

Sunday 15 March 2020-“God’s will and my Identity”-Colossians 3:1-5;

Why can’t we find fulfillment

ourselves? Because we were created to reflect the glory of God and, since the main goal in seeking an identity outside of Christ is to bring glory to ourselves, we will never find lasting fulfillment apart from him.

A man with no direction is a man of many directions. When you understand who you are in Christ, it helps you to focus on what is important. As we have read from Colossians 3:1-3-The Bible says:

1.Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

Knowing our identity in Christ is one thing, but understanding how that practically changes the way we live is another. Here are a few ways that understanding our true identity in Christ can greatly impact the way we live our lives.

We no longer chase after the desires of our flesh but instead seek to bring God glory in all areas of our life.

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (1 John 2:15-16)

If we are not seeking to find our identity in Christ alone, then we are seeking it in something else. However, when our identity is in the eternal things of Christ, we will not be crushed by our failures and weaknesses, fall into pride from worldly success, or despair over disappointments or tragedy. We won't get lost seeking the attractive but empty things the world offers because Christ gives us a stable and eternal hope in a world of unstable hopelessness.

2. We no longer fear the future.

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father." (Romans 8:14-15)

If we have peace with God, then we have nothing to fear on this earth. Our eternities are secure as adopted sons and daughters of Christ. So we don't need to fear financial collapse, losing our job, getting Corona Virus or Measles, or being ridiculed for our faith. Of course these things aren't easy or painless, but we can have confidence that our Heavenly Father is sovereign over every moment of our life and will equip us for every single thing He ordains.

He bought us with the blood of His own Son so that we could claim our identity in the righteousness of Christ. We can trust that he will provide us with everything else that we need in this world. Our identity in Christ as His children has given us direct access to our Heavenly Father, who we can call on with confidence and complete trust.

3. We have no need to judge or compare ourselves to others when we seek to please Christ alone, in whom our identity is hidden.

One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we

live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. (Romans 14:5-7)

Comparing ourselves to those around us or judging the decisions that others make can suck the life right out of us. Biblical convictions are hard and fast truths that God has given us in his word to show us the way to live. Personal convictions, however, are decisions we make within our own families that may be right for one family but wrong for another. It's easy to confuse the two and judge others who have different convictions than ours.

This can also create insecurity in our own choices due to our desire to please man over God. So let's be careful that we are not imposing our personal convictions on others as if we are more godly than they are. We can ask Christ for wisdom in this area of personal convictions, be open to hear and discern other's perspectives without judgement, and then walk in confidence that God is the only one we need to honor and please in these decisions.

We must seek to glorify Christ in the gifts and talents he has uniquely chosen for us and not get lost in the joy-sucking pursuit of being something God never

created us to be. Don't miss out on the blessing of serving Christ where you are with what he has chosen for you.

4. We should not be surprised when suffering comes, but we can be confident that it will produce things of eternal value.

The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. (Romans 8:16-17)

If our identity is in Christ, then we are guaranteed that one day we will identify with him in his sufferings. Just as Christ's sufferings were not hopeless and wasted, neither will ours be. Christ's sufferings defeated sin and death, and therefore we identify with him as he uses suffering to put sin to death in us, to make us reflect more of him. Not only does suffering sanctify us, but it assures us that, after suffering with him for a while, we will one day be glorified with him.

Everyone suffers, but can everyone look back at their suffering with thankfulness and joy because of

it? Only those with the hope of Christ can do that. There is no good that comes from suffering if we are apart from Christ.

Suffering gradually changes our earthly perspective into an eternal one.

We can spend our lives fearing pain and suffering, or we can thank God for the times of reprieve. Then we can trust the seasons of suffering to Christ's great purpose in our lives: to identify with and become more like him.

Have You Been Changed by Christ?

Where do you find yourself seeking identity outside of Christ? Do you find yourself holding tightly to something, in fear that you'll be lost without it? Sometimes in God's grace, he allows the very thing we fear losing the most to be taken away to reveal that we have sought our identity in something other than him. As he grows us in understanding our true identity is in him, we are then freed to enjoy and glorify him in the unique ways that he has created us.

In my flesh, I have gifts that are riddled with pride and imperfection, I have desires that often seek my

own will more than God's, and I have blessings that I'm prone to hold tightly to rather than use for God's glory. But that is not my identity anymore. I am righteous, holy, loved, and able to bring Christ glory through the gifts and blessings he has given me. Not by anything of my own doing, but by the grace of Jesus Christ.

Praise God that he loves us enough to take our broken, rebellious hearts and, because of the sacrifice of his son, offer us a new identity in Christ. Let's not settle for anything less.