

IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST

Remember that everything that comes to the Christian comes to us through Jesus' substituting Himself for us and that it is only through our acceptance of Him as Lord and Savior that we can claim any of the benefits of that sacrifice. This is a process through which every Christian must pass. Last time we saw that we are identified with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. Jesus said that **“on this rock [Greek, petra--a huge rock like Gibraltar] I will build My church, and the gates of Hades (the powers of the infernal region) shall not overpower it [or be strong to its detriment or hold out against it]”**. Matthew 16:18 (Amplified) Why then are the powers of darkness in many instances prevailing against the Church? The Church does not know, or believe its identity.

In the Church, the enemy's strongest weapon is to keep individuals ignorant of their identity in Christ. If our self-image is destroyed we will not have the confidence to assume our authority. This is one reason why Christians feel victimized, abused and defeated. In Christ, we have spiritual gifts and talents but because we are ignorant of them, the enemy has succeeded in destroying our perception of who we are and who we can be. If we are to live victoriously and minister effectively, we have to know who we are and the significance of our true identity.

From the beginning we were created in the image of God.

“And 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 fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. Genesis 1:26 (KJV) For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour;” Psalm 8:5. (KJV)

At creation, our position was above all created things - just below God. Then Adam sinned and relinquished that position to satan. Adam died spiritually and as a result, all mankind became contaminated and sinful. Jesus took our guilt and was punished in our place so that, through faith, we could regain our lost position. We are no longer sinners because Jesus was made sin for us so we could be made the righteousness of God in Him. Having accepted Christ we become God's children, capable of growing up to become “Sons of God” through constant meditation in God's Word, and with the Holy Spirit's help. As God's children, we are joint heirs with Christ.

“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together”. (Romans 8:17)

“Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ”. (Galatians 4:7)

God brought us back into the God family, and restored our identity and our authority as sons of God. As sons of God, we have the nature of God. With the new identity, we have been given all the attributes of God. As a new creation, the

old man died and the human spirit has been reborn.

In addition to restoration, God has given us His Holy spirit to live inside us. Since we are born of the Spirit, the divine nature of God is in us also.

“And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness”. (Ephesians 4:24)

However, the manifestation of this new creation is a process we must undergo through meditation on the Word.

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord”. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

We have the power, the gifts, the fruit and the permanent presence of God in our lives.

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:8); Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:4); But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23. Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22-23)

“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust”. (2 Peter 1:3-4)

God gave us everything to have abundant life and Godliness. Abundant life does not relate to possessions but is received by taking the Word of God and hiding it in our hearts. This produces an experiential knowledge of Jesus which in turn develops a new identity within us. We then begin to think like God (our minds are renewed) and we become what He intends us to be.

As Christians, we are a part of the body of Christ. Jesus did not return to His state of being God only, now he carries a glorified human body as well. He has become God-man. As a result of sin, we cannot go directly to the Father, but Jesus as the perfect man, yet God, has become our intercessor and mediator enabling us to enter boldly into the Father's presence knowing that He is our Father and we are His children.

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:” (Romans 8:14-16)

When Jesus died and was resurrected we were in Him and we remain in Him, seated in heavenly places as sons and daughters of God with authority and power that we can exercise in His name. When Jesus left earth, He declared that we

would do even greater things than He did. This is as the result of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit could not be poured out until He had ascended.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father”. (John 14:12)

Spiritual authority is a part of our identity and nature because it flows from inside of us. It flows out of our spirit man, manifests through our personalities, talents, character and most importantly, is an expression of an intimate relationship with God. It is this spiritual energy (the anointing) that is instrumental in drawing others to Christ. We are God's ambassadors sent from Heaven, operating in place of Jesus on the earth, under His delegated authority, in His name operating in His power, recreated in His image and likeness, drawing the world to Him through the Ministry of Reconciliation.

“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.”
(2 Corinthians 5:18).