

Finding Your Identity

by David Guzik

This sermon delves into the concept of identity in Jesus Christ, using the life of Moses as an example. It emphasizes the importance of understanding who we are, who we are not, and to whom we belong in the context of our faith. The speaker highlights the need for a fundamental shift in identity when becoming a Christian, moving from making Jesus part of our story to being part of His story.

Scripture: Hebrews 11:24, Romans 6:6, Galatians 3:26, Ephesians 1:13, Luke 2:49

Topics: "Identity in Christ", "Transformation through Faith"

Description

This sermon delves into the concept of identity in Jesus Christ, using the life of Moses as an example. It emphasizes the importance of understanding who we are, who we are not, and to whom we belong in the context of our faith. The speaker highlights the need for a fundamental shift in identity when becoming a Christian, moving from making Jesus part of our story to being part of His story.

Transcript

I'm not a social scientist. I don't think necessarily I have the keenest eye in observing the culture and the world around me. I'm not the expert on all those things.

But I'll just tell you what I see and what I perceive. I look at how things are today, and invariably someone from my generation, I compare them to what I understood when I was young. I was born in 1962.

I pretty much have an awareness of things and the culture and life around me, you know, starting in the 1970s. And I came to faith in Jesus Christ in the mid-1970s, when I was 13 years old. Again, coming from that nominally Roman Catholic home.

But I came into faith in Christ in the mid-70s. And so I had an understanding of what the world in general was about, at least the Western world, the United States at that time. I also had some understanding about what the Christian culture was like in the mid-1970s.

And this is what I observed. I observed something that probably seems completely foreign to you and to your generation. And I don't think that it can necessarily be replicated.

Let me explain to you what I mean. What I saw in those years was an incredible interest on behalf of the culture at large and believers. They were asking these questions.

These questions were big in the culture and among believers. What's gonna happen to this world? Where does the future lead? How does it all end up? These were years when the idea of ecological crisis first began to come very heavily upon things. Population explosion, nuclear annihilation, the Cold War, on and on.

People really wondered if humanity was gonna last another five or 10 years. Now, I don't know. I mean, you guys live in the atmosphere today where there's anxiety about global warming and future and things like that.

But I don't think you can relate to the kind of things. Literally, people lived in fear that presidents or politicians were gonna push a button and that the world could end. I mean, this kind of fear and anxiety was like a fog that hung over everything.

Again, because of the ecology, because of population, because of social trends, and especially because of the nuclear threat, there was a very high anxiety. People were asking these questions. What does the future hold? Is this world gonna make it? How does it all shake out? Now, what I find fascinating about that is that at that time and place, the church had an answer for the world.

And the answer was rooted in what we would call biblical prophecy or eschatology. The answer is to say, you know, the Bible talks about the future. The Bible says what's gonna happen.

The Bible says it's gonna happen with these nations. The Bible says this is gonna happen. Look, you can see it happening all around us.

This is the world, and in a way that, again, I don't expect your generation to connect with, but I just want you to understand it, even in a detached sense. In an amazing way, hundreds of thousands of people, if not millions of people, came to Christ through preaching on prophetic end times eschatological subjects. Now, can you imagine that? I imagine for somebody from your guys' perspective, that must seem like on the dark side of the moon.

Somebody gets up and preaching to a popular audience, lots of people who are not yet believers in the audience, and they're talking about the end of the world, the rapture of the church, the re-establishment of Israel, all that, and then they give an altar call, and many, many people come to Christ. You know, for you, I could see, how do those two things go together? Ateah fits together because the church had an answer for the questions that the culture was asking. In those times, I saw it.

The church had an answer for the questions that the culture was asking. Now, fast forward to 2018. The culture's asking different questions.

The same questions aren't connected. Now, I believe that what the Bible says about prophecy, eschatology, end times, I believe that it is just as true today as it was in the 1970s. In the 1970s, by some measures, the best-selling non-fiction book of the decade was a book about prophecy, titled *The Late Great Planet Earth*, written by a guy named Hal Lindsey.

