

SERIES: DO YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE?

PART 11B: I AM NEW

The Book of Ephesians is about who we are once we have surrendered our lives to Jesus Christ; the Holy Spirit's purpose in our lives is to develop the purity and the power of Jesus Christ within us. We become God's representatives. What does that mean? It means that we re-present who Jesus is. How are we to do that? We do it the way Jesus did. In Matthew chapter 13:53-58, Jesus returns to Nazareth, His hometown, where He taught in the synagogue, and everyone was amazed and said in v. 54c, **“Where does He get this wisdom and the power to do miracles?”** All throughout the gospels it was Jesus' wisdom, the ability to know the Father's will in every situation, and then the humility, courage and boldness to do what He saw the Father doing and to say what He heard the Father saying. Did you know you can get in trouble when you see and hear the things that God wants you to say and do? Jesus sure did, especially with the most religious. Because they are motivated by greed, arrogance and pride, just like the Pharisees and Sadducees—the religious elite of Jesus' day, people won't always be glad that you're here. That is true in our secular world. Yet, there are so many people who are broken, damaged, hopeless, lonely, suicidal, and in despair, and they desperately need to have an encounter with Jesus' wisdom and power through you and me, His church.

If there is ever a time where each of us—His church—needs to walk in the power of the newness that only Jesus can give us, it is now. God wants you and me to walk in His confidence and to walk so closely to Jesus and to the Holy Spirit that we will boldly declare as our life mission how He taught us to pray. **“Our Father in heaven, may Your name be kept holy. ¹⁰May Your Kingdom come soon. May Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.”** (Matthew 6:9-10). God’s Kingdom is His rule and reign in every situation. His Kingdom includes His desires for your marriage, for your parenting, for your dating life, your sexual life, your spiritual, emotional, relational, financial, your vocational, intellectual, and physical life. We are to re-present Him and go throughout our day, and, when we’re with others, to partner with Jesus and ask for His Kingdom desires to be manifest at that present time. When you pray for someone, when you pray for a person’s marriage, or their personal life, or for their healing, or if they’re being harassed by demonic powers, you can say with authority, “Kingdom of God come now. Jesus heal this person now. Demon you must leave now in Jesus’ name. Will of God be done right now.” Paul in Ephesians 1:19 writes, **“I pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God’s power for us who believe Him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms.”** Notice Paul says, “I so desperately want each one of you to grasp intellectually, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually just how much power God has placed at your disposal since you have become a new creation.” Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:17-

19, “¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! ¹⁸All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting their sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation.” Part of our purpose and mission as new creations in Jesus Christ is to be about the business of helping people realize that God is not angry at them, and He does not hold their rebellion, sin, fault, flaws, foibles, and failures against them. Please follow along as I read our scripture for today, Ephesians 4:17-24, “**With the Lord’s authority I say this: live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. ¹⁸Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against Him. ¹⁹They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity. ²⁰But that isn’t what you learned about Christ. ²¹Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from Him, ²²throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. ²³Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. ²⁴Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.**” If you did not get to listen to last week’s teaching, you can go on our website CVCHURCH.COM and listen. Today I want to finish this teaching by looking at:

III. How to walk in your new identity as belonging to Jesus Christ—learn to live out of your:

A. New birth

In John 3, Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, comes to Jesus at night. Most likely he comes at night so he would not be seen by other Jewish leaders. Keener writes, **“Night was the time for secret deeds and whatever one wished not to be known.”** Nicodemus is a secret believer at this point, and he is in solidarity with those who fear to confess Jesus, or they would be expelled from the synagogue. He says to Jesus, **“‘Rabbi (teacher), we know that You are a teacher Who has come from God. For no one can do these things that You do unless God is with Him.’³ Jesus replied, ‘I tell you the truth, unless you are born again you cannot see the Kingdom of God.’”** (John 3:2b-3) The phrase “born again” means born from above. In vs. 13 Jesus says to Nicodemus, **“No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man has come down from heaven.”** In vs. 31, John the Baptist says about Jesus, **“He has come from above and is greater than anyone else. We are of the earth, and we speak of earthly things, but He has come from heaven and is greater than anyone else.”** To be born from above means that you surrender your life to Jesus Who is from above. You believe that Jesus is God and He came down from heaven, so you could be transformed into the new creation by His Holy Spirit. It is a supernatural work that Jesus through His Holy Spirit does in you. The new birth only comes from and through you confessing that Jesus is God and that you

