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SERMON TITLE

Who Do You Think You Are? (part 4)

SERIES

Who Do You Think You Are?

DATE

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KEY SCRIPTURE

Jn. 15; 1 Cor. 3; 2 Cor. 5; Eph. 1

SYNOPSIS

Scripture has a lot to say about who we are in Christ. Knowing who you really are is encouraging and inspiring for your walk with God.

HIGHLIGHTS



☞ Who do you think you are?

Don't be a dinglehopper. Know your true identity in Christ and begin living like it.

You need to know who you are! Previously:

You're a child, friend and heir of God. You're part of his body; a masterpiece; redeemed and set free from sin. You are no longer condemned; a conqueror, covered by the Lord; and you are capable through his power that is in you.

Here's more for today. Who do you think you are?

☞ You are a branch

John 15:5-8

I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. 8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

First, this is encouraging, because it indicates a belonging and attachment to the Lord. We are connected to him and he is continually giving us life. He is the vine from which life to the branches flows.

☞ But there is also a caution here: stay connected! The word “**remain**” is used three times in these few verses and two more times in the preceding verses. This is important. If you are not strengthening your connection with Christ, you are in danger of becoming detached, which leads to separation and loss of life. A few weeks ago, we had a branch break off from our tree. It had a bunch of smaller branches, twigs and leaves attached to it. But guess what? It didn't take long at all for those leaves to dry up and the branches to become brittle. They were detached from the main trunk and were no longer receiving life-giving nourishment. We eventually cut those branches into smaller pieces and burned them all up. That same thing can happen to us spiritually. We've got to stay connected. Again, today, I say, it's time to get back to church. We need each other and we help each other stay connected to the true vine.

☞ You are a branch and branches are supposed to **bear fruit**. In fact, Jesus says that branches that stay firmly connected will bear a lot of fruit. He also says that being fruitful brings glory to God and proves that you are a disciple of Christ. We often talk about John 13:34 which says the world will know we are his disciples by our love for each other. That goes back to our need for each other. However, here, Jesus says that fruitfulness is another important indicator of discipleship.

When we think of fruit from a spiritual standpoint, we naturally think of the fruit of the Spirit found in Galatians 5:22-23: “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” So, you can do some self-evaluation of your



connection with Christ. How loving and joyful are you? Are you patient and at peace in all situations? Are you kind and good toward others? Are you faithful to the Lord? What about gentleness? What about self-control? These are all indicators of fruitfulness and your connection to the Lord. You are a branch, but if these qualities are in low quantity, you need to strengthen your connection with the Lord.

You are a branch that is expected to be fruitful. In addition to the fruit of the Spirit, another aspect of fruitfulness is reproduction. That all started in the Garden of Eden when God told Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply. In fact, in all of creation, there is an innate ability and desire to reproduce. It's evidence of God's handiwork. It's the same spiritually - God expects reproduction to take place. That means he wants us to be fruitful and multiply as believers, too. When's the last time you led someone to the Lord? When's the last time you even shared your faith with others?

You are branch, designed to be fruitful.

☞ You are God's temple

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.

The main idea here is that God lives within you. The Spirit of God, the creator of the universe, resides within you. That's an amazing thought! In the Old Testament, Israel started with a simple tabernacle in which God would make visitation and his glory would manifest in a cloud by day and a fire by night. Then after David was king, Solomon built a temple for the Lord which was incredibly expensive and ornate. God's shekinah glory filled that temple and on occasion was so overwhelming that all their normal practices were disrupted. Now, since ☞ Christ, we are the temple of God. He **fills us with his glory**.

2 Corinthians 6:16 talks about this as well:

What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

Here we see again the emphasis that God actually lives and walks among us. He resides within. We are his people. We are his temple. But this scripture adds a caution: the temple of God is to ☞ be **dedicated exclusively to him**. No idols allowed.

Warren Wiersbe... The attitude of too many Christians today is that the church should court and please the world in order to try to win it. Nothing could be further from the truth! There must be separation from sin. This does not mean isolation, retreating from the world; it does mean keeping ourselves from the defilement of the world. It is fine for the ship to be in the water, but when water gets into the ship, look out!



This reminds us that we are a holy people – set apart for God. An idol is anything that competes for priority with God. Anything, or anyone, can become an idol if we place the value for that thing or person above our value for God. Things like:

Money: Many people trust their money more than they trust God.

Entertainment: We are obsessed with being entertained. When our lives become all about the search for entertainment, then it's become an idol. It's become more important than God.

Sex: Our culture is obsessed with sex. It is everywhere. We have taken a gift from God and made it into the god of our lives. And for many, their lives are controlled by sex.