That was the best-selling book of the decade, non-fiction. And why? Because it answered questions, or at least it spoke. You could judge for yourself whether or not it answered the questions, but at the very least, it spoke to the questions that the culture was asking.

Our culture's asking different questions today. And I see, I don't know if I understand it entirely. Again, I gave that little disclaimer that I'm not really a pundit.

I'm not really a great teen social observer. I don't know all that stuff. But it does seem to me like today, more than ever, the culture is asking these critical questions.

They want to know things about identity. It's out there in the air. People want to know, who am I and to whom do I belong? In other words, who am I, myself, and to what people do I belong to? I don't know if this is the only question the culture's asking, but I know it's somewhere on the list.

It's gotta be up there in the top five. People want to know these things. These things are driving our modern culture.

And so much of what we see in the present day, it revolves around those very questions. Look, you gotta be blind if you don't see that political and social issues today revolve around identity. Who am I, and basically, what team am I on? If I'm on team red, then I'm team red, and team blue can do no right.

If I'm on team blue, then team blue, man, they're angels, and team red, they can't do any right. That's how it's divided in our country today. Politically, socially, we see it today in the way that people perceive sexuality and gender roles.

There is an ache that this young woman in the video spoke to, that there's an attraction to certain groups and teams as much as anything, not so much that they particularly wanna act out in those particular ways, it's I'm aching to have an identity. This group will give me an identity. At least I know who I am.

And I can understand some things from there. Consumer choices, brand identification fits into it all. There's national, ethnic, tribal identities.

Man, I'll tell you, in a way that is remarkable in our modern culture, it is all about identity, about those questions, who am I, and to whom do I belong? And I got good news for you. Listen, the Bible has an answer to those questions. Now, it may not be an answer that the culture will fully embrace.

I got news for you. In the 1970s, lots of people didn't embrace the Bible's answer for where the world was going and how the future would play out. So we're not saying everybody's gonna accept the Bible's answer, but everybody should know the Bible speaks to these issues.

These are things that God wants us to understand and God addresses in his words. It's not an answer that everybody or even a majority is gonna accept, but it is an answer nevertheless, and it speaks to the deep need inside the human heart, inside the human soul, to have these things resolved. Now, we believe that we're Christians, that we're focused upon Jesus, and we believe that the Bible speaks to us, not only through the words and the person of Jesus Christ, but also through the work that God has done through other people.

So now, this morning, in talking about this idea of identity, I wanna talk to you about Moses. Not because we are followers of Moses. We're followers of Jesus Christ.

But God's work in the life of Moses, I think, tells us a lot about these issues of identity. Right, so we're ready to take a look at this? Exodus chapter two, beginning now at verse 11. Now, it came to pass in those days when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens.

And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. Now, Acts chapter seven, verse 23, tells us that this happened when Moses was 40 years old. So you have something about the trajectory of Moses' life? Moses was born among a slave people.

The slave people were the Hebrews who were in the land of Goshen in Egypt. And for hundreds of years, they had lived under slavery. Slavery had identified them completely.

It's very interesting to me to make a parallel between slavery as it existed in the United States and slavery as it existed for the people of Israel in Moses. And just this one likeness I'm gonna make. How long did slavery as an official institution last in the United States? Well, it began in colonial times, pre-war.

I mean, should we say maybe 1700? Let's say that. I mean, I know that's not an exact figure, but we're just looking for a round number here. And you could say that at least officially, legally, it ended with the Civil War, the Emancipation Proclamation of Abraham Lincoln.

That's what, about 1860, let's just say 1865 for a round number. I know it was a little bit earlier than that. So basically, you have 165 years, and again, that's not an exact number.

It goes a little bit before that and otherwise, but let's just say, roundly, 165 years of slavery among African Americans in the United States. Now, did that leave a lasting legacy among the African American community in the United States that goes beyond the end of slavery? You better believe it. It wasn't just something that they just shook off and said, well, okay, great, everything's good now.

I mean, we still live today, and you can debate how much. That's actually a very valid debate to have. How much does that legacy continue? How much does it affect things today? But what I just wanna say is that when slavery was declared over, it's not like all its ill effects just went away.

