



Shiloh Messenger

March 2017

Identity, How We View Ourselves (pt.2)

So, if the real issue is a problem of identity, how does the gospel address and solve that problem? Paul actually addresses this very question multiple times in his letters; we just haven't seen it yet because we've always kept the problem outside of us. *"Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefor with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him,"* **Romans 6:3-8**

In this passage Paul describes how the death and resurrection of Jesus are applied to us. Notice nowhere in this passage does Paul use substitutionary language. He never says Jesus died for us. Most Christians are trying to live their life according to the principle that Jesus died for us so we should live for him. That sounds good, but living for God was actually the subject of the Old Testament. Jesus empowers us to go beyond the Old Testament into the New!

So what language does Paul use in this passage? He uses language of *union*. He says that we have died with him and been resurrected with him. He says that we are united with Jesus on the cross ("in a death like his" means death on the cross), burial and resurrection. Paul uses this language over and over in his letters. Here are a few more examples: *"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20. Set your minds on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God,"* **Colossians 3:2-3**. This is a paradigm shift on the gospel. It means that the way the identity problem is solved is that the old us is killed, and a new us is born. When Jesus died, he brought the old us with him to the cross; and when he was resurrected, we were born to new life. We are quite literally a different person than we were before we believed in Jesus. In fact, Paul says exactly that same thing: *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation (or creature). The old has passed away; behold, the new has come,"* **2 Corinthians 5:17**.

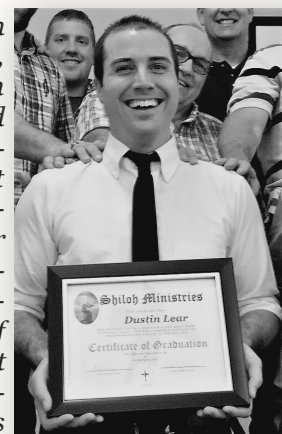
The gospel message is that we are made new! We are a new person, and that new person is in no way who we were before. The person that was marred by sin died with Jesus and was buried with him in a tomb 2,000 years ago. The person that we are now is restored back into the image of God: *"For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers,"* **Romans 8:29**....*"and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness,"* **Ephesians 4:24**. See the whole point of this thing is about the likeness of God restored! Jesus is after restoring what was lost in the garden: *"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost,"* **Luke 19:10**. This is why Jesus drafts us into his compassion. In doing that, Jesus pulls us back up to the original mission given in the garden: to be the face of God on this planet. This commission is described repeatedly throughout the Scriptures. You can see it here in the commission given to the disciples in the Gospel of John: *Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father, has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit,"* **John 20:21-22**.

If you think about it, this is an astounding statement: *"As the Father sent me, so I send you."* How was Jesus sent by the Father? He wasn't just sent to this world to save it (although that was definitely a big part of it); he was sent as the revelation of who the Father is. He was able to say to Phillip in **John 14**, "If you've seen me, you've seen the Father." This is the way that Jesus was sent by the Father, and this is the way he sends us. We ought to be able to say, "If you've seen me, you've seen Jesus." We are now the face of Jesus to the world. That's why we're called the *body* of Christ. Jesus was God incarnate; he was God in a body. He then commissions us to that same call and says in effect, "Alright, you're the body. Here comes God!" And he breathes on us, and God in the form of the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of us. We become God incarnate as well—the face of Jesus to the world. You could sum it up like this: Jesus died *as* us so we could live *as* Him (1John 4:17).

I hope you're getting this. Even as I write, I'm so excited! This is the gospel; the good news, and it's pretty much so good that you'll have to have faith to believe just like Abraham: *"Abraham never wavered in believing God's promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God. He was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises. And because of Abraham's faith, God counted him as righteous,"* **Romans 4:20-21**.

Graduate Testimony

My name is Dustin Lear. As a young man, I regularly attended anything and everything church related. I had head knowledge of Jesus and even professed Him as Lord and Savior of my life, but all around me I only saw religion and I did not have anyone teach me how to live out an active relationship with Him. When I graduated high school, I left the church and fully intended to never come back. But at age 22, I hit the first low point of my life as a result of drug and alcohol abuse. Jesus Christ found me right there where I was. I actually contacted Shiloh at that time but made the decision not to come. As a new believer, God began to bless my life tremendously. Having come from a broken home, He eventually gave me all the things I had ever wanted in a beautiful family of my own. Sadly, I was not yet mature enough spiritually or emotionally to manage and steward this blessing properly, and soon found myself back in the devastating cycle of substance abuse. At age 28, after going through a difficult divorce as a result of my destructive behavior, I found myself at rock-bottom for a second time and began crying out to the Lord for deliverance. In His marvelous mercy and grace, God brought Shiloh to my remembrance and welcomed me back into His loving arms through this ministry. The process was a challenging one and I had many issues to work through, but the Lord liberated me from deep, dark places of depression and anxiety. I have learned to hear God's voice for myself, and it is God alone who has restored my desire to pursue my dreams and passions again. I stand on Deuteronomy 31:6 – "Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid and do not panic before them. For the Lord your God will personally go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor abandon you." Thank you Jesus for restoration in a place called Shiloh. Love you all!



New Dorm to House More Men

Over the past couple of years we have had a waiting list for potential students. With a waiting list comes consequences. Many men have to wait for 90 days & we often lose them after that period. We do have a referral list of other ministries, but most of them insist upon being put on our waiting list. They tell us it is our success in ministry to others they know or it is them visiting our website that they choose to wait. The Lord spoke to me last year and told me He wanted another Dorm built. We complied and began construction last fall. We now have a 45 by 75 Ft. exterior building, that needs completion on the inside. This includes, Sheet Rock & mud, Paint, Insulation, Wiring for Lights & AC, Ceiling Tile, 2 five ton Air Conditioning Units, Stained Concrete flooring, Showers and Plumbing (toilets, faucets, shower heads & valves & PVC piping).

The approximate cost for completion of the Dormitory is \$31,000.00. We ask that you pray about what The Lord would have you do to help us in restoring His most valuable and precious asset, "People." With your financial gift, it will make possible for us to quickly finish this Dorm project so we can help to house more desperate men.

Thank you again, to everyone who co-labors with us in reconciling men with God, so restoration can begin.

We love you,

Rocky & Debbie Fondren

(Shiloh Ministries is recognized by the IRS as a 501c3 charitable organization. All financial gifts are tax deductible at the end of the year)

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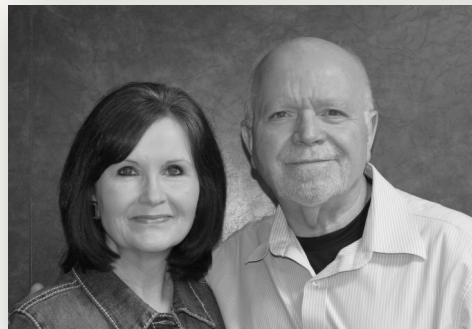
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