



Sermon Series: Being An Authentic Church

To be used with Session: Built on Christ

Sermon Title Possibilities: (re)Defining He, We, Me

Scripture: 1 Peter 2:1-12

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the Bible study “Being an Authentic Church,” this sermon guides the church toward authenticity by helping individuals recognize and embrace their identity in Christ. It emphasizes the communal aspect of this identity, fostering unity and collaboration.

Introduction: Do you know someone who cannot live without social media? They spend all their lives curating a perfect social media page that reflects who they are, interests, and the communities they engage with. In our faith, to be authentic, our identity is like a profile, uniquely defined by our connection to Jesus. This is what the writer of 1 Peter was seeking to describe. A space where our identity as believers is explored with the depth and intricacy of a really well thought out...Instagram.

1. Who are We? (v. 1-9)

In verse 9, we see that the early Christians were referred to as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people." What does it mean to be a royal priesthood? It means that we are set apart for a sacred purpose – to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 5:7-8; Heb. 13:15-16). As priests, we enter God's presence boldly through faith in Jesus (Heb. 4:14-16), and we represent God's kingdom on earth (Rev. 1:6). Again, this identity is not based on our works or achievements but on our union with Jesus. We function as a royal priesthood; we recognize that each believer has a valuable role to play in building God's kingdom. We function together in unity with Jesus.

2. Who Is He? (v. 10-11)

Imagine a person who used to identify themselves solely as a basketball player, but then retired from the sport and became a teacher instead. While they may still have some connections to the basketball world, their primary self-identification has shifted. Similarly, when we place our faith in Jesus, our old identities are replaced by a new one – children of God. Peter continues and uses interesting words calling the readers “exiles” and “strangers” in a foreign land (v. 11). Why? Because they were scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia after the death and resurrection of Jesus (Acts 2:9-11). Yet, despite their dispersion, they were still considered “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special people” (Ex. 19:5-6; Deut. 7:6). Because they were born again of imperishable seed (1 Pet. 1:23), regenerated by the Holy Spirit (John 3:3-8), and adopted into the family of God (Gal. 4:4-7). In other words, their identity was no

longer defined by their ethnic background or circumstances but by their union with Jesus Christ. In Jesus, our Identity is changed. We are not known by words such as “exile and stranger, rather we are known as a child of God.

3. Who Am I (v. 12)

Think of a river flowing down from a mountain peak. Along the way, it picks up rocks, soil, and other materials, gradually changing its course and shape. Similarly, as we allow the Holy Spirit to transform us, we become more like Jesus, and our lives bear fruit for God's Kingdom. That is our journey to verse 12, which says, "Keep your conduct honorable so that whenever anyone speaks against you, they may see your honesty and be ashamed." How can we ensure that our actions align with our identity in Christ? By allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us and conform us to the image of Jesus (Romans 8:29). As we submit to God's will, we become more like Jesus in our thoughts, words, and deeds, bringing glory to God and witnessing to the world around us.

Conclusion: We are a community; we are children of God, and our identity is in Jesus. Keep moving with the knowledge that your source and foundation is in Jesus. Embrace a transformed identity. An identity that is not defined by external factors such as a career or experiences, rather how Jesus thinks about you. In addition, collaborate with other Kingdom builders and celebrate the unity and diversity within your church. Challenge your congregation to a week of intentional conduct and contact. Whether that’s a prayer challenge, social media challenge or other options of working together to live into a new and shared identity.

Author Bio

Dr. Justin R. Lester is the Pastor of Friendship Baptist Church in Vallejo, California. He is the Author of, “Necessary Endings” and other works to enrich the local Church.