



OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST

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From time to time we hear on the news of some people who through a traumatic experience in their lives lose their memories.

Maybe they have been beaten up with serious brain injuries and they cannot remember who they are; whether they are married or single, where they work or where they live. Their identity has gone. Sometimes their memory returns to them but in many cases it does not.

They have no idea who they are, no idea of their past, present or future. Their identity has gone. It is a terrible thing to happen.

Did you know that Satan is trying to erase your true identity and mine? He is you know. There is a spiritual war going on over your identity. Satan cannot create anything. Only God can create.

What Satan does though is, he perverts, he destroys, and he distorts your identity. Gradually he wants to rub it out.

So anything that God creates, he takes what God has created and perverts, distorts and destroys. He takes sex and perverts it; he takes relationships and destroys them; he takes thoughts and distorts them. He takes God's truth and alters it too.

Satan cannot hurt God because he is not as powerful as God, if he was as powerful he would do it, but he can't. Incidentally God created Satan, Satan did not create himself. So because he cannot hurt God he hurts God's children. He is very skilled at this.

If he can keep you from being you, and hide your true identity he has succeeded in hurting God.

How does Satan do this? How does he keep you from knowing your true identity? Well He uses different tools to do this and they are generally always the same tools. They seldom change over the centuries.

One of them is the Opinions of other People.

Parents, friends, colleagues, family members have said things about you all through your life; some of the things have been good some of them bad; some of them true; some of them not true; and most of the time they have said these things to mould you and shape you to be like them.

They want you, to be what they want you to be. Not what God wants you to be. And Satan uses the opinions of others to prevent you from finding out the real you.

Secondly; he also uses hurt and pain to deceive you in your life. If he can get you guilty, angry, bitter, resentful, ashamed, hating, he knows you are going to miss your true identity. He wants to fill you up with these sort of things.

He can use hate or bitterness in your life to the extent that it becomes all consuming; that's all you ever think off. Getting you own back or how to hurt that person.

Thirdly he uses the MEDIA all the time. The messages are why can't you be like that person. You should look them, you should dress like them, you are never going to have their talent or their ability.

Be more like them, be more like everybody else. Why don't you buy what they buy and have what they have; Not to be you – but to be like everybody else.

And Satan puts thoughts in your mind. When God puts a thought in your mind its inspiration, it's a great thought; like a light coming on. When Satan puts a thought into your mind its temptation; there's a twist to it; a hidden agenda.

We have thoughts as well; but most of those thoughts are stupid; one or two are good; most are stupid. WE choose which thoughts we are going to hold on to.

However; the thoughts that Satan puts in our minds are; you have to earn God's acceptance to be loved and liked by him; you have to earn it. He says things like; you don't matter, you're not important, your worthless. That sin you committed 3 years ago you could never be forgiven for that. You should be ashamed of yourself.

What are people going to say when they find out you did this.

It is tragic and it seems to be a daily occurrence when a young person takes their own life over comments made or photographs taken that have gone public, or the threat to do so; on social media. Something is very badly wrong in our society with social media.

All shame comes from Satan. It doesn't come from God; shame comes from Satan. These are the things he says to you to prevent you from understanding your true identity. I hope you can see his methodology.

But the number one tool he uses is to erase your true identity is; to repeat what he has told you. How can that be, you may ask yourself??

Well He will plant a seed in your mind at some point, he walks away and allows you to keep on repeating it.

You heard and you believe it. I'm worthless, I'm no good, I'm never going to amount to that. I can't do this and I can't do that. I'm guilty, I'm ashamed and that's me, that's the true me. That's my identity.

Things stick with you. You can believe your own assessment of yourself very easily.

Has that ever happened to you. In my home church in Bangor we had very fine preachers in that

church over the years. Very articulate, very well educated, natural orators.

Satan used to say to me you could never be like those men. You're not educated to their level; you're not an orator like them, you don't have their command of English. You don't have their presence. You not smart enough. Besides your too old; your past it.

Do you know what – I believed it?

Maybe you have convinced yourself through the seed Satan has planted or the seed he has got others to plant for him, that you are not good enough, too old, too stupid; you don't have that talent.

Now then you may well ask;.....If all these tools are being used against me to conceal and hide my true identity, how can I know the real me??

Blaise Pascal was a very famous French mathematician, physicist, and philosopher in the 17th century. An extremely intelligent and clever man. He invented many things but as a Christian he wrote; 'not only do we know God through Jesus but we only know ourselves through Jesus Christ. Apart from Jesus Christ we cannot know the meaning of life. We cannot know ourselves, we cannot know God; except through Jesus Christ.'

Now this term 'in Christ' is found 140 times in the bible which is a lot. It is the most used term to describe a disciple or believer. By contrast a 'Christian' is used only a few times.

About 35 of those times God says; because you are 'IN Christ' here is your true identity, here is who you truly are. Here's who you were made to be, here's the real you.

This is what it means to be 'In Christ'. These are the 4 finger prints of your true identity. Can you find the 4 marks? This is your test. What are the 4 marks:

- You are chosen
- There's a Royal Priesthood
- You are Holy
- You belong to God

And because of these things God wants us to praise him, which is right and proper.

All of these fingerprints of your true identity given to us by God point to ONE thing that I am completely accepted. I am completely accepted by Christ.

