Before and After – Our Identity in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17)

**Introduction:**

***1 Sam. 17:45-47*** – David’s clear picture of God’s identity enabled him to face Goliath without fear.

***1 Sam. 18:18*** – David’s murky picture of his own identity caused him to hesitate on joining the king’s family.

***Gen. 50:19*** – Joseph’s recognition of the fact he was not God prevented him from judging his brothers.

***Mark 8:29*** – Jesus queried His disciples on who the people and the disciples believed Him to be.

***John 1:19, 23*** – The Pharisees questioned John’s identity and his authority to baptize.

***John 3:30***– John’s recognition of his identity helped him be satisfied with his subservient role.

***John 13:3, 4*** – Jesus knew who He was and where He was going. This knowledge allowed Him to serve when others wouldn’t.

***2 Cor. 5:17*** – God said when we came to Him, He made us into a new person.

***Gen. 1:26*** – You are a creation of God, made in His image.

***Gen. 1:31*** – God described His original creation as “very good.”

1. **No longer a Slave, but a Son.** (Luke 15:11-24)

***Luke 15:11-24*** – Story of the Prodigal son

***Luke 15:19, 21*** – The prodigal son was hoping to get a job as a slave. His father wanted him back as a son.

***John 8:33, 34*** – The Pharisees protested when they heard Jesus refer to them as slaves.

***Rom. 6:16*** – Whomever you obey is your master.

***Rom. 3:23*** – All humans are sinners. We are all under bondage.

***John 3:3*** – Jesus calls us to be born into a new family with a new destiny.

***John 1:12*** – Faith in Jesus gets us adopted into God’s family.

***Romans 8:14-17*** – The Father calls us His children. We have the authority to call him “Abba.”

1. **No longer an Enemy, but a Friend.** (Acts 9:23-31)

***Acts 9:1-2, 23-31*** – Story of Paul’s transformation from an enemy into a friend

***Phil. 3:7, 8*** – Paul threw away his credentials before Christ in favor of his new relationship.

***Rom. 8:29*** – Paul wanted to be like Jesus.

***Eph. 2:8, 9; Titus 3:5-7*** – Good works are not sufficient to transform an enemy into a friend.

***Psalm 139:7-13*** – David, like many, ran from God’s presence.

***Rom. 8:7; Matt. 12:30*** – We were God’s enemies. There is no neutral position.

***John 8:32*** – The truth sets us free; God doesn’t imprison the enemies who properly respond to the truth.

***John 16:8*** – God sends His Spirit to open your eyes to your need and His solution.

***Rom. 5:8; John 15:13*** – Jesus paid the price for us before we were His friends.

***John 15:14, 15*** – Jesus calls His disciples His friends.

***Ex. 33:11*** – God spoke to Moses the way friends communicate.

***Isaiah 41:8*** – God called Abraham His friend.

1. **No longer dead, but alive.** (John 11:38-44)

***John 11:38-44*** – Story of Lazarus’ resurrection

***Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13*** – We were dead in our sins, separated from God.

***Eph. 2:12*** – We were without hope.

***John 1:29*** – Jesus came to take away sin.

***John 11:25, 26*** – Jesus death and resurrection provide me with life.

***Rom. 6:1-14*** – Death to sin doesn’t give me permission to indulge in it.

***Rom. 12:1, 2*** – Now, Jesus calls me to die to myself and be a living sacrifice.

1. **No longer dirty, but washed.** (Luke 7:36-50)

***Luke 7:36-50*** – Story of the woman who washed Jesus’ feet with her hair.

***1 John 1:7*** – Jesus’ blood can cleanse us from all sin.

***Matt. 9:10-13*** – Jesus invites “sinners” into His company, not because He wants to be like them, but because they need to be like Him.

***Eph. 5:25-27*** – Jesus cleans and refines His bride.

1. **No longer condemned, but justified.** (Luke 18:10-14)

***Luke 18:10-14*** – Story of the Pharisee and tax collector. One went home justified; the other did not.

***James 1:23-25*** – The mirror of God’s Word shows you your inescapable flaws.

***1 John 1:9*** – God promises forgiveness, but you wonder how He could be just in giving it.

***Lam. 3:22-23*** – God’s mercies are new every morning.

***Matt. 18:21, 22*** – God requires limitless forgiveness and offers you the same.

***2 Cor. 5:21*** – God gave you His righteousness in place of your sin.

1. **No longer alone, but part of a family.** (Ruth 1:19-22)

***Ruth 1:19-22*** – The Story of Naomi and Ruth.

***Ruth 1:20*** – Naomi expressed bitterness at God for her losses.

***Ruth 1:16, 17*** – Ruth sacrificed everything to stay with Naomi.

***Ruth 4:16*** – The story ends with Naomi holding her grandson.

***Ruth 4:22*** – Ruth’s son was the grandfather of David, Jesus’ ancestor.

***John 1:12*** – Through adoption, you are a part of a new family.

1. **No longer destined for Hell, but a citizen of Heaven.** (Rev. 21:22-27)

***Rom. 10:17*** – Faith comes by hearing. So listen to how God answers the following questions.

***1 John 3:1*** – Are you a slave or a son?

***Col. 1:21, 22*** – Are you God’s enemy or His friend?

***1 John 3:14*** – Are you dead or alive?

***1 Cor. 6:11*** – Are you dirty or washed?

***Rom. 8:1*** – Are you condemned or justified?

***Psalm 68:5, 6*** – Are you alone or in a family?

***John 14:3*** – Are you headed for Hell or Heaven?

**Conclusion:**

***Ex. 3:11*** – When God commissioned Moses, Moses asked the self-identity question. “Who am I?”

***Ex. 3:12*** – God’s response to him did not answer his question, but the response met his need. “I will be with you.”

***Ex. 3:13*** – Moses’ follow-up question asked about God’s identity. “Who are You?”

***Ex. 3:14, 15*** – God answered, “I Am the God of your ancestors, and I do not change.”

***Phil. 1:6; 1 John 3:2*** – God will one day finish His work of transforming you into the image of Jesus, His Son.