Phones: Or tablets or whatever you carry around with you and can't stop checking every five minutes. If you're giving your electronic device more time and attention than your loved ones, something's wrong.

Worship: Yep, you heard me. Even strong believers can get off track here, when we worship “worship” more than we worship God. Thoughts like, “I hope the worship is good today” or, “I didn't really like the worship today” reveal a misaligned focus. Worship is not about you; it's about God!

1 Peter 2:5 ties in here:

you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, **☞ offering spiritual sacrifices** acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

You are God's temple and, in a temple, sacrifices are made to God. For us, the sacrifices are all about serving God. Ultimately, we offer our very selves as living sacrifices to God. (Rom. 12:1) Sacrificing is also praising God and doing good to others. (Heb. 13:15-16) Philippians 4 talks about financial giving as an acceptable sacrifice to God. And, in Romans 15:16, even the people we win to Christ are an acceptable sacrifice to God.

You are God's temple, filled with his glory and making spiritual sacrifices to God.

☞ You are God's ambassador

2 Corinthians 5:17-20

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.

Ambassador = emissary, envoy, diplomat, deputy, agent.



Merriam Webster Dictionary: a diplomatic agent of the highest rank accredited to a foreign government as the resident representative of his own government, appointed for a special and often temporary diplomatic assignment.

There is so much to the idea of being ambassadors! An ambassador does not speak to please his audience, but the King who sent him. An ambassador does not speak on his own authority - his own opinions or demands mean little. He simply says what he has been commissioned to say. But an ambassador is more than a messenger; he is also a representative, and the honor and reputation of his country are in his hands.

☞ You are an ambassador for God! You are his agent on a mission. You **represent him** to those around you. By your words and actions, you **communicate God's message**. His message is reconciliation. I've preached before about how the fundamental message of the Bible is summed up in the word, redemption. Here's the message – God created mankind to be in close fellowship with him, but the fellowship has been broken because of sin. But through Christ, the damage of sin can be removed and that fellowship restored. That is the gospel message. That is what we are called to communicate. You are an ambassador, a diplomat for God.

☞ As a diplomat, this is all done **with** - you guessed it – **diplomacy**. Diplomacy is skill in handling affairs without raising hostility. It is tact, courtesy, sensitivity, and charm all working together to influence others. Isaac Newton said, "Tact is the art of making a point without making an enemy."

Colossians 4:5-6

Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

You are God's ambassador, representing him.

☞ **You are a saint.**

Ephesians 1:1-2

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

The word "saint" is used no less than 45 times in the New Testament to refer to believers. Saint really means "holy one" or a person belonging to God. The focus is not upon a particular state of holiness, but upon **a special relationship with God**. This word is not reserved for the especially great Christians who accomplish something truly significant. It describes all believers.

You are not just "a sinner, saved by grace." You are a saint. The "sinner, saved by grace" is true, but it is incomplete. Paul acknowledge that he was a sinner of the worst kind. (1 Tim. 1:15) But ☞ he also understood that he was **called and set apart by God**. (Rom. 1:1)



The first identity is good so far as it keeps us humble, remembering that all we are is due to God's grace. But the latter identity reminds us how God thinks of us and helps us live a righteous life. It's who you are. You are a saint.

- ☞ **As a saint, you are loved and called by God. (Rom. 1:7)**
- ☞ **The Holy Spirit intercedes for you according to God's will. (Rom. 8:27)**
- ☞ **As a saint, you will judge the world & are capable of judging smaller matters now. (1 Cor. 6:2)**
- ☞ **As a saint, you are faithful in both the big and the small things. (Eph. 1:1)**
- ☞ **You are qualified to receive an eternal inheritance. (Col. 1:12)**
- ☞ **You are able to understand the mysteries of God. (Col. 1:26)**
- ☞ **Your prayers go up and are heard by God. (Rev. 8:4)**
- ☞ **As a saint, you have a reward coming. (Rev. 11:18)**
- ☞ **You are called and capable to endure and remain faithful in all circumstances. (Rev. 13:10)**
- ☞ **As a saint, God, himself, will judge those who mistreat and persecute you. (Rev. 18:20)**

You are a saint, in a special relationship with God!

Who do you think you are?

You are a branch. Remain in the Lord and be fruitful.

You are God's temple. Filled with his glory; exclusive to him; offering spiritual sacrifices.

You are God's ambassador. Represent; communicate his message with diplomacy.

You are a saint. You have a special relationship with God and so many good things come with being a saint. Remember who you are!

We're the People of God