

# **St Martins C3 – July 21, 2024**

## **CALLED to Be Who You Are – Chosen**

### **Sermon Summary:**

In this series, we have discovered that God chose each of us to know Him. All that we are in our relationship with God and everything we do for God ought to come from being a child of God.

But how do we know we have embraced our identity in God? As we read, Ephesians 4-6 we will discover whether we have embraced our identity in God or if we have a way to go.

Here is the key point of this passage of scripture. **Be who you are!** You are a child of God. Now live like that is the case: in the local church, in our character and moral behaviour, and in how we treat others in our home.

He uses some word language that helps us see that this is the case.

### **1 - Lead a Life Worthy of your Calling**

**Read Ephesians 4:1**

Paul says, as a result of all God has done for you, people saved by grace, I beg you to live up to this new life you have been called to. There should be a consistency between our identity and the way we choose to live.

### **2 – Put on the Uniform**

**Read Ephesians 4:17-24**

If you are a Christian, you are not to live the same way as everyone else around you. There must be something different about your way of life from the rest of the world. Paul encourages followers of Jesus to reflect Him in their mindset and have their actions reflect their identity.

### **3 – Imitate God**

#### **Read Ephesians 5:1-2**

We are supposed to get to know God so much that people look at us and see Him. It is our identity. Be like God. Bear his image. Imitate him well. If we had no commands, no lists, but we just had these words we would have a pretty good idea of what God requires of us. We can use these commands as a checklist to ensure we have truly embraced our identity in Christ.

#### **Read Ephesians 4-6:9**

A godly identity has no insecurities. A godly identity doesn't need to justify itself. A godly identity doesn't need to look beyond itself for pleasure.

If you want to grow in your identity, you can do two things. The first is to know who you are, so you can be who you are. Do whatever it takes to embrace your identity in your heart. The second is to ask God's Spirit to fill you every day with the knowledge that we are chosen.

#### **Read Ephesians 5:18-20; Romans 8:16**

## **Connect Group Material:**

### **Key Point**

Be who you are. Live consistently for God, in all the relationships around your life. These are the attitudes and behaviours that flow from your identity as God's children.

### **Questions**

Share any revelations you have had from the previous two weeks' messages.

What stood out to you from this week's message?

What does this message tell you about God and humans?

How would you express your identity in God?

Which of the three images from the message on Sunday help you understand the relationship between your identity and your actions?

How is seeing this section of Scripture as a description of the way a child of God behaves more helpful than a to-do list?

Read through Ephesians 4-6:9 and read it as a checklist of how much you have embraced your identity. What areas of your life show you have embraced your identity in Christ?

What areas of your life show that you still need to embrace your identity in God?

How can you further "be who you are"?

## **Monday Devotion: In the Church**

***Read Ephesians 4:1-16***

As we study, this section of Ephesians, we see what it looks like to live out of our identity. There are three areas that Paul emphasizes to the people of Ephesus that are important to us too. They are the way we behave in the church, in our character, and our homes.

Paul begins with the church, which is a natural flow from chapter three, where he shows that the coming together of Jews and Gentiles in the church was God's plan all along.

He now encourages the church to first be united in love and unity. His call is for them to be gentle and humble, patient with each other, making space for others' faults, and being bound together by the Spirit.

He moves on to show them that they all have gifts and when they come together in harmony, they are a sign of complete maturity. The unity with each other ensures they are not carried away by false teaching but continue to grow together closer to Christ.

Consider your commitment to other believers and see whether your attitude matches up to the attitude displayed here. Clearly for Paul, having an identity in Christ is about more than the individual believer. Paul sees that an identity in Christ is persevered through a commitment to other believers in the family of faith.

## **Tuesday Devotion: In Character – Part 1**

**Read Ephesians 4:17-27**

Paul takes time in the next section to look at how our identity affects our character. He describes it as taking off our old nature and putting on our new nature. He then shows what that looks like in some specific areas.