Now, that was with 165 or so years of slavery in the United States. You know what I find fascinating? How long was Israel's slavery in Egypt? Something like 350 years. What I want you to understand was, this was a slave people.

The habits, the ideas, the culture, the identity of slavery had deeply impressed itself upon them. Now, the leadership of Egypt felt threatened by the population growth of the Hebrew slaves in Egypt, and so they commanded infanticide, abortion after the fact, if you wanna call it that. They commanded that all the male babies among the Hebrews be killed.

When they're born, kill them. They commanded the midwives to do this, and one of the children who should've been killed by drowning in the Nile River was this baby Moses. So what did Moses' parents do? Well, in faith, they put him in a little basket.

They coated it with asphalt or tar so that it would be waterproof and float, and they sent it down. They put him in the Nile River. They just put him in a little boat, and they pushed him down towards Pharaoh's daughter.

She took him and adopted him, so understand Moses. Ethnically, genetically, he comes from the Hebrews, a slave people, but he grows up in the palaces of privilege. He grows up not just with a little bit of privilege, with the greatest privilege.

He grows up with leaders and a family that was thought to be directly descended from the gods of Egypt. Now, that's a heavy thing, and according to Josephus, the ancient Jewish historian, the Bible doesn't tell us this but Josephus does, so take it for what you will. Josephus tells us that Moses was in line to be the next pharaoh, that he was a greatly successful military general.

He was a great leader, yet he was in line to be the next pharaoh. Okay, taking all that into consideration, take another look at this verse here. Exodus chapter two, verse 11.

Now, it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, he's 40 years old, he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. Do you realize what a remarkable statement that is? He looked at their burdens, it says. Now, by the way, that phrase in the original Hebrew, it has more than the idea of just to see, it means to see with emotion.

It means to see and be moved. He saw their burdens and it moved him, and then it says, he looked at their burdens and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. Do you see the idea that's repeated twice in verse 11? What is it? One of his brethren.

Do you understand what a radical thing this is for Moses? Moses understood that his brethren were the Hebrews, the slave, despised, oppressed class, not the privilege that he grew up in. That's unbelievable. He understood something about who he really was.

Moses understood who he was and he understood to whom he belonged. It's as if Moses could say this, look, I know I've been raised as an Egyptian and a very privileged Egyptian at that. The world of Egypt, the world of all that around me, it has a lot of opportunity for me, but you know what? Those aren't my people.

My people are the Hebrews. Now, I'm gonna jump ahead a little bit and talk to you about something from Hebrews. We'll turn to it in a few minutes.

But I want you to understand something. Moses did this by faith. Moses did not define who he was primarily by his environment, where he came from.

If he were to identify himself primarily where he came from, he'd say, I'm an Egyptian. Listen, he grew up from babyhood as an Egyptian. He's an Egyptian through and through.

That's who he is. His culture, background, all that stuff, education, all of it comes forth from Egypt. His future, man, it's in Egypt.

I mean, if you're in line to be the next pharaoh, if in fact that's true from Josephus, that's who you are. He didn't define himself from his cultural background, nor did he define himself merely because of his genetics. The reason why I say that is because Hebrews tells us that Moses did this by faith.

Moses didn't say, I'm a Hebrew because of genetics. He said it by faith, on the basis of faith. It was because of his relationship with and trust in God that he defined himself, this is who I am, this is who my people are.

He saw that Egyptian being him and he said, that's my brother. I belong with those people. Now, check this out.

Verse 12, so he looked this way and that way and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. Remember what I was talking about last night about kind of reading the Bible in drone mode,

automatic pilot? You know, it'd be so easy, oh yeah, okay, yeah, he saw this and then he killed the Egyptian, buried him in the sand. Do you realize how radical that is? Do you realize what that would be like to see that happen before your eyes? Do you think that the Egyptian that was beating the Hebrew slave, do you think that when Moses came upon him, he just said, oh yes, Moses, you wanna kill me? Please kill me.

