

Who Are You?



John 1:19-20

It was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders sent priests and Temple assistants from Jerusalem to ask John, "Who are you?" He came right out and said, "I am not the Messiah."

What do the words mean "who are you?" John was an uncomfortable person to the religious leaders of Jerusalem. The world wants you to think in the way tamed in the world. The world wants you to be tamed constantly through mass media and social media. John was a person untamable because of the truth of God in him.

When I ask you the same question, "Who are you?" What would you answer?

When I received the question for the first time, I was embarrassed because I didn't know how to answer it. In the morning, I think this way, in the evening, that way. Sometimes I feel great, and sometimes miserable without any reason. Am I the person that other people define me? Or am I the person that I think and understand? How about you? What would you answer?

If we go to the etymology of *person*, we can clearly understand what it means to be a human. The Greek etymology of the word *person* is from *persona*, which means *mask*. The word "Person" gives a great insight into this deceptive human nature, the duality or the multiplicity of self.

It means every person lives behind the mask. Not only **one** mask; some people are living with **double, triple, or a thousand** masks. They are detached from their true self. Usually, we think that the mask is **me**. But the mask is **not me**. It is the false self that has its autonomous world, so it deceives me. The false self is the way of being in the world, relating to and accepting myself and others. Then how should we know whether we are living in a false or true self?

Here is a sad story of an alcoholic by James Finny. He was in a meeting with alcoholics. "In the first meeting, they were scared to death about the fact that they needed to give up what they thought was holding them together. The man said to me, 'If I can't have another drink again, I have no reason to live.' To the man, the drink was what allowed him to live. But actually, alcohol is the binding power into his prison."

We all live in our unique version of false selves, addicted to food, sexuality, relationship, reputation, job, religions, etc. We tend to cling to illusions about ourselves and the world. We do it without any conscious effort.

There is a beautiful definition of the true self by Thomas Merton. "The true self includes God. The true self is the self that is one with God." The true self is true you created to be from the heart of God and is the self in intimate communion with God. Your true self is the You only in the grace of the Gospel. The true self fulfills the purpose of God, and it empowers you to be liberated. It is your inner man, a holy person mingled with the Holy Spirit, who freely chooses to be obedient to the word and ever soar to the realm of eternal ecstatic joy.

Who are you?

Grace and peace - Pastor Hae-Jeong