



Shiloh Messenger

February 2017

Identity, How We View Ourselves (pt.1)

We have recently finished a series on Identity, at our Sunday Night Encounters meeting in the Chapel. I felt impressed by the Lord to share a part of this series by Putty Puttman titled, "*Identity, how we view ourselves.*" Here is part one of the teaching:

The issue of identity is of paramount importance to us as believers. As we learn to relate to ourselves the way that God relates to us, it provides stability for us to build upon in our interactions with others. The way we see ourselves is a powerful factor in the way we live and what we become. Jesus taught on identity in an interesting passage: In **Luke 6:43-45** Jesus says, "*That if we want to have good fruit, we ought to be a good tree!*" That seems simple enough. Notice then what Jesus closes with: "*your fruit is determined by your heart.*" Being a good tree and producing good fruit then is a product of the good treasure in your heart, and vice versa for evil. This is what we're interested in going after here.

Identity is a complex term that can mean many things, but in this context I am referring to a knowing and confidence in who we are so that we have good treasures to draw from. Identity is such a powerful message because it really is the gospel. The gospel is a message that has power within itself: "***For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek,***" **Romans 1:16**. As such, the message of identity empowers us to do the things that God calls us to. To get the message of identity, we need to reconsider our whole understanding of what we are saved from and how we are saved.

What we're saved from? We all know that we are saved from sin, but often we are a little unclear exactly what the problem is with sin. It turns out that answering this question correctly makes clear why identity is such a critical issue. Let's start by looking at the original identity as described by God when he created humanity. Here is the stated purpose for humanity by God himself. *Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."* **Genesis 1:26**. We see two things here: first man was made in the image and likeness of God. What does it mean to be made in the image of something? Think of a statue or painting of a person that you know of, say the Lincoln Memorial. The Lincoln Memorial is a statue that was made in the image of Abraham Lincoln. What this means is that when you see the statue, you see the person it was made in the image of. When you look at the statue, the likeness that comes to mind is Abraham Lincoln, not a large rock that was dug out of a mountain somewhere. That's what it means to be made in something's image; it means to be recognized as a visible representation of what that thing is. So, for us to be made in the image of God means that when the rest of the earth was to see us, they would recognize God. We were the picture of God to the world.

Secondly, we see that humanity was given dominion, or rulership, on the earth. This makes perfect sense; if we're made in the image of the King, we'll have to rule. We wouldn't be able to be what we were made to be otherwise. So, the original identity of humanity could be summed up like this: 1). Be God's face on this planet. (Our original identity) 2). Do God's job on this planet (Our original destiny). God puts Adam and Eve in the garden and they begin to fulfill the destiny God has given them through intimacy and fellowship with God. Of course, as we know, the story gets more complicated: Satan creeps into the garden in the form of the serpent, tempts Eve, and sin enters creation (**Gen. 3:1-3**).

Satan enters the garden and brings up the tree. Eve correctly recalls that she's not supposed to eat from it (and incorrectly adds that she's not supposed to touch it). Notice the serpent's response: *But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil,"* **Genesis 3:4-5**. The enemy's lie is simply this: that God is holding out on you. If you eat this tree, you'll become like him. There are actually two lies there: the first is that God is holding out on you, and the second is that you're not like God. The first lie is built on the second. God can't be holding out on us if Eve is already like Him, which she is—we just saw that in Genesis 1! The original deception of the enemy starts with a lie about our identity.

This has been his strategy ever since. He comes after our identity and through that offers options to satisfy needs that are based on deception. Eve believes the lie about her identity, and her mindset shifts. She begins to think from lack—from who she's not. With a mindset that's been rooted in a lie about her identity, Eve begins to consider the tree. As she does, her passions are ignited. Why are they ignited? Because the tree looks like it has something to offer. Her beliefs are based on a lie, and out of that her desires go astray. She acts on that desire and takes and eats the fruit. Adam eats the fruit as well when she brings it to him. When Eve acted on the enemy's lie, it became true. She was like God until she ate from the tree. In following the actions of the enemy, she brought into reality the lie she acted on. This is again how the enemy works with us. He wants to sell us self-fulfilling lies that become true when we act on them. Eve's sin is profoundly symbolic. She does not simply do something with the fruit she wasn't supposed to she actually takes the fruit and eats it; she brings within her being the sinful act that she's committing. It enters her, becomes part of her. Sin isn't just something she's done; it becomes something she is (Gen. 3:7). Adam and Eve come to the revelation that the problem is internal. They're broken, and if they are seen for whom they really are at this point, they will be ashamed. So, they do what humanity has done ever since then: they reach for something outside of themselves to cover up an internal problem. They try to use an external thing to fulfill an internal need.

(We will continue next month with this teaching on Identity How We View Ourselves)

Graduate Testimony

My name is Robert Springstead III. I'm from Gardner, Ks. I'm 34 years old. I had a very normal childhood up until 15 years of age, when I lost my brother to suicide, he was 14 years of age. This traumatic experience caused my life to spiral out of control for 15 years of my life. I struggled with depression at a young age which turned into using alcohol and marijuana. Doctors gave me several different diagnoses—bipolar, depression, mania, etc. As I got older these problems worsened I eventually started abusing pills the doctors prescribed me. Manipulating my family and eventually the devil had a strong hold in me and he was destroying my life. After years of family relationships being destroyed, depression, despair settled in and then, several mental hospitals, suicide attempts and legal troubles, I finally gave my life to the Lord at Shiloh Ministries and the darkness that shaped a hole in my heart has been dispelled and filled with The Light of God. He healed me of 7 years of high blood pressure, depression, restored my family and my life. I stand on Galatians 2:20 (a), "For I am crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ within me." Thank you Lord, Pastor Rocky, Sister Debbie, Shiloh Staff and Shiloh supporters. This could not have happened without all you sowing into this wonderful ministry. I am a life forever changed by the Glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ!



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Contact Us At:

Shiloh Ministries,

PO Box 10226,

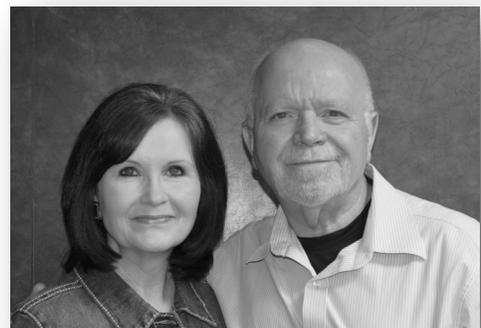
Liberty, TX 77575

Phone#936.334.8616,

Fax:936.334.0061

E-mail: shilohmin@sbcglobal.net

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