I mean, this had to be a struggle. This had to be a fight. This had to be something brutal and Moses murdered the guy.

Now, we're not exalting Moses. This was a sin for Moses to do. I'm just saying, this was something radical and he did it, springing forth this understanding of who he was and to whom he belonged.

By the way, how do we know that it was wrong for Moses to do it? We know that this was wrong for Moses to do. We're not defending Moses here one bit but we know that it was wrong for Moses to do from what it says in verse 12. Can I play a little, you know, try to read the teacher's mind here? You hated that in school when he said.

But try to read the teacher's mind. Verse 12 tells you that Moses knew this was wrong. Where does verse 12 tell you that? What? Tell me the words, tell me the words.

Yeah, he looked on each side and saw. Nobody looks around to see if anybody's watching unless they know what they're gonna do is wrong. If you know what you're gonna do is right, it's like, who cares? But the fact that Moses knew it was wrong and it was wrong for him to do this and he killed the Egyptian.

Now, Acts chapter seven tells us more about why Moses did this. It's fascinating. He did not do it only out of anger.

It's not like he just was raging and went to this psychotic thing. I gotta kill this guy. Ah, you know, it wasn't like that.

No, Acts chapter seven tells us that Moses did this because he really believed that it would trigger a slave revolt among the Hebrews and that they would look to him as their leader and that he could lead them out of Egypt. He thought it would happen right then. But what happened instead? They rejected him.

Isn't that kind of radical? Think about it. This is who I am. This is to whom I belong.

And then they reject you. Now, what's interesting about that is it was all completely within the plan and timing of God that they rejected him. It was all gonna work out in the end.

But you can imagine how crushing that must have been for Moses at the time. Now, verse 13 and 14. And when he went out the second day, behold, two Hebrew men were fighting.

And he said to the one who did the wrong, why are you striking your companion? And he said, who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian? So Moses feared and said, surely this thing is known. You see, Moses had reason to believe that because of his background, his education, his status, his success, his sympathy with the people of Israel, that they would embrace him as their leader. But they didn't.

They said, man, who are you? Verse 14, who made you a prince and a judge over us? You know, a prince has the right to rule over people and to expect their loyalty. A judge has the right to tell you what to do and

to punish you if you don't do it. In rejecting Moses, this is what they said to him.

They said, we don't want you to rule over us. We don't want you to tell us what to do. By the way, there's a real analogy here.

People reject Jesus Christ for the same reasons. Make no mistake about it. One of the greatest difficulties in evangelism today is when Christians, I'm here today, sometimes we as preachers, we're the worst at this.

Sometimes we as preachers, we are the most guilty of this of anybody. We're guilty of presenting Jesus as just something you add to your life. Add Jesus to your life and your life will be better.

Is your life not so good? Add Jesus and your life will be better. Now, that is a, okay, I'm not gonna say it's a 180 degree difference between the two of us because listen, I believe that Jesus does make people's lives better. But, not always.

Sometimes, surrendering your life to Jesus Christ will make your life worse, at least in the short term. You may lose a lot of friends. You may lose some privilege.

You may lose this or that. No, no, no, we don't present Jesus that way. Instead, we make sure that people understood that coming to Jesus Christ means he will be a prince and a judge over you.

He's a prince. He has the right to rule over you and you owe him your loyalty, number one. Number two, he's a judge.

He has the right to tell you what to do and to deal with you when you don't do it. Jesus, I recognize you as prince and judge over my life. That's what they didn't want from Moses.

That's what some people don't want today from Jesus Christ. Now, keep all that in mind. What does Moses do after this? He flees to the desert.

He spends another 40 years on the far side of the desert tending sheep in a very humble existence as different from the marvelous marble palaces of Egypt as you can imagine. That's Moses' story. Now, I want you to turn to Hebrews chapter 11 and we're gonna take a look at how, in Hebrews 11, they took a look at Moses and some of these events.

Hebrews chapter 11, beginning at verse 24. I wanna show you how Moses understood his identity and how the Bible shows us we can understand our identity. Here's the verses.

