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, (we have BOLDNESS to go before the Father into the Most Holy Place ... where The Father is ... because Jesus' blood has cleaned us)**

20 **by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh,**

21 **and having a High Priest over the house of God,**

22 **let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. (All of that guilt gone)**

23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

We can't be bold if we are conscious of our failures ... disappointments ... weaknesses ... the multiple occasions where we've all sinned ... if we see ourselves as worms ... inferior ... wicked sinners ... guilty ... worthy of judgment and punishment ... then how could we be bold? We'd be anything but bold!

But someone who understands who they really are ... sees themselves as a son or daughter of God ... an heir ... one of the Beloved ... friend ... a new creation ... one who's been declared righteous ... is under no condemnation. Such a person who knows they're family ... it is easy and natural for them to come boldly to the Throne of God. Why on earth wouldn't you?

So. Who do you think you are? Are you what the devil ... the world ... tells you? What your parents ... family ... maybe even church ... tells you you are ... or ... are you ...

What God says you are?!