

Unpacking the Preach

Date: 7th February 2021
Sermon Title: Our Identity in Christ: The Importance of our New Identity
Bible Passage: Ezekiel 36:24-29a, Galatians 2:20

Recapping the Preach

Take time to read the two passages and perhaps look at a different translation

- What stood out to from the passages?
- Can you see any links between he two passages? What are they?

Stu began with a story of an experiment done at Stanford University in the 1970's. He made the point that, how we understand our identity impacts how we live, the choices we make and the actions we perform. He explained that when we are talking about identity we are referring to our sense of self and our sense of self worth.

- Thinking about the experiment at Standford University - why do you think the people behaved the way they did?
- Do you agree that our identity impacts how we live and the choices we make?
- Our identity is made up of the 'hats' we wear (sense of self) and the labels people place on us (sense of self worth). What 'hats' and 'labels' have you worn in the past? How did these affect the way you lived?

Stu explained that when a person comes to faith in Christ a fundamental and radical change takes place in our identity. He then went on to explain what has happened to us in Christ by looking at the conversation between Nicodemus and Jesus (John 3:1-15) and the link between Ezekiel's prophecy. Essentially Jesus was informing Nicodemus that the new day of cleansing power anticipated by Ezekiel is now at hand, the long awaited messianic age is present, because Jesus the Messiah and King of the Kingdom is present.

- Why do you think Nicodemus misunderstood what Jesus was referring to when he spoke of a person being born again (John 3:4, 9)?
- If someone asked you, 'What do Christians mean when they talk about being born again?' how would you respond and explain this?
- Stu highlighted four parts of the Ezekiel prophecy (below) which describe the fundamental and radical change that has taken place in us. Discuss each aspect: how do you understand these, what does it mean to you, what difference is it making in your life?
 - I will gather you...
 - I will cleanse you...
 - I will give you a new heart...
 - I will put a new Spirit in you...
- Do you think the persistent 'I will...' phrase is important? If so why?

Stu then referred to Galatians 2:20 as Paul's statement of belief and his way of describing the radical and fundamental change that has taken place when we came to Christ.

- Do you think of your life in light of Galatians 2:20?
- What difference should it make to us that we have been "crucified with Christ and no longer live"?
- What does Paul mean when he says, 'Christ lives in me'?
- How does knowing who we are in Christ give us security, significance and satisfaction?

Response

- Is there anything from the preach and passage that you will be taking away to reflect on or work on?
- Are you living out your new identity in Christ daily?

Prayer pointers

- Take time to share prayer requests and pray for one another.
- Pray for one another that we would live out our new identity in Christ.
- If you struggle believing that God has done something fundamental and radical at conversion, ask someone in the group to pray with you, for God to open your eyes to see your life how He sees it in the light of Christ.

Additional resources:

If you need some additional resources the below websites are useful:

- <https://www.gotquestions.org>
- <https://enduringword.com>
- <https://www.biblica.com>
- <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/>