Hebrews, I was gonna say Moses. No, Hebrews chapter 11, starting at verse 24. By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, for he looked to the reward.

I think those three verses have so much to tell us about identity that it's scary. We'll unpack them. The first thing I want you to see, look at the first few words of verse 24.

By faith Moses. Now, we live in a really weird age. We live in an age that can't make up its mind between two ideas.

The one idea is you are determined who you are by your genetics, by your upbringing, by your culture. That's who you are and there's no escaping it. That's one message from our culture, is it not? Another message from our culture says this.

You can be whatever you want to be. You can identify in any way you want to identify. You know, have your dreams, have your aspirations.

You can be whatever you want to be. That's another message that's in our culture. It doesn't take a genius to figure that those messages will conflict with each other.

They bump up against each other pretty hard. Now, are those messages true or false? True or false? My answer to that is yes. Listen, there's no denying that genetics and culture and upbringing have something to do with who we are.

But I believe that here is the message of the gospel, is that who you are is not ultimately determined by those things, but that God can transform your identity. By faith, Moses. Now, I want you to see how this was true for the life of Moses.

I think really in a startling way. Number one, by all his culture, all his upbringing, all his privilege, he was Egyptian, an Egyptian at the highest level. Yet Moses had the power to say, I'm not that.

Nevertheless, he wasn't just a slave to who he was genetically either. For two reasons, I bet, because number one, Moses looked at the slaves in Egypt, the Hebrew slaves, and I don't think for a moment Moses said, I'm that. Moses never thought of himself as a slave.

He may have thought of himself as a Hebrew, but not a slave. But secondly, notice this. The first few words of Hebrews chapter 11, verse 24 say it was that by faith Moses did these things.

A living, breathing, true relationship with God through Jesus Christ can transform identity in a way that nothing else can. You do not have to be a prisoner to who you were in upbringing, genetics, culture. You shouldn't be a prisoner to any of those things.

Instead, by faith, God can speak to who you are and who you should be by your identity. That's the first thing to notice. Second thing I want you to notice here in verse 24 is take a look at what it says there.

When he became of age, I think that if you want to say identity awareness, identity awareness in Jesus Christ, it's a mark of maturity. When he became of age, Moses had to come to a certain age before he could figure this out and demonstrate it. Now as children, maybe even especially as adolescents, we are expected to be unclear, maybe even confused about our identity.

But you know what? As adults, we're supposed to have that stuff sorted out. I don't know. I'd be interested to, I don't know.

To me, it would be a very interesting survey to do among you all. Do you guys consider yourselves adults? And if I could guess, the answer is something like this. Yes and no.

In some ways, yeah, you're not a kid. You know, come on. You're not 16, you're not 18, yeah, you're adults.

But in other ways, when you think of what adults maybe are and what it is, they're like, well, I'm not that either. You're kind of in this weird in-between sense that you might think, possibly. But here's the idea, is that we understand that in healthy adulthood, man, you have this understanding.

This is what it was for Moses. I think God wants you to live in a confident sense. I know who I am and I know where I'm going and far too many of us don't.

And man, it's like a big hindrance in our life. It leaves us adrift, confused. Now, here's another thing.

Our identity awareness is demonstrated by our life choices. What do I mean by that? Look at verse 25. It says there, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God.

Moses made a real life choice. His identity wasn't just an idea in his head. It was evident in real life choices that he made.

Now look, I'm gonna speak in general about you all here. So if this doesn't apply, don't take offense. I mean, I'm just speaking in a very general way.

But in a very general way, it makes sense to me that you all would identify yourselves as Christians. How? Well listen, not knowing anything else about your life. I know that on a Saturday morning, you're here wanting to know something more about the Christian life.

Again, I don't know about every life. I don't know where you guys read. I don't know how much that's true about how you perceive yourself.

But at least I know that you've done something that points in the direction, yes, this person. Now, you probably know people, or maybe this has been you in the past, that they identify themselves as Christians, but there is no action in their life that would indicate that. Nothing, just nothing.

And I mean, I'm not saying that these things are the things that make a Christian, but these are things that Christians might do. They don't go to church. They don't read their Bibles.

