



Sermon notes

Preacher: Di Timberlake
Title: Who do I say I am?
Text: Rom 8:14-17 (NIV)

Who are you?

Have you ever asked, I mean really asked, "WHO AM I?"

What defines me?

What makes you feel important or feel good about yourself?

PAUSE

Where do you get your identity from?

When you introduce yourself, what do you say?

Could it be what you do? "I am an accountant"

Or your education "I am a qualified psychologist" or "I am studying for my MBA"

What about your title "I am the General Manager"

Do we give more value to someone who is a CEO versus a housekeeper?

Is it about how much you own? (The car I drive or my possessions)

How about your family name or who you are associated with? (Pastor's wife)

What about your achievements? (I have won the comrades)

Does that make you feel worthy and important?

Is it how much others affirm or don't affirm you?

How about the clothes you wear and how you look like?

Let's take it on a Spiritual level:

Do you get your identity on how long you have been a Christian? What about your judgement of someone else – "That person has been a Christian for years, they must be really spiritual"

How many Bible verses you know.

What about the ministry you are in or the title you have in the church?

Your relationship with Jesus and that you put God first?

The way we can see what is really important to us and what defines us is by thinking of situations that we have been in and the way we react to them.

Example: Develop and grow people vs Recognition

What is important to me is that I can develop others and see them grow – training leadership skills.

I train and coach this person for a full year and she receives the top achievement award at a huge ceremony.

She thanks everyone for their contribution except for me.

What is my reaction?

If I am disappointed and hurt or even offended that she does not acknowledge me and my contribution, what does that say about what is really important to me? RECOGNITION, not developing others!

How would you react or have reacted in these situations?

How would you feel about yourself if you lost your job? (retrenched, employers leaving the country)

Think about a situation when you really messed up – someone may consider it failing?

If you are at school or university, you set a target to get a B and get a C.

How do you react when you are asked to do menial tasks?

How does it feel when you have done your very best and you are still criticised for that?

If your boss or friends undermine your character and disrespect you?

Who do I say I am? Why does it matter?

Our identity and the way we see ourselves directly impacts the way we live.

We filter everything through these lenses.

This affects the way we think feel behave and spend our time focusing on.

We are challenged today to assess this against God's word.

Our reading comes from Romans 8 but first, let us understand the book of ROMANS so that we get the context of our reading today.

Paul writes in chapters 1-4 of our great need for righteousness and of God's provision of it through Jesus Christ. What we sinners cannot do for ourselves, God has done for us in Christ. We are forgiven of our sins and declared righteous, not by striving to please God by our good works, but by trusting in Jesus Christ, in faith.

In Chapters 5-8, Paul speaks to those who have made Jesus their Lord and Saviour and have been justified and made righteous by faith. He writes about the need for a change in the lifestyle of the Christian – death to sin and living out God's righteousness before men.

In Chapter 8, Paul writes about the role of the Holy Spirit and what that means to us.

Verse 1 of Chapter 8 starts with **THEREFORE there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2. For the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you through Christ Jesus from the power of sin that leads to death.**

Let us now read our text for today

Romans 8:14-17 "For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. 15 The Spirit you received does not make you slaves so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba Father" 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. 17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory."

Who are you?

PAUSE

Truth 1: I am a child of God

1 John 3:1 "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!"

How do we become children of God?

1. We are born again of the Spirit when we accept Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. (Verse 14 says we are led by the Spirit) Jesus stated clearly that we need to be born again – not of water and flesh but of the Spirit.

When we are born again we are born into God's spiritual family.

2. We received the Spirit of **Adoption**.

Adoption in those days did not mean the same as what we know it means today.

We understand adoption to be when we bring a child who is not of our flesh and blood into our family through a legal process of adoption.

The Greeks and Romans had a ceremony called Adoption, which literally means "the placing of a son."

As long as a child was under the legal age of inheritance, they were not really considered to be a full-fledged member of the family.

They did not enjoy all the rights and privileges of family membership.

When they became an adult, that is the legal age of inheritance, they went thru a ceremony called the "toga virilis".

They would take the toga off of the back of the adult, place it on the back of the child, and then pronounce them to be a full-fledged member of the family, with all the rights and privileges.

Paul uses this understanding of Adoption for us to understand our place in God's family.

