



Dear Partners,

February 2020

Lately we have been overwhelmed (in a good way!) with phone calls and prayer requests from people all over world who don't know who they are. We hear from a lot of young people especially and the number one thing they all have in common is that they aren't sure what God's will is for their life. Most are unsure if God wants to use them after everything they've *done* in life and all *sins* they've committed. They don't believe that God would want to use someone with their past and mistakes. That is a complete lie from the pit of hell! We assure you, as we do them, that God does NOT look at your past to determine if you are "good enough" to be used for the Kingdom.

His Word holds our identity. As Christians we need to learn to identify with the Word of God instead of our current or past situations. If all your life you've been told that you're unloved, good for nothing, uneducated, timid, shy, weak, stupid, etc, then you will most likely hold that to be truth. But the TRUTH is that the Word of God is the ONLY truth in the world. Truth doesn't come from anywhere else except from the Word of God. James chapter 1 says that the Word of God is our mirror. When we look into the Word of God, it should reflect who we are.

In an identity-confused, gender-confused world, we need to know who we are in Christ more than any other time in history. It's so important to stay focused on what the WORD says about us instead of what social media, the news, books, magazines or movies say about us. In reality, many of us have faced challenges and heartaches in this life. *We've all been through something* in our past and experienced some sort of failure. As Christians and children of the Most High God, that is not who we are. *We can't allow a failure from our past to determine our identity today.* In fact, as we were reading about the disciple Peter, we realized that Peter had a lot of zeal but he lacked identity. He allowed himself to identify with doubt, fear and unbelief instead of what Jesus was teaching him. He was the first to jump out of the boat and walk on water towards Jesus but he allowed fear and began to sink (Matt 14:29). He was the first to try and "protect" Jesus from his upcoming suffering and death but Jesus rebuked him (Matt 16:22). Peter was the first to speak up and say that he will **never** desert or deny Jesus only to deny Him 3 times after Jesus was arrested (Matt 26:33-35). He was also the first one to draw his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant in order to shield Jesus. (John 18:10). All this to say Peter was very eager but his timing and actions were usually a bit off.

Regardless of the fact that Peter prematurely acted out many times and allowed his doubt, uncertainty and fear to influence him, he ultimately became the *pillar* of the ancient church. Jesus even changed his name from Simon which meant "unstable and unreliable" to Peter which means "solid; a rock." Peter went from being unreliable and unstable to being a solid rock in the Kingdom of God (Jn 1:42). He went from being fearful and unstable to being filled with Holy Spirit and preaching what would become one of the most powerful sermons of all time at Pentecost (Acts 2). He baptized thousands of new believers, preaching the Gospel as far as Rome. His mere **shadow** would heal the sick (Acts 5). He was given the miraculous revelation that the remission of sins wasn't just for the Jews but also for the Gentiles (Acts 10). Peter was eventually murdered by Nero as a martyr for the Gospel of Jesus, choosing to be crucified upside down as he believed he was not worthy to die like his Savior. What a life Peter lived! The old Simon would become the new Peter and in the end he was transformed into a masterpiece and his life became a legacy to be

remembered forever. One of the greatest stories of redemption ever recorded. *When Jesus changes our identity, we become what He predestined us to be!* He makes ALL things new (Rev 21:5).

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new (2 Cor 5:17).

The other day we were having lunch with a friend who we hadn't seen in a long time. During our time together, she was telling us about her recent diagnosis. The more she expressed herself and explained the diagnosis, the more it seemed like her whole world was revolving around the disease. It seemed almost like she had allowed the diagnosis to become her new identity. We asked ourselves, why would anyone allow themselves to identify with a diagnosis that way? The answer is simple- people who don't know their identity will yield to their past or current circumstances.

Often times we find ourselves putting more **value** and **trust** in what the doctor says than in what the Word says about us. We find it easier to associate with the disease we've been diagnosed with than with what the God-breathed Word says. We accept what others say about us rather than what the Word of God says. If we don't have a solid foundation of our identity then we begin to identify with someone or something else. It could be a tragedy, a disease, a person, feeling or past relationship. But those things aren't who **you** are. Many people fall into this trap because they need meaning in their life and instead of searching out what the Word says about them, they yield to whatever is going on around them instead. **We must choose to believe the truth regardless of what situation we're in.**

When you're told that no one loves you, God says:

I have loved you with an everlasting love (Jer 31:3)

When you're told that your life has no value, the Word says,

God knows the number of hairs on my head and I am worth more than anything to Him (Luke 12:6-7)

When you're told that you aren't smart, the Word says,

I have the mind of Christ and God will give me a generous amount of wisdom when I ask (1 Cor 2:16; James 1:5)

When the world says you're too shy and timid and won't amount to anything, the Word says,

I am bold as a lion! (Prov 28:1)

When the doctor tells you that you're disease is incurable, the Word says,

The Lord bore all my sickness and He heals all my diseases, the Word of God is my medication and it brings healing to ALL my flesh! (Isaiah 53:4, Ps 103:3, Prov 4:22)

When satan accuses you and tells you that you will never be forgiven, the Word says,

There is no condemnation for me because I am in Christ and He is faithful to forgive and purify me (Rom 8:1; 1 John 1:9)

The answers to all our questions are found in the Word of God. The answers to who we are and our identity is found in the Word of God. The solution to all our current or future circumstances is found in the

powerful, truthful Word of God! Speak the Word of the Lord! **The Word of God must hold the highest value in our life in order for it to work.** The Word of God has the final say about who we are!

In Christ, *John & Alexandra*