The deepest wounds in our lives have come from Rejection. All of us have these wounds. Generally, they are hidden concealed wounds that we carry around with us.

They have been caused mainly by spouses, family, friends, or people at work. We have felt rejected through their actions; a divorce, cut out from the will; dumped from a relationship; ignored at work.

Out of that wound or wounds we try to find acceptance in our lives. But We look for it usually in the wrong places; we look to parents, family, work, partners; the pub; entertainment, activities; and what happens is that you see the same pattern emerging again and its usually based on how well we are doing. Am I wearing the right clothes; am I going to the right bar, driving the right car.

If You look back to the sixties, seventies or eighties and see what people are wearing; you say to yourself what on earth were they wearing those things or why did they have their hair in that way. Why because they needed acceptance. We've all been there.

The pain of not being Chosen is too great. Not being chosen in the school playground can last a lifetime and can lead on to other things. At school I was good at sport so I was generally chosen first or second and you know what; it made me feel good.

I can still remember being chosen first for the football, cricket or basketball.

When you are chosen it makes you feel good doesn't it. When you are selected to play for the first eleven or first 15 and your name is pinned up on the notice board it makes you feel good. Or chosen to represent your school or your work in a particular event. Being part of a promotional team for your work.

But invariably unless we are naturally talented and gifted in some particular way which most of us are Not; we run the risk of chasing after this acceptance from other people and other things and get disappointed.

But with God we don't have to do that. With God he accepts you as you are.

It doesn't matter to him if you are broken and hurting or bleeding inside. In fact, sometimes that is a good thing. You have been chosen by God himself. That is the truth. But How do I know this even though I don't feel it?

Because God chose me before everything. Eph 1:4 he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight by his love.'

Think about that for a moment. Before God chose to make the oceans he chose you. Before he made the solar system he made you. Before he put the moon, sun and stars in their orbit he chose you. Before he placed a flower, a tree, a mountain, or elephant on this planet; he chose you.

That's how I know my true identity. He chose me because he has said so.

Jesus made me acceptable. Titus 3 v 7. Jesus treated us much better than we deserve. He made us acceptable to God and gave us the hope of eternal life.'

God Made us and gave us.' Do not try to perform your way into acceptance by God because it is not based on performance it's based on a gift. This is where the true identity starts.

That's the mistake the rich young ruler made with Jesus. His idea of being accepted by Jesus was based on performance. He told Jesus that he had kept all the commandments since he was a boy. There was no one like him, very few could keep the commandments as he had.

His acceptance by Jesus was based on his spiritual performance.

God's view of me ' IN Christ' is this; I am extremely valuable. But We actually want more than acceptance, we want to be valued.

God says I don't just accept you; I value you.

Holy' and valuable. Holy means valuable. The Holy Bible is extremely valuable the holy land the holy city, holy of holies is considered more than just normal it is considered extremely valuable. God says your true identity is extremely holy and very valuable.

What is it that makes something valuable? First thing is who owns it. Things owned by famous people are of more value than things NOT owned by famous people.

Tennis shoes. You go on line and see that a football shirt worn by Messi is for sale and one worn by Alan Wilson is for sale. Which one will you buy. It's a no brainer. It's the same with a rare book or rare letter that has been hand written.

It's not the owner of the book that is valuable but who wrote it. God is the author of your life.

If God is your owner/author you are extremely valuable. If you belong to the King of Kings you are his treasured possession because nobody values you more than God. Others may not value you, but God does.

Why am I extremely valuable; because God is my father and I am in his family. One day in heaven he will share all his glory and all his inheritance with me. He will share everything with his children. God wanted children and he has millions of them.

Now this is important; everybody is created by God, but NOT everybody is a child of God. Everybody is loved by God; but NOT everybody loves God. I think we would all accept that.

You have to choose to be in God's family and a lot of people do not choose to be in his family. You do not automatically qualify to be in God's family because God happens to love you. You are to love God.

Nor do people choose to trust in his Son Jesus Christ. And that's the key to finding your true identity. Trusting in Jesus.

When we choose to trust in Jesus there's that phrase again, In Jesus. When we choose to trust in Jesus our heavenly father promises to take care of all our needs.

Jesus says, "consider the ravens; They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn, yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds." God takes care of birds, and animals and insects. If he does that for them, then He will take care of you

How much are you worth. Look at the cross and see how much you are worth. This is how much you are worth. Arms wide open. Jesus is saying I'd rather die than live without you. I'm willing to die and shed my blood for you in order that you may have faith, forgiveness, and eternal life.

The greatest ransom ever paid in the history of the world was given by God to buy you and secure your identity in him. Amen.

Alan Wilson is a Presbyterian Minister in Northern Ireland, where he serves a large congregation, supported by his wife. Before he took up the call to serve Christ, he was in the Royal Ulster Constabulary for 30-years. He has two children and two grandchildren and enjoys soccer, gardening, zoology, politics and reading. He voted for Brexit in the hope that the stranglehold of Brussels might finally be broken. He welcomes any that might wish to correspond with him through the [Contact Page](#) of The Postil.

The [photo](#) shows, "St. Mary Magdalene in House of Simon the Pharisee," by Jean Beraud, painted in 1891.