They don't talk to other people. They don't associate with other Christians for the purpose of talking about their Christian life or sharing their Christian life with the people. Yet, somewhere in their mind, they have it.

I am a Christian, I identify that way. But again, if it's a true identification, there's gonna be something in your life. Moses, notice that word in verse 25, choosing rather.

Now, again, your choices say something about who you are. The kid or the adult who spends way too much time entertaining himself with gaming. Now, that isn't just something he does.

It's something that says something about who he thinks himself to be. I'm not saying that in a good way or a bad way, although it's kind of hard to escape that it's at least somewhat negative. But yeah, what we do says something about who we are.

I don't think that's the entirety of it, but Moses had a choice that declared something about his identity. Here's the third aspect. Our identity awareness as believers, it'll cost us something.

Look at verse 25. It says, choosing rather to suffer affliction. Moses chose this.

He chose to embrace affliction. And when you think about the opportunities open to him, it's a remarkable choice. Look, make no mistake about him.

Moses had in front of him a life of almost unceasing comfort and ease as being at the top levels of Egyptian society. That was his future. But he made a choice knowing that it would cost himself.

And you know what? Whatever choice you make for an identity, it is gonna cost you something. And I think that this awareness of identity in Moses answered three questions for him. Okay, here's the three questions.

I think these are three questions that you need to answer personally for yourself in your life. Number one, who I am not. Number two, who I am.

So first in the negative, first then in the positive. And then thirdly, to whom do I belong? Who are my people? Okay, those three questions. Who am I not, who I am, and to whom do I belong? Now, I don't know if those questions need to be asked in that order, but this is the order that I see them in the text.

Notice first of all, Moses understood who he was not. Do you see that in verse 25? He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Now why? Everything in his life led him to have that expectation.

The Bible tells us why. By faith he understood this. There was something in Moses that went far beyond getting back a DNA test from 23andMe saying you're Hebrew.

It went far beyond that. It wasn't based on that. It was based on faith.

By faith Moses said those ivory palaces of Egypt, that's not me. I'm someone else. I'm someone different.

Now that's a radical thing to say when you've had that much privilege, that much comfort in front of you. I think of what it said about Moses' past, what it says about his future, what the culture would say around him, but he understood first who he was not, and it ended up being a renunciation, at least in some ways, of his past. I'm not defined by my past.

Everything in my past says Egyptian, Egyptian, Egyptian, but I'm not defined by my past. I'm defined not necessarily by my genetics. I'm defined by the calling of God.

God has a call on my life. I embrace it by faith. Listen, in our last session today, I'm gonna talk to you a lot more about this.

I'm gonna talk about this idea of calling, because I think it's really important, and really important for any impact that you or I are gonna make on this world. But right now, just shelve that idea and understand that Moses embraced this by faith. I don't belong to those people.

Secondly, notice this. It says, he understood who he was, and who was that? He was a Hebrew by faith and by birth. I understand who I'm not.

I understand who I am. And then verse 25 indicates that he understood to whom he belonged. Notice it says there in verse 25, with the people of God.

He chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God. Now, let's get back to those questions that people ask in the culture. Who am I, and to whom do I belong? Now, think about all the things that people

do today to try to answer those questions for themselves.

And please, I hope nobody takes this in any kind of personal way. This is any kind of personal evaluation or criticism of anything or anybody or any practice, but think about the practice and the popularity of tattoos. The tattoo is not just something nice that you get.

I suppose for a few people it is. But for many people, it's meant to be a meaningful statement about who I am. This marks me.

This is a declaration of who I am, something about me that I regard as important. It's an effort to brand oneself. And sometimes people literally do that with a hot iron.

I wanna let everybody know and remind myself who I am and to whom I belong. But listen, it goes far beyond something like that. It's almost in everything.

It's not just this. It's like, hey, I prefer Apple computing products. It's, no, I'm a Mac guy.

It's not just I prefer Starbucks. No, that is something that defines me. It's not just I like a certain kind of technology in my smartphone.