The first thing we are put on is a holy and righteous nature, which refers to those who are free from contamination by doing God's will. They are the bringers of purity, healing and hope. They are the enactors of God's new life to the world.

Then Paul says, "Stop telling lies", in other words, let your words be true representations of who you are. Instead, we are to tell people the truth. There should be an openness and honesty that comes through being part of the church. Because God's laws are not arbitrary, he reminds us of the reason for this command, which is unity.

Then he talks about anger. Anger is an emotion, it is not a sin, but to stay in anger or to seek revenge or the harm of another person is a sin. We are encouraged to deal with our anger in appropriate ways and to resolve it either within ourselves or in the relationships around us. The reason why is that the devil is always looking for a way into our lives to provoke us into more anger and more sin and Paul recognizes this can be a weak point for many believers.

May we see that we have dealt with issues of lies and anger and are committed to being like Christ in all things.

## **Wednesday Devotion: In Character – Part 2**

**Read Ephesians 4:28-31**

I have never had someone come to me for advice and say “I’m struggling to stop stealing.” I think the reason Paul mentions stealing is because the new behaviour is so good. Work! Work is highly praised in God’s kingdom. Here the positive result is that work will earn you enough money to not only look after yourself but also to look after other people. Generosity is important in God’s kingdom.

Paul then talks about foul or abusive language. It is any language that is rotten or excretes rottenness on others. It is anything that injures others or hurts them. This is a big one. Some people think it’s okay to be a Christian who swears. I believe that quite clearly swearing is something that comes under this category of foul or abusive language. Yet, it’s not the worst of bad language. The worst of bad language is the language that pulls other people down, talking about people behind their backs, gossiping and slander.

Instead, our words should be good and helpful. They should build other people up. They should show concern and care. They should encourage others.

Our lives should please the Holy Spirit doing his work inside of us. As we look at our lives how are we doing with our words? Are they a reflection of our identity or are they falling short of who we are?

## **Thursday Devotion: In Character – Part 3**

**Read Ephesians 5:1-20**

As Paul continues the list he encourages the people of Ephesus to have love as their guiding light. Sacrificial care like Christ showed is their north star. With love as your guide other behaviours do not belong.

Sexual immorality is a cheap substitute for love. Impurity and greed have no place. They are worse than sins. They are idolatry, making a god of people or things in our lives.

As C. S. Lewis says in *The Weight of Glory*:

*We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.*

We must determine to do what pleases God, not what pleases ourselves. Our identity within us is to be people of the light. “For this light within you produces only what is good and right.” (5:9) It is our identity shining out.

This new identity is a work of the Holy Spirit. For us to be who we are, we need to connect with Him and fill ourselves with Him as an alcoholic might fill themselves with alcohol. Think about the commitment they show to something that destroys them and instead devote yourself to the one who gives you life.

## **Friday Devotion: In Our Homes**

**Read Ephesians 5:21-6:9**

Paul's theme through these chapters is harmony. Harmony in the church, harmony inside a believer, harmony between a believer and God. Paul now talks to the people of Ephesus about the harmony that can exist in the home.

He begins by talking about husbands and wives. Much is made of Paul's command for wives to submit to their husbands. It must be noted this is seen in the context of mutual submission and the greater emphasis is on the way the husband is to love his wife. It is well summarised by the admonition for respect and love in verse 33.

Paul then looks at parents and their children, again showing that both have responsibilities in the relationship. Children have the responsibility to obey their parents. Parents have the charge to not provoke their kids but discipline and instruct them in God's way.

The last section is about slaves and masters and reflects the cultural norm of having household servants, rather than permitting the horrors of slavery we have seen over the past few centuries. In fact, the relationships shown here are far more equal than our modern view of slavery. That is why these verses have often been applied to our work and those who run businesses.

As we embrace the identity of Christ, may we see in our family and work relationships increased harmony.