

Identity In My Skin - Sermon Notes for Website

Pastor David Brock | Sept 17, 2023

Ephesians 4:17-24

Summary of Main Points

- Speak God's Truth to Yourself
- My Worth to Myself
- My Worth to God

- *THE MIRROR*
- *Ask: Do you have a morning routine?*
- I do!
 - *Describe your typical morning routine, working towards the first point in which you typically look at your reflection in a mirror.*
- This is the point where some people begin to have a significant deviation from others in their day.
 - While their routine may stay similar, the atmosphere around the routine may shift.
 - Why?
 - Looking in the mirror...
- A mirror can have multiple use-cases but if we narrow it down there's two most frequent uses:
 - It reflects light to make a room feel bigger
 - It reflects your image for you to look at.
- See where this deviates?
 - When you look in the mirror, your day takes on the tone of the things you say and think about yourself.
 - *Begin to list and write positive things you might say or think if you are looking at your reflection in the mirror with the green marker:*
 - *Examples: beautiful, happy, clean, energized*
 - *Begin to list and write negative things you might say or think if you are looking at your reflection in the mirror with the red marker OVERTOP of the green marker:*
 - *Examples: ugly, too fat/skinny, gross, tired, wrong hair color, big nose, etc.*
 - See, the list of negative not only feels like it is easier to write, but it feels like the negative things we say and think far outweigh the positives, and that's because we often let that happen.

- BUT THEN we let God's truth into our lives and allow it to transform and renew our thoughts not just about the world around us, not just our faith, but the way we view ourselves as children of God which we will expand on next week.
- Picking up on last week, when we recognize what our faith looks like, our ability to speak the things of God into our lives increases.

// Speak God's Truth to Yourself

- Ephesians 4:17-24 CSB
 - Therefore, I say this and testify in the Lord: You should no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thoughts. They are darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them and because of the hardness of their hearts. They became callous and gave themselves over to promiscuity for the practice of every kind of impurity with a desire for more and more. But that is not how you came to know Christ, assuming you heard about him and were taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus, to take off your former way of life, the old self that is corrupted by deceitful desires, to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, the one created according to God's likeness in righteousness and purity of the truth.
- Ever struggle to believe that God "made you new"?
- Why can we come to God and ask him to heal me of this, rid me of that, purify my mind, yet walk away and give in to the same thoughts and feelings that trapped us in that deadly cycle to begin with?
 - Isa 55:8 CSB
 - "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not my ways."
This is the Lord's declaration.
 - For the Lord to take away your thoughts takes away the freedom he gives us through Him!
 - We must learn to conform our thoughts to REFLECT him.
 - *Begin to erase the negative thoughts on the mirror*
 - In any area of your life that you may struggle in, we must learn to let those areas of our lives be RENEWED by God and see them transformed to honor Him.
 - What do you see on the mirror now?
 - A clean start!

- A perfect reflection of one who can choose to reflect God every day in word, action, and thought.
- We live in a society where the validity of truth seems to be questioned more and more.
 - *Who's truth are we listening to?*
 - *Well, that's your truth, not my truth!*
 - And no, I'm not just talking about the one topic you're thinking about right now (but yes, we will be talking about it today).
 - We see this as Jesus prays over his disciples:
 - John 17:14-19 CSB
 - I have given them your word. The world hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I am not praying that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. I sanctify myself for them, so that they also may be sanctified by the truth.
 - Not only is Jesus saying that the world will reject the ways of the Lord, but those who live and walk in His word.
 - Jesus also declares that his Word is truth!
- The Gospel's truth is not the world's perspective of truth:
 - We're told that you must find who you are and have to express who you are.
 - We ARE SINNERS
 - If we live who we are in this way, then we express SIN

// My Worth to Myself

- Sexual Identity
 - We often jump to one conclusion when this topic is even mentioned, but the truth is that there's more to it:
 - We jump often to sexual orientation, and don't get me wrong, that's part of it.
 - **Romans 1:26-32 CSB** (*I really encourage CSB in this verse, even if your default translation is something different*)
 - For this reason God delivered them over to disgraceful passions. Their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. The men in the same way also left natural relations with women and were inflamed in their lust for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the appropriate penalty of their error. And because they did not think it worthwhile to acknowledge God, God delivered them over to a corrupt mind so that they do what is not right. They are filled with all unrighteousness,

evil, greed, and wickedness. They are full of envy, murder, quarrels, deceit, and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, arrogant, proud, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, senseless, untrustworthy, unloving, and unmerciful. Although they know God's just sentence—that those who practice such things deserve to die—they not only do them, but even applaud others who practice them.

