

“Holding on to Identity”

Keeping Hope in Mind Sermon Series | Week Five | Newbreak Church

May 29th, 2022

Newbreak's Sermon Study Guide is an in-house resource that serves sermon-based Life Groups and/or individuals who want to reflect further on how the message contributes to our spiritual formation.

In this week's study, we close out the sermon series by talking about our identity “in Christ” and the importance of knowing whose we are.

Icebreakers for Life Groups

- What is your favorite flower and why?
- Have you ever had your identity stolen, or known someone who has? How long did it take to recover?

Going Deeper Into the Message

Read Romans 8:1

The only label that matters is who I belong to.

Point 1 – God renames us based on how he sees us.

One of the beautiful outcomes of Christ's death on the cross and subsequent resurrection is how it changes how God sees us. He no longer sees our sin and shame and mistakes. God sees us through the blood of His precious Son, Jesus Christ. He sees us washed whiter than snow. Because we have been made clean, we can approach His throne with confidence. The Bible says we can come boldly to His throne. **So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most (Hebrews 4:16 NLT).** He sees our new selves.

His love for us is complete. God is not bound by time, and because He knows all things, past (He knows everything we have done, good and bad), present (He sees our struggles right now), and future (he sees us complete in the fullness that comes from

Him, [Ephesians 3:19](#)) He can love our complete selves, the selves that will one day be made completely perfect.

We only see in part right now because we are finite and we cannot see our futures selves, but God can. He sees us for who we are in Him. In 1 Corinthians 13, a chapter about what love is and is not, Paul tells us, “[Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.](#)” God names us precious because of how He sees our whole selves, past, present, and future!

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- What name do you wish you had? Or have you always liked your name? Why?
- What’s one thing about you that you know God really enjoys? How do you let this be part of your identity?
- If you had your identity stolen, would you give up trying to get it back? Why is it harder to fight to believe our identity in who Christ says we are? Why do we find it easier to give into Satan taking our identity?

Read Luke 8:1–2

The only label that matters is who I belong to.

Point 2 – God reframes our identity to be found in him.

Mary Magdalene’s story isn’t told in detail, but we have enough to where we imaginatively fill in the gaps... The amazing TV show “The Chosen,” which is a multi-season show about the life of Jesus (season 3 is coming this Fall) shows the story of Mary from an angle that was very possible and really well done. It shows Mary as a little girl learning Scripture from her dad. She was taught when she was scared to recite Isaiah 43:1 all the time growing up.

[Isaiah 43:1 \(ESV\)](#) But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; **I have called you by name, you are mine.**”

At some point in her life, she lost her way, her faith, and demons—7 of them—made their home in her. All sorts of abuse came her way. It was an awful and terrifying picture. And occasionally she would regain some sort of consciousness and realize how much despair she was in. Even the religious leaders were frightened of her! One night, Mary went to a tavern in hopes of drinking away her sorrows. She knew it wouldn't solve her problems but least even the demons seemed to be soothed by the alcohol... **Consider watching this clip from "The Chosen."**

Isaiah 43:1 (ESV) But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, **you are mine.**"

Who knows how long Mary had carried that heavy label of "demoniac"? **But after encountering Jesus, she went from being a demoniac to being a disciple**—she played a crucial role in Jesus's ministry. Her whole identity was reframed in light of being a disciple! Her label changed in an instant! This is not just some moot language, it changed everything for her!

But even though her label changed in an instant, no doubt it was a process and a journey for her to work out what living in that new label meant for her life.

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- Mary's story shows the journey of changing labels that matched a changed life, from demoniac to disciple. What label have you been carrying that does not belong? What label does God want to redeem?
- How does our life being reframed by God happen both instantaneously and as a process?

Read Romans 8:15–16

The only label that matters is who I belong to.

Point 3 – Learn to see myself the way Jesus sees me.

A large part of the Christian life is bringing into alignment who we are and how we feel. Who we are is our identity in Christ—who God says we are and sees us as. This is as true to reality as concrete. How we feel is our perception of reality. Feelings are fickle

and don't always tell the truth. Feelings are not bad! They are great when they are accurate and tethered to reality. But often our job is to make sure our identity—who we are in Christ—is informing how we feel; not the other way around! This is where the old axiom “knowledge is power” rings true! I might feel rejected, but I have to allow my knowledge of God's acceptance of me to govern and guide my feelings until they come into conformity about what is true. Biblical authority is greater than feelings. We can learn to see ourselves the way Jesus sees us when we let Biblical authority guide our feelings.

Paul tells us in Romans 8 that we received God's Spirit when He adopted us as His own children. We get to call the Lord Almighty, Father because we now belong to Him. The Holy Spirit wants to show us the reality of this truth on a daily basis, so that we can be secure in the knowledge that we are accepted and loved by God. That will shape our thoughts and behaviors. When we let the Holy Spirit teach us the truth, we can master our feelings. We can revel in the feeling of being loved by our Father and we can speak truth over the lies that will sometimes come up that say we are not loved and protected and valued.

Today see yourself as Jesus sees you, a beloved member of God's family.

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- What do you think about when you hear the word meditate? How can you empty the lies about yourself you have been carrying around and fill up on the truths of Jesus about you?
- What would you like God to affirm in you today? How can you be honest with Him about this need? What does this look like for you?

—FINAL CHALLENGE QUESTIONS—

How are you going to think or live differently in light of what you have read, heard, and discussed this week?

How does this week's message shape or nurture your relationship with God?

BONUS: For those of you with kids or around kids: What is one truth from this message that you can share with your kids in a way that they would relate to or understand?