



SERMON BASED STUDY GUIDE

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IDENTITY IN CHRIST WEEK 1

OPENING & PRAYER:

Identity is one of the biggest things a believer can get a hold of, because it changes how life gets lived, how God gets approached, and how everything around them gets seen. The question is not merely who God is or what a person is here for, but who a person really is. The orphan picture makes it plain. An orphan kid can get adopted into the wealthiest family in the world and still hide food, steal silverware, and live scared because his heart has not caught up with his new home.

"Lord, thank you for the opportunity to study in Your Word today. We pray that You lead and guide our study as we learn more about our identity in You. In Jesus' name we pray, amen."

SCRIPTURE:

"A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. **John 14:19-20**

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. **John 15:1-3**

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. **John 15:4-5**

the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Colossians 1:26-27

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. **1 John 4:4**

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **Ephesians 1:1-2**

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, **Ephesians 1:3-4**

having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. **Ephesians 1:5-6**

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, **Ephesians 1:7-8**

having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. **Ephesians 1:9-10**

In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. **Ephesians 1:11-12**

In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

Ephesians 1:13-14

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. **2 Corinthians 5:17**

GO DEEPER:

God adopts people into His family when they are born again. The Father is good, wealthy beyond measure, loving, correcting, guiding, and fully aware of every need. But an orphan heart still looks at hardship and asks, "If God is good, how come this?" That disconnected heart has to give way to the Father's heart. Identity cannot be built on family patterns, money, skin color, job, car, achievements, feelings, or what people say. A believer is what God says they are, nothing more and nothing less.

Worldly identity is all about self, appearance, achievement, and external validation. That stuff moves all the time. One day people praise, the next day they curse. Nice things are fine, but they are superficial. They can all be gone tomorrow, and none of it changes whose a believer is. Biblical identity is focused on Christ, based on God's unchanging truth and Christ's finished work. Jesus is in the Father, believers are in Jesus, and Jesus is in them.

The vine and branches show that identity in Christ produces fruit. God prunes branches, and pruning hurts, but it cuts away what keeps a life from bearing more fruit. Christ in believers is the mystery hidden through the ages, the hope of glory. Angels do not share this privilege. Believers are in Christ, and Christ is in them.

Identity in Christ changes self-image, relationship with God, courage in challenges, lifestyle, spiritual warfare, and relationships with people. Sonship does not walk into the Father's house like a stranger scared to sit on the furniture or open the fridge. Sonship knows the Father loves to bless His children. Ephesians 1 names the identity God gives: blessed, chosen, holy, without blame, adopted, accepted, redeemed, forgiven, sealed, and purchased by Jesus. The old person is gone. In Christ, a believer is a new creation, and the Word of God gets the final say.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

1. Leave the orphan heart behind. The orphan heart expects lack even while standing in the Father's house. It keeps storing up fear, reading every hardship as rejection, and struggling to receive what love has already provided. Adoption calls a believer to learn a new way of living, not merely to enter a new religious system. **[03:59]**

2. God's word names the believer. Feelings can be loud, family history can be real, and other people can have plenty to say. But none of those voices gets to establish identity over the Father's voice. A believer is not required to agree with depression, shame, failure, or inherited labels when God says something different. **[06:40]**

3. Abide in Christ for fruit. The branch does not produce fruit by trying harder apart from the vine. Christ brings cleansing, growth, and pruning as a believer stays connected to Him. Pruning can hurt, but God cuts for more fruit, not to throw His children away. **[12:52]**

4. Sonship changes how God is approached. Sonship does not try to wear God out or twist His arm through religious effort. The Father is not stingy, mad, or looking for a reason to push His children away. Believers approach Him through Christ with the settled confidence of children who belong in the house. **[23:41]**

5. Claim the new creation identity. Ephesians 1 gives believers a list worth saying out loud: blessed, chosen, holy, accepted, redeemed, forgiven, sealed, and purchased. The old identity does not get to keep defining a person after new life in Christ has come. The Word establishes what is true before circumstances ever catch up.

LEARNING AND GROWING:

1. In John 15:1-5, what does Jesus say is the relationship between the vine, the branches, and fruit? **[12:52]**
2. If God's pruning is meant to lead to more fruit, how can a believer tell the difference between being rejected by God and being lovingly corrected or redirected by Him? **[13:44]**
3. What label has been most tempting for you to carry—something from your past, family, struggles, work, finances, or other people's opinions? How does that label compare with what God says about you in Christ? **[06:40]**
4. Which truth from Ephesians 1 do you need to say and believe this week: blessed, chosen, holy, accepted, redeemed, forgiven, sealed, or adopted? Why does that particular truth meet you where you are? **[37:08]**
5. Has there been a recent loss, closed door, correction, or difficult season that may be part of God's pruning work? What might God be cutting away, and what fruit could He be growing through it? **[13:44]**

CLOSING PRAYER:

"Lord, in a world constantly trying to tell us who we are by what we do, I thank you for the gift of finding my identity in You and who You say I am. I pray while finding my identity in You, that I can be a light to those around me. In Jesus' name I pray, amen."