No, that's kind of what team I'm on. Everything comes back to this kind of identity. Who do I belong to? Now, I think that this question connects so big to people in our world today, which is really all of us.

We desperately wanna know who they are and who they belong to. Now, I understand that the question, excuse me, that the answer we give to the culture horrifies them. Who am I? To whom do I belong? Hey, you can be a follower of Jesus Christ.

You can be a Christian. And for many, many people in the world, that answer horrifies them. That's the last people to whom I would wanna belong.

Are you kidding me? That collection of ignorant, superstitious, haters, because really, I mean, this is how many times the Christian community is perceived by the world, is it not? Why would I ever wanna belong to that? Well, listen, I'll tell you one thing, is it has to be a work of God that happens in people. You tell me, why would Moses choose to identify with the despised slave people in Egypt? God had done something in them. And God has to do something in people before they say, this is who I wanna be and this is whom I want to belong to.

Now, it's very much important for us as believers to live both as individuals and as our community to the best of our ability, to the very best of our ability, to live in a way that puts all those accusations to the lie. In other words, people say we're ignorant and superstitions and haters, we should never live in a way that justifies those accusations. While at the same time understanding that even though they say those things about us, they're still gonna say those things about us.

Brothers and sisters, I'm here to tell you, Christians have been lied about from the very beginning. Do you know in the days of the early church, the lies that they told about Christians? This is what they said about Christians in the Roman world in the early church. They said, number one, they're cannibals.

Number two, they said that they're sexually immoral. And number three, they said that they hate humanity. So if you have Christians being haters, let's go back to the Roman times.

Okay, well, why would they say that they hate humanity? I'll tell you why, because when everybody was all getting ready to go to the gladiatorial games and see two people literally butcher and kill each other on the gladiatorial, the Christians said, no, man, no thanks, I'm not going. They're like, what, do you hate us? When everybody was running down to the Temple of Aphrodite to employ the team of prostitutes that worked at the brothel at the Temple of Aphrodite, and they asked the Christian guy from work to come along, he says, no way, man, I'm not going to that. Well, what, do you hate us? That's how they, haters of humanity.

Why did they get accused of being sexually immoral? Because Christians would get together and have something that they called the love feast, and it was just for their group. It wasn't open to everybody. It was just for their group.

It was the love feast. We know it was times when they'd get together and have a potluck dinner and have communion, but the Romans said, oh, man, when they closed the door at their love feast, who knows what happens behind there? And then why would they say that Christians were cannibals? Because they say, do you know what they do? They get together and they actually eat the body and drink the blood of some dead guy, and these are the accusations that went around. We hear those now, hundreds of years later, and we smile.

Those were popularly believed in the Roman world. Look, we can't stop the world from lying about us, but we do need to live in such a way that says what they say about us is a lie, but it does make us realize that God has to do a work in somebody before they'll say, this is who I wanna be. These are the people to whom I belong.

But listen, I gotta admit to you, it's a dicey thing, man. I see Christians in the world, in the media, and they embarrass me. Am I alone in this? Man, they embarrass me.

It could be from a lot of different ways that they might embarrass me, and I just kinda bow my head and just go, oh man, this or that, and there's something in me, sometimes, that wants to stand up and scream, I'm not like them, I'm not like them! But you know what I realized then? I realized, look, at the end of it, God needs to deal with that person, and if there are some weird people in the Christian family, then there's weird people in every family. There's weird people in your family, aren't there? Look, you might be the weird person in your family for all I know, but that's just how it is with family, right? Family will have some weird people in it, and they can still be family, and we can just hope and trust and believe that God will deal with them, but we still say, look, at the end of the day, we're still the body of Christ. Even at times when it embarrasses us.

All right, so back to this idea. When we're not confident in God's power to change lives, and when we're not confident in his ability to really transform identity, then we can present it to people that you can answer God's call with no change in identity. Brothers and sisters, that's a problem.