surrender your life to Him. Titus 3:5-7 in the ESV says, **“He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶Whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”** The term regeneration is this idea of being born again and being born from above. **Being born again—regenerated—means it is a supernatural act of God in which God places His new life in each one of us when we repent, confess our sins and confess Jesus’ Lordship in our lives.** In being born again God makes us holy, meaning He sets us apart for His purposes, His Kingdom, His rule and reign in our lives. Your new birth secures your inheritance of eternal life and is the cornerstone of your identity in Jesus Christ. Colossians 2:13 says, **“You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ for He forgave all our sins.”** 1 Peter 2:1-3, **“So get rid of all evil behavior. Be done with all deceit, hypocrisy, jealousy, and all unkind speech. ²Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment, ³now that you have had a taste of the Lord’s kindness.”** Question, have you been born again?

B. New Lord

Once you confess Jesus as your Lord and Savior, the power of satan is broken over your life. You now serve a new Lord. Jesus is your God. Ephesians 2:2 says, **“You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God.”** Jesus isn’t a fable or myth. He’s a risen, living Person who reigns now and for eternity. Your new Lord loves, forgives, serves, gifts, hears, empowers, and lives on the inside of you. He will never fail, leave, or forsake you. Your new Lord defeated satan, your old lord, so that you no longer have to believe his lies or succumb to his temptation or serve his mission. You no longer must be enslaved to old habits and your old natures. You have a new Lord in Jesus Christ.

C. New heart

In the Bible the heart is the metaphor used to describe the center and core of your identity, which is expressed outwardly in your words and deeds. The word for heart is used more than nine hundred times. In the gospels in Matthew 12:24, 5:28, 6:21, Mark 7:21-23, Luke 6:45 and 21:34, Jesus says the words, lusts, how we spend our money, evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, folly, good and evil, sinful grief, anxiety, and drunkenness all come out of our hearts. The Bible says once you are born from above, you have a new Lord and He gives you a new heart. Because Jesus is our new Lord, the deepest desires of our hearts change, and we have new hearts for the purposes

and plans of God. God says it this way in Ezekiel 36:26-27, **“And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart.”** ²⁷ **And I will put My Spirit in you so that you will follow My decrees and be careful to obey My regulations.”** You have a new heart in Jesus Christ. This truly changes how you see yourself and is crucial to your new identity.

D. New creation

As a person who has been born again, and you have been regenerated by Jesus Christ, this means that you have been changed so deeply that the Scriptures call you a “new creation.” 2 Corinthians 5:17 in the ESV says, **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation. The old has passed away, behold, the new has come.”** Your old sin nature has been changed because of the forgiveness of Jesus and the blood that He spilled on the cross for you. Practically, this means that if there is to be any true responses of wholeness and righteousness through your thoughts, feelings and actions, the change in our behavior must be preceded with a change in our nature by the Holy Spirit. Galatians 6:15 says, **“It doesn’t matter whether we have been circumcised or not. What counts is whether we have been transformed into a new creation.”** It is tragic that we often forget this wonderful benefit of being born again and instead try to change our outward behavior, forgetting that change begins deep inside us and works its way out into our daily actions. You cannot simply improve the old you. He has

made you an entirely new you. The old person is dead. Paul says we're to put to death the old nature when it rears its ugly head. Loved ones, if you have confessed Jesus Christ as your Lord then you're a new creation in Jesus.

