

Who Are You?

This is a short series of sermons called 'Who Are You?', through which we will explore some elements of our new identity in Christ – Christ-followers.

Identity is an extremely important and personal issue for everybody. You only have to open a bank account, get a driver's licence, get married, or apply for a passport to travel overseas, to discover how important your identity is. And once you have established your identity, many opportunities open up to you.

Moses asked the question, "*Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?*" His identity became rooted in who God is!!! (Ex 3:11-15).

King David asked the question in Psalm 8, *Of what importance is the human race, that you should notice them? Of what importance is mankind, that you should pay attention to them?* (Ps 8:4 NET)

Jesus asked his disciples the question, "*Who do people say the Son of Man is?*" (Matt 16:13)

As followers of Jesus Christ we need to understand this: our identity gives us authentic 'Throne Rights', which we must recognise and learn how to use over time! For example:

¹⁴ *Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.* ¹⁵ *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to feel sympathy for our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet he did not sin.* ¹⁶ *Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

(Heb 5:14-16)

¹⁰ *His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms,* ¹¹ *according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.* ¹² *In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.*

(Eph 3:10-12)

Throne Rights 1

You Are an Unconditionally Loved Child of God

There are a number of reasons why this is so, and what that means for us now!!!

- ...because God is LOVE – love is his greatest motivator!!!

⁷ *Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.* ⁸ *Whoever does not love does not know God, because*

God is love. ⁹ This is how God showed his love among us: he sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. (1Jn 4:7-9)

- ...because you are highly valued by God

As John said, God sent his Son to show the reality of his love – the price that God was willing to pay for your love and partnership in his global mission of reconciliation and transformation was exorbitant – it cost Jesus his life, which he willingly gave for each of us!!!

- ...because you have been born into God's family through a spiritual new birth.

¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. (Jn 1:12-13)

Our spiritual new birth is the first stage of God's transformational work within our lives. Our human spirit had become dead to God as a result of Adam's failure to faithfully obey God's word of instruction to him – "...you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die" (Gen 2:17).

They did not physically die immediately, but they did die spiritually immediately. Their problem was, they did not trust God for his wisdom to know how to respond effectively to Satan's deception. It is our new birth that reconnects us to God through the Holy Spirit taking up residence within our lives.

- ...because you share in Christ's inheritance with him

¹⁵ ...you received the Spirit of 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. (Rom 8:15-17)

Jesus brings us into the same very special relationship that he has with his Father – 'we cry, *Abba, Father.*' *Abba* is an Aramaic word that was the language spoken by the local Jews of that era. It has the double-barrel meaning of both 'intimacy' and 'obedience', because it encapsulates both the relaxed atmosphere of a family setting, but also the respect for the father as the head of a Jewish family.

Because of this special relationship with our heavenly Father, through the Son and the Spirit, the Holy Spirit speaks to us through our human spirit, telling us we are part of the family!!!

- ...because you will be totally transformed into the same form as the risen Christ in the resurrection

¹ See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! ² Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ³ All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

(1Jn 3:1-3)

The sure hope that we have as God's children through our faith in Jesus as God's Son, is the certainty of Christ's return – his second coming to receive the fulfilment of his inheritance.

We will see him as he is, and we will be like him just as he is!!!