

WHO AM I?

Mark 11:1-11

Both of my brothers served in the United States Navy.
So did some of my uncles as well as one of my grandfathers.
My Uncle Mike even gave up his life for this great country of ours while serving in the Navy. He was 20 years old.
Regardless of the cost, they all still served proudly as soldiers in the United States armed forces.

Why?

Why would they risk their lives?

Why would they endure the physical, mental, and emotional stress?

Why would they leave their homes and families for a bunk bed and C rations?

Why do men and women still do it today?

I suggest to you that they do it for two reasons.

1) They know who they are:

They are Americans,
they are trained soldiers

2) They understand they have a mission to fulfill:

To defend the freedom of this country they call home

To defend their families that they love

To stand up for those who are unable to do so on their own

We read in our passage today from Mark that Jesus is riding into the city of Jerusalem amid shouts of praise and hosanna.

People are waving and lying down branches and clothing for him to ride in on.

The original first red carpet!

**It might have resembled a little bit of what our children did here today.
Palm branches waving, people shouting.**

This day marks the beginning of the end for Jesus' earthly life.

The first day in what was to be his last week.

His final path to glory.

His weekend would take him to a cross on Friday morning,
 into a tomb on Friday night and all day Saturday,
 then ultimately result in him being raised to life again on Sunday morning-
 Easter.

Jesus knew before he ever entered the city of Jerusalem – what would lie
 ahead for him:
 Betrayal, beatings, rejection, and a cross.
 Yet still he came.

In fact Mark 10:32 tells us, “They (meaning the disciples and Jesus) were on
 their way to Jerusalem with Jesus leading the way.”

Luke 19:28 says, “Jesus went on toward Jerusalem, walking ahead of his
 disciples.”

The Message Bible says it this way, “Jesus headed straight up to Jerusalem.”

He knew where this path was leading.
 He knew the pain he would endure.
 He knew a cross would be waiting for him.
 He knew these shouts of Hosanna would turn to shouts of Crucify Him.
 And yet still he came.

So I ask myself that same question.

Why?

Why would Jesus enter the city that he knew was going to kill him?

Why would he endure the physical, mental, and emotional stress?

Why would he give up his life for someone like me?

WHY?

I believe he did it for the same two reasons.

1) Jesus knew who he was

And

2) Jesus had a mission to fulfill.

Author Neil Anderson in his book, Victory Over the Darkness, asks this
 question:

“Is who you are determined by what you do, or is what you do determined
 by who you are.”

I will agree with Mr. Anderson that I believe what we do is determined by who we are.

“Our understanding of who God is and who we are in relationship to Him is the critical foundation for our belief system and our behavior patterns as Christians.”

And I believe that too few of us truly know who we are in Christ and therefore we do less than what we are called to do in Christ’s name.

Let me explain what I mean.

Jesus Knows Who He Is.

Mark tells us that Jesus entered the city, he entered Jerusalem sitting on a little gray donkey, actually he calls it a colt that has never been ridden before.

Why not a great white steed like we see in most movies.

The Roman Emperors of that day would enter the city upon a large powerful prancing horse ahead of their victorious warriors amidst shouts of praise.

Jesus knows who he is.

Jesus is the Son of God

Luke tells us that Jesus was baptized and “as he was praying, the heavens opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in the form of a dove. And a voice from heaven said, “You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Jesus is the fulfillment of Scripture.

Zechariah 9:9 says:

“Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of donkey.”

Jesus is God who became human

“So the Word became flesh and lived here on earth among us.” John 1:14

Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah

During this final week of Jesus’ life he will be asked several times -

Are you the Messiah?

At one point Jesus will reply, “I am, and you will see me, the Son of Man, sitting at God’s right hand in the place of power and coming back on the clouds of heaven.”

Jesus didn’t need a great powerful charger.

You see he didn’t come as the conquering hero who would overthrow the Roman government as the Jews hoped he would.

He came as the gentle, dignified, loving conqueror, which would save the world **not** from Roman rule (that was too small a vision, too narrow a definition of who the Messiah is) but he came to save us from all sin, for all people, for all time.

Jesus comes boldly into Jerusalem because he knows who he is.

He comes without fear, without hesitation, without a second thought.

He comes because he knows he has a mission to fulfill.

This was the path Jesus had been preparing for since that first crunch of the apple in the Garden of Eden.

This was his final path to glory.

Jesus was, in essence, God’s soldier and he had a mission to fulfill.

John 3:16 tells us that, “God loved the world so much that he sent his one and only Son, that whosoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”

A friend of mine recently reminded me that all too often we stop at that.

Jesus came to save us all from sin, all people, for all time.

The price for our sin, which is death, has been paid.

As Christ was nailed to that tree, to that cross, our sins were upon him.

As he hung there he looked out not only at those around him but he saw you and me as well.

He died for all people, for all time, and sins’ penalty was paid.

But if that were all he did then we would just be forgiven sinners.

Thank God for Good Friday.

Thank God that he sent his son.

Thank God that Jesus went to the cross and took our sins upon himself.

Thank God that he paid the penalty for our sins, which was death.

But his mission didn't stop there.

Our hope, what we truly celebrate every Easter, is that Christ conquered death.

He rose from the grave.

He was resurrected.

There was an empty tomb.

He LIVES!!!!

Easter morning is what takes us from forgiven sinners to redeemed saints.

So what does that mean for us?

Who does that mean we are?