E. New mind

As a new person in Jesus, He gives you a new mind to think as He thinks and love what He loves. This doesn't make us smarter than non-Christians or that non-Christians are unable to come to great insights and discoveries in all fields. What it does mean is that without a new mind in Jesus the things of God are naturally perceived and embraced. To be precise on this important point, without the Holy Spirit, Jesus as fully God and fully man is not understood, and the fact of His death in our place for our sins sounds like foolishness apart from a new mind in Christ. 1 Corinthians 2:14 says, **“But people who aren't spiritual can't receive these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means.”** As we feed our minds with God's Word as found in Scripture, our thinking radically changes. You have a new mind in Jesus Christ.

F. New love

When you are born from above you will learn to love as Jesus loved. 1 John 4:7-9 says, **“Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. ⁸But anyone who**

does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹God showed how much He loved us by sending His one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through Him.” With being born again, and a new Lord and a new heart, and you have become a new creation, and you have a new mind, now you have a new love, because you are connected to the source of all true love, God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit. As a result, you have the capacity when you walk in obedience, to love God, your spouse, your children, your friends, your neighbors, and even your enemies. You have a new love in Jesus Christ.

G. New desires

A new creation has new desires that create a new appetite for the purposes and plans of God. Paul says this in Galatians 5:16-17, saying, **“So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves. ¹⁷The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions.”** This second to last sentence is absolutely critical to understand and implement in your own life. Paul argues that, as Christians, it is the Holy Spirit that gives us desires that are just the opposite of what our sinful nature desires. The way we win over the battle of our sinful desires is to nurture our relationship with the Holy Spirit and to act on His desires. Desires to read throughout the bookmark every day.

Desires to pray throughout the day. Desires to get with other believers in one of our small groups. Desires to reach out through ministry to serve others. Desires to share our faith when the Holy Spirit gives us an opening. Desires to worship God throughout the day. Desires to get to know Jesus better. C.S. Lewis says it best about this issue, other than Scripture, **“It would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because she cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”** You have new desires in Jesus.

H. New community

As born from above, regenerated people, our sins are forgiven, and we're reconciled both to God as Christians and to other Christians as the church. So, one of the new desires is to pursue community with other Christians in the church. This new community has been given a variety of names in the New Testament. **Citizens of God's Kingdom. Members of God's family. A temple for God's presence. We are parts of one body.** By living in community with brothers and sisters in Jesus as the church, we learn more about God and how to live a life that brings glory to Him and helps others to do the same. You have a new community in Jesus. Ephesians 2:19-20 says, **“So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all**

of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. ²⁰Together, we are His house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus Himself." You now belong to a new community.

I. New power

With the Holy Spirit in your life you have new supernatural power to live new lives. Therefore, Jesus called the Holy Spirit our Helper and Teacher in John 16:5-7. To be filled with the Holy Spirit is like being a sail filled with wind. Just as a ship opens its sail, that it may be powerfully driven toward a destination, as you as a spirit-filled Christian, as you open your mind, heart and will to God's rule and reign in your life, you will see His supernatural power flow through your life. The world desperately needs to see God's power through each of one of us. Paul writes in Ephesians 5:18, **"Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit."** You have a new power source in the Holy Spirit through Jesus.

J. New freedom

Along with your new power, you now have a new freedom in the ability to say no to sin and yes to God. In this life, you will either have your face toward sin and your back towards God or your face toward God and your back toward sin. One of the freedoms of those who are born again, born from above, is you have the ability to repent, turn your back on sin,

and turn your face toward God to live your new life for God's purposes and for His glory. You have a new freedom and liberty in Jesus.

Communion

“Then He took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. Then He said, ‘Take this and share it among yourselves. ¹⁸For I will not drink wine again until the Kingdom of God has come.’ ¹⁹He took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then He broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, ‘This is My body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.’ ²⁰After supper He took another cup of wine and said, ‘This cup is the new covenant between God and His people—an agreement confirmed with My blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you.’”

Prayer.