- I want to point out a few things here that we might be tempted to misinterpret and some for clarity:
 - God had a design for us when it comes to our sexuality and that anything outside of that is unnatural in God's eyes
 - When we commit our lives to sinful acts, even knowing what God's word says, God does not prevent us from making that free choice, and as a result, we are permitted by God to continue growing in our corruption against Him. After all, anything other than that would mean God didn't give us free-will.
 - Scripture isn't saying that each person who deals with this sin is all of these, but rather, let's look at what the ESV Study Bible says:
 - **1:28–31** Human sin is not confined to sexual sins, and Paul now lists a whole catalog of the evils common among human beings as a result of turning from God.
 - **1:32** People do not generally sin in innocent ignorance, for they **know God's decree** (at least in an instinctive way) that their evil deserves condemnation. Indeed, the evil goes further when people **give approval** and applaud others for their sin, probably because having others join in their sin makes them feel better about the evil course they have chosen.
 - Crossway Bibles. (2008). *The ESV Study Bible* (p. 2159). Crossway Bibles.
 - Paul isn't saying kill these people, but that there is an eternal punishment for living in sin - which is all throughout scripture, this isn't the first time it's mentioned and is not exclusive to this.
- Relationship status
 - Sometimes we get caught up in our identity of having to be attached to someone, where I have to be in a relationship, have to be dating somebody, so consumed by the idea that I have to get married, that I begin to compromise on the things of God.
 - **Matthew 5:28 CSB**
 - But I tell you, everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.
 - We should not be so consumed by things that are for this world only!

- Scripture says in **Matthew 22:30 CSB**
 - For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like angels in heaven.
- Luke 14 shows what happens when we prioritize relationship status over Jesus in the parable of the large banquet where the one guest said he was unable to come because he just got married, that they will not enter the kingdom.
- Gender Identity
 - God made male and female. Satan wants to blur the lines and distort God's image. Don't let him distort the image He created!
 - Extra verses to use to emphasize this as you see fit:
 - **Deuteronomy 22:5 CSB**
 - "A woman is not to wear male clothing, and a man is not to put on a woman's garment, for everyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord your God.
 - **Deuteronomy 23:1 ESV** "No one whose testicles are crushed or whose male organ is cut off shall enter the assembly of the Lord.
 - This is directly referencing the eunich's of the time who did these things as worship to pagan gods.
 - When we give in to the temptations of the enemy, we are doing the same thing!
 - You know what's detestable to God - ALL SIN
 - Sin defiles
 - Sin is anything we say or do that goes against the Will of God!
 - God isn't saying we won't have temptations, but as we saw in this testimony, part of following God is saying no to my temptations and desires and saying yes to Him!
 - If you have or struggle with any of these, God is still saying to TURN TO HIM - wipe that mirror clean and see HIS reflection in YOU!
- Why does any of this matter? Because...you have WORTH to God!

// My Worth to God

- Luke 12:4-7 CSB
 - ⁴"I say to you, my friends,^{4r} don't fear^{as} those who kill the body, and after that can do nothing more. ⁵But I will show you the one to fear: Fear^{at} him who has authority to throw people into hell^{aw} after death. Yes, I say to you, this is the one to fear! ⁶Aren't five sparrows sold for two pennies?^o Yet not one of them is forgotten in

God's sight.^{av 7} Indeed, the hairs of your head are all counted. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

- Whether you are in a valley so low you think there's no other way out or a mountain so high that you think you're higher than Jesus, we come to recognize that **CHRIST VALUES YOU**
- **YOUR VALUE IS HIGH**
 - **Suicide**
 - And yes, we recognize the mental disorders that influence this, we're not addressing the mental disorders here.
 - But it's important to recognize when you have thoughts of suicide, get help! Call 911, call a friend, the suicide hotline, there are places equipped to help you!
 - Your life is worth so much!
 - **1 Peter 2:4-5 ESV**
 - As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
 - **Pride in Possessions**
 - We can land in the other realm of this thinking our worth is caught up in worldly possessions and that my worth is so high that we are full of ourselves!
 - YES, your worth is HIGH, but it's not because of what you have, but because you are a **CHILD OF GOD** as we talked about last week.
 - Jesus talks about this in the parable of the rich young ruler in Mark 10.

// GROUP QUESTIONS

- WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ...
 - Not be bound by my old self
 - Be dead to sin, alive in Christ
 - **Romans 6:11 CSB**
 - So, you too consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.
 - **Write life giving words on the mirror** (*bring it full circle*)
- Releasing my old self - be sanctified and live in my new self

- *Small Group Leader, ask ...*
 - *Is there anyone in the group that wants to pray for someone specific in your life that is struggling - a nephew or niece or cousin... we can bring them before the throne and declare freedom in Jesus' name!*