Galatians 4:1-2 " Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father. 3 That is the way it was with us before Christ came. We were slaves to the spiritual powers of the world. But when the right time came, God sent his Son born of a woman subject to the law. God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law so that he could adopt us as his very children.

Here is the significance:

With Rebirth we are born again and became a child of God - literally

With Adoption we became a child of God - legally

THEREFORE....

We can call out to God as Abba Father

What a privilege we have to call the God of all creation Father – with reverence and submission.

He is Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End

He is perfect in all His ways.

He is goodness, kindness, faithfulness

He is Holy, Righteous and worthy to be praised.

Truth 2: We are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ

In verse 15: **When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ."**

As fully adopted and accepted children of God, we share the same inheritance as Jesus. Before Jesus died, he is referred to as the only begotten Son.

After he has risen, he is now called the First Born

In Roman times, the first born would normally get the bulk if not all of the inheritance. God says, no – you are joint heirs with the First Born - Jesus.

Our relationship is not one of uncertainty but of belonging.
To be told that we are loved and part of God's family is one thing, but to be adopted and made joint heirs with the Son of God goes so much further.
We are heirs in full.
Not just on paper.
Not just for appearance' sake.
Not just as a token.
But heirs with a full share in the inheritance.

Our right to this divine inheritance stands or falls with Christ's.
If Christ has no inheritance, nor do we.
Our two interests are intertwined and made one.
We have no inheritance apart from Jesus.
We have no right to heaven, our right lies in Christ.
When we are forgiven, it is through HIS blood
When we are justified, it is through HIS righteousness.
And when we be glorified in the end, it is because God the Father glorified His Son Jesus.

So, my question to you is Are you in Christ or not?

What an honour is placed on us.
We have the family name of Jesus marked in us and we are inseparable from Jesus.
We bear the mark of the King of Kings, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
The same hand that wrote Jesus as heir of all things, wrote our names in His book of life.

So ... this we now know ... in our heads. So why don't we believe it?

Think back to what you said your identity is and what is important to you.
Think about your reactions to those situations I prompted you in
Does it really matter what job you have, what others say you are or are not?
What does your reaction tell you about yourself
Do you really KNOW, in your heart, that you are a child of God and you have value regardless of your circumstance, what others say about you or to you.

How do we change that from head knowledge to our hearts?
How do we see ourselves through God's eyes and not our own?

The decider sits in verse 15 and 16

15 The Spirit you received does not make you slaves so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba Father" 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

When we become Christians not only does the Holy Spirit fill us and renew us but our spirit is awakened and connects with God.
Our SPIRITS become one. We are grafted together.
Look in verse 16: **The spirit himself testifies with our spirit.**
Until we unlock the spiritual, we will never "get it"

If we see this passage through our physical eyes, we are not connecting spirit to spirit.

Romans 8:5 “Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires”

Do you see yourself as a physical or spiritual being?

By which spirit are you operating?

Is it the spirit of slavery or of sonship?

How big is your box? (spiritual box vs physical box)

Are you living 80% in the physical with a spiritual top up?

If we were to take a continuum

Physical eyes

Spiritual eyes

Where do you operate from?

Do you see yourself fully grafted into Jesus as a co-heir?

Until we see our lives in the Spirit, we will always see and live through our physical eyes and understanding.

Only when I truly understand

Who I am in the Spirit

And my infinite worth

Will the physical in which I live become dull and unimportant.

No matter what others say or think about me, and even what I say and think about myself, it DOES NOT CHANGE my value as a child of God and co-heir with Jesus.

Refer to Passage:

We will now give you time for reflection and hearing from God.

Doug taught us about listening for God's voice last week.

Awaken your spiritual eyes. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you Spirit to spirit.

What are the lies that hold you bondage to fear – I am not good enough, I don't deserve this, I can never get this right. My father wasn't the best, how can I trust Father God?

What is your truth Jesus? What do you Jesus say about this belief I have about myself?

Ask for feedback:

Did anyone hear anything from the Lord?

What is different from how you saw yourself in the beginning?

How will this change the way you think, feel and behave

If you did not hear anything, spend time in prayer this week, listening to what God might say to you – especially when you sense a reaction in you that is likely to be bondage to fear.

Amen