

Who Are You Really?

Sermon notes for May 10, 2020

2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Romans 5:1-10

I [Jeff] have a new haircut. I did it myself. Yet I am surprised every time I look in the mirror. My ingrained image of myself does not match reality.

How do you See Yourself?

Does your image of yourself match reality? Not the outside of you, but the inside. Who you are really – in the heart.

How do you see yourself? How do you describe yourself?

How does God see you?

How does God describe you?

Do these views agree? Who is right, you or God?

How can you adjust your image of yourself to match God's image of you? [2 Cor. 5:14-21; Rom. 5:1-10]

God's image of you is the true image.

Consider God's image of us – how He sees us and treats us.

How God sees you

God sees you with love because He is love.

God even **loves his enemies** and sent his Son to die for them, not counting men's sins against them, so they could become his children. That's what happened to us. [2Co 5:13-21; Rm.5:1-10]. As we live out this new relationship with God, the church and the world, we begin to see our new selves and act like our new selves more and more.

Now God sees us through eyes of a Father. He sees you as his beloved child. He loves you. He likes you. He enjoys you. He delights in you.

But maybe **you don't feel like this is true.**

Maybe **you are still seeing yourself as you were before** and not as you are now. That makes it difficult to act like the new you if you still see yourself as the old you.

New Eyes see New Image

How can we trade out our old image of ourselves for God's image of us? It takes lots of time and practice. **Keep Telling yourself the truth** as God describes it and **act like it's true** because it is! You will grow into feeling as you get used to it and practice it. Repeated actions will create a new habitual memory.

We will begin to see ourselves more and more as God sees us and become what he plans for us.

One of the Family

God made us so that **we get our image of ourselves** from the **group we belong to**, from how **"our people"** see us. Who I am depends on who my people are. God wants us to see that we are **His people, His family**. He is our Father. Christ is our brother. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. We are to get our understanding of who we are from God, our family and our church family. Even though we are family we don't often feel that way because we don't always act that way. We need to believe it and start acting that way. Then after a long time of acting that way, we get used to it and it becomes our habitual image of ourselves, of who we are.

OJT God gives us **a way to accelerate this process**. He gives us on-the-job-training, **practice while under pressure**. He tells us to love and forgive people who may irritate us sometimes. Who are these people? We are they, one another in our families and in our church. As we practice showing love, patience, kindness, gentleness, forbearance and forgiveness with each other we begin to see and experience Kingdom living.

We begin to **see and treat each other as God's Kingdom people**, as **God's family**. As we experience loving and being loved in spite of not

being perfect we can sense God's perfect love for us. We begin to **think of ourselves as God's people**. We do this both as individuals and as a group. The very process of interaction involves and trains our whole mind not just the cognitive part to have this new image of ourselves. If we respond in humility as learners, as disciples, we can be trained and grow to be more like Christ and we will get used to this image. We will also appear to be disciples of Christ to the world.

2 Kinds of Knowing

Back to my haircut. Why am I surprised when I look in a mirror? Don't I remember that I did that haircut to myself?

I do remember. I am conscious of that fact.

But habitual memory is faster than conscious thought. When I look in the mirror, my mind expects to see the old me not the new me, even though consciously I "know" that I have a new look. One's self-image comes not from the slow track conscious part of the brain but the pre-conscious fast track. The fast track is programmed through group interaction. How we see and treat each other in our groups, family and church, affects how we know who we are and how we react. These understandings are **more caught than taught**.

Our sense of self identity

As we tell ourselves and hear from one another what God says about His image of us and as we work at loving and forgiving, being loved and forgiven by each other, we form a new habitual image of ourselves in our minds. We begin to see ourselves more as God does, as we are and as what God is transforming us into – his beloved and holy children.

Paradigm shift

We often struggle in our relationship with God because we project our view of ourselves and the world upon our view of God. We need to change that around. We need to see God for who he really is and

what he thinks of us in order to see ourselves for who we really are and who we are becoming.

We need to see God as the One who loves us and gives us what we need and what we enjoy. We see we are his beloved children.

God is our good, good Father and what he does for us and gives to us is good. He provides and protects. Experience his goodness. Taste and see that the Lord is good [Psalm 34:8]. Thank and praise God all the time for everything. Count the blessings he and given and bless the Blessor. Your love and gratitude for God will grow.

Once we begin to see God for who He is and who we are in Christ, then we can begin to see the world how God sees it. We can see people through God's eyes, people in our neighborhoods, in our schools and at our work places.

God sees the world is lost. God knows the world is against him but God loves the world. God loves even his enemies.

He wants them to repent and invites them to become his children. That is what God did for us.

We can love God back by loving our fellow believers and by loving those who are not yet believers to join Christ and us in God's family.

Right Headed

I decided to practice reminding myself of my new haircut, my new image, even before I see myself in a mirror. I reach out my hand and rub my head. This reminds me of the truth that I often forget – no hair. This then makes me think of another more important truth – I am God's beloved child; He is my loving Father. Then I talk to God. I thank and praise Him and talk to Him in prayer. This helps me get used to my new images internally and externally.

Together we will help each other clearly see our new image in Christ as God's beloved children.

God bless you. Happy Mothers' Day