To answer the call of God in the Christian life is to say, I am gonna embrace a new identity in Jesus Christ, and I'm gonna allow this to become my chief identity, whereas before, I might have fundamentally seen myself defined as my race, my class, my culture, my education, my hobbies, whatever it be. Those things in the past, I may have let those in my mind and in my expression define who I am. To be a follower of Jesus Christ says, no, he becomes my identity.

I look to him first and foremost. Now, this gets back to something that I mentioned before. It affects the way that we do evangelism and that we understand evangelism.

Too many people understand coming to Jesus Christ as, the figure I used before was adding Jesus to your life. Let me use another figure. It's making Jesus part of your story.

In other words, it's like there's a movie of your life, or if you wanna think of it as a theatrical production, whatever, there's a movie of your life. You're writing the movie, you're directing it, who's the lead actor or actress? It's you. It's the story of your life.

This is it. And there's some people who think that having Jesus in your life means that Jesus comes into your movie and makes it a way better movie. Man, Jesus, this movie was really stinking before, but since you came into it, wow, everything's better in the movie.

And Jesus is so amazing, you are so good, I'm gonna give you a leading role. Now, not the leading role, of course, the leading role is me. But Jesus, man, you're gonna get top billing, and I got a good feeling you're gonna get best supporting actor for your role in my life, because man, this is great.

That's your job, Jesus, to be best supporting actor in my life. But it's still my story, my movie, my script, I'm the director. Do you realize that being a Christian is such a fundamental change of identity? That being a Christian means that we take the script of our own movie, and we rip it up and throw it in the trash.

And we say, Jesus, I wanna be an actor in your movie. I don't care, your movie is what's important. And instead of trying to make you part of my story, I wanna be part of your story.

My identity is now found in you. That's what it's about. That's this fundamental shift.

So we have something very powerful to speak to ourselves and to present to the world, and it gives us a new set of values. Take a look at this in verse 26. It says, esteeming the reproach of Christ, greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.

In other words, he had an entirely different set of values. So, who we are in Jesus seems so big, so impossible, that it needs to be grasped by faith. Who are you in Jesus Christ? Let me tell you.

I'll give you just a very, very brief incomplete overview. You're forgiven. You're made righteous.

You have the righteousness of Jesus Christ. You are adopted into his family as a son or a daughter of God. You are filled with and sealed by the Holy Spirit of God.

Your old man is dead and you reckon it so. You are now a new man or a new woman in Jesus Christ, and that new man is patterned after Jesus. You are called and gifted to serve Jesus and his people.

You have an important place in God's eternal plan of the ages. I mean, all these things are true. This is who you are in Jesus Christ.

Each individually or taken together are huge, and it takes faith. And finally, what I want you to know is all of these things were true of Jesus. Now, I put before you the example of Moses, the guy who knew who he was, who knew he was not, and knew the people they'd identified with, even more so it's true of Jesus.

Do you think there was ever a person more aware of his identity than Jesus himself? Listen, at 12 years old, he said, I need to be about my father's business. At 12 years old, he had a sense of his identity. He knew who he was, he knew who he was not.

He could stand aside from a corrupt and sinful and rebellious and terrible world, and so I'm not of that. And he knew to whom he belonged as well, his Father in heaven and his people here on earth. This is something that Jesus Christ wants to recreate in everyone of us.

Now, your task here is, as you read and hear and understand the Bible, to continually ask yourself these questions. What did this tell me about who I am? What did this tell me about who I'm not and who I used to be? And what does this tell me about the people I belong to? I'm gonna suggest to you, I'm using a little bit of hyperbole here, I'm gonna suggest to you that that is written on every page of the Bible, deals with one of those three questions. Who you are, who you're not or who you used to be, and the people you belong to.

The more settled and secure you get in this, the more you're gonna see your life thrive in Jesus Christ. We hope you enjoyed watching this session from our 2018 Philly Young Adults Conference. If you're looking for more video resources like this one, please click the subscribe button below.

We also have a variety of print as well as more video resources available at our website, truthoncampus.com. Feel free to reach out to us with any feedback or questions you have at talkattruthoncampus.com.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/ghRB-C12GaA.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-guzik/finding-your-identity/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net