It means that as redeemed saints, who believe in Christ and what he did for us, we are what **Galatians 3:26-27** proclaims, “**You are all sons (and daughters) of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.**”

Take a look at what you are wearing, at how you have covered yourself in clothes.

This verse tells us that we are just as covered in Christ.

What the Bible has to say about Christ is true about us as well.

In your Weekly Papers you will see an insert – I want you to pull that out right now and read with me a little of what the bible has to say about who we are in Christ.

Let's read together the first list under I AM ACCEPTED

“Our understanding of who God is and who we are in relationship to Him is the critical foundation for our belief system and our behavior patterns as Christians.” *(Neil Anderson, Victory Over the Darkness)*

Who I Am in Christ

I Am Accepted

<i>John 1:12</i>	<i>I am God's child.</i>
<i>John 15:15</i>	<i>I am Christ's friend.</i>
<i>Romans 5:1</i>	<i>I have been justified.</i>
<i>1 Corinthians 6:17</i>	<i>I am united with the Lord, and I am one spirit with Him.</i>
<i>1 Corinthians 6:20</i>	<i>I have been bought with a price. I belong to God.</i>
<i>1 Corinthians 12:27</i>	<i>I am a member of Christ's Body.</i>
<i>Ephesians 1:1</i>	<i>I am a saint.</i>

Ephesians 1:5	I have been adopted as God's child.
Ephesians 2:18	I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit.
Colossians 1:14	I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins.
Colossians 2:10	I am complete in Christ.

We are guaranteed each of these by the Word of God simply because we were born into God's holy family by faith in Christ.

In much the same way that we are guaranteed the rights and freedoms that go along with being born an American. They are ours because we are Americans. We trust that and believe it fully.

Well everything we just read is true of us because we are a part of God's family through what Jesus Christ did for us.

Why do we have such a hard time trusting and believing fully in those facts as well?

I believe it is partly because we forget who we are in Christ.

That is why we made this list for you to take home and put someplace where you can look at it everyday.

Read it.

Remind yourself of WHO YOU ARE.

I Am Secure

<i>Romans 8:1,2</i>	<i>I am free from condemnation.</i>
<i>Romans 8:28</i>	<i>I am assured that all things work together for good.</i>
<i>Romans 8:31-34</i>	<i>I am free from any condemning charges against me.</i>
<i>Romans 8:35-39</i>	<i>I cannot be separated from the love of God.</i>
<i>2 Corinthians 1:21,22</i>	<i>I have been established, anointed and sealed by God.</i>
Philippians 1:6	I am confident that the good work God has begun in me will be perfected.
Philippians 3:20	I am a citizen of heaven.
Colossians 3:3	I am hidden with Christ in God.
2 Timothy 1:7	I have not been given a spirit of fear, but of power, love and sound mind.
Hebrews 4:16	I can find grace and mercy in time of need.
1 John 5:18	I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me.

Jesus spent a great deal of time in prayer with his Father to help him remember who he was.

We need to do the same.

Read your bible and claim your identity in God's family.

Then you will be prepared to carry out your mission.

Just as we are clothed in Christ,

we also have a mission to fulfill in Christ's name.

Jesus told us in **John chapter 20** – “As the Father has sent me, so send I you”

We are soldiers in the Lord's army.

And our mission we find in Matthew 28:19-20 “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

Look again at your insert and read with me the last section under I AM SIGNIFICANT.

I Am Significant

<i>Matthew 5:13,14</i>	<i>I am the salt and the light of the earth.</i>
<i>John 15:1,5</i>	<i>I am a branch of the true vine, a channel of His life.</i>
<i>John 15:16</i>	<i>I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit.</i>
<i>Acts 1:8</i>	<i>I am a personal witness of Christ.</i>
<i>1 Corinthians 3:16</i>	<i>I am God's temple.</i>
<i>2 Corinthians 5:17-21</i>	<i>I am a minister of reconciliation for God.</i>
<i>2 Corinthians 6:1</i>	<i>I am God's coworker. (see 1Corinthians 3:9)</i>
<i>Ephesians 2:6</i>	<i>I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realm.</i>
<i>Ephesians 2:10</i>	<i>I am God's workmanship</i>
<i>Ephesians 3:12</i>	<i>I may approach God with freedom and confidence.</i>
<i>Philippians 4:13</i>	<i>I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.</i>

The Lord still has a mission that needs carried out today.

He is depending on all Christians (that includes you and me) to carry out that mission.

We have been given our marching orders if you will.

We need to take the Good news out beyond these doors – out to the city - out into the mission field.

Those who are in the midst of major changes like a new marriage, a new baby, a new home, a new job, or a new school need the stable love that Jesus Christ offers.

Those overwhelmed with the tension of marital and family problems, death of a loved one, unemployment, financial problems, loneliness, resentment, guilt, and other stresses need a Savior to ease and deliver them through and from the pain.

Those who have never received Christ into their lives need the Good news brought to them.

We can enter the city just as Christ did:

Boldly, bravely, without fear, without hesitation, gently and lovingly.

Because we know who we are in Christ

And we have a mission to fulfill in his name.

We are soldiers in the army of God.

We have authority in Him.

We represent Christ in the world and

We re-present Christ to the world.

When our feet hit the floor in the morning all of hell ought to shake and

Satan and his demons ought to tremble

Because we know Who we are and Whose we are!

Your Mission: Introduce people to God!

Matthew 28:19-20: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you...."