

SERMON SERIES: *Starting Point*

SERMON TITLE: *New Identity*

SCRIPTURE: John 1:1-13

DATE: 9.26.21

BIG IDEA:

Only in Christ do we find an unshakable identity.

1. Everyone searches to discover their identity.

A. Your identity consists of your...

- Self image
- Self worth

B. Identity confusion is the result of looking to the wrong sources to understand one's identity

- **Traditional cultures** define one's identity by the role they play in the family or community
- **Modern cultures** tell a person it is up to them to define their identity
- Massillon is influenced by a mix of traditional and modern culture identity formation

2. Our identity drives our behavior.

A. How you view yourself and how you view your worth determines how you behave.

3. Only God has the right to define your identity.

A. God is our creator

B. God is our owner

- Monkey/Shark illustration

4. Christ offers us an unshakable identity.

A. You were created to be God's image bearer.

- You bear God's image when you, "reflect God's attributes and glory, represent him With authority in this world, and relate to him and others directly in an intelligent, intimate, glorifying way."¹

B. You were created to rule.

- You are to rule by **multiplying** yourself so that the whole earth is **filled** with God reflecting, God and people loving rulers.
- You are to rule by **subduing** creation, which means harnessing the raw, uncut potential of the earth itself for the flourishing of both the human and nonhuman creation.

C. We have rejected our identity as divine image bearers who rule on God's behalf.

- We have sought to build an identity apart from God.
 - Soren Kierkegaard defined sin as, "building your identity on anything but God."
- The result?
 - We become woefully and tragically fallen image bearers and rulers.

D. Jesus offers a way for our true identity to be restored.

- Jesus lived the perfect life we couldn't and died the death we deserved so that when we believe and receive him as Savior and Lord, we can be forgiven, reconciled to God, adopted into God's family, and given an entirely new identity which consists of...
 - New **name**...child of the King
 - New **status**...forgiven, redeemed, a new creation.
 - New **family**...the Church, Christ's bride
 - New **authority** to represent Jesus in the world
 - New **provision**...God supplying all of your needs

¹ Defined by Stephen and Alex Kendrick p. 62.

- New **purpose**...to be the divine image bearer and ruler you were always meant to be
- New **security**...nothing can separate you from God's love
- New **value**...you were blood bought
- New **heart** that desires to please God
- New **power** for godly living...the Holy Spirit
- New **inheritance**...New Heavens, New Earth, Resurrected body

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What has been your identity formation journey? How did you view yourself as a child, a teenager, a young adult, etc.
2. Who or what have you looked to in order to define yourself?
3. What is your current self image? In other words, how do you predominantly view yourself?
4. What is your current self worth? In others, how do you feel about how you see yourself?
5. What does our culture tell us to build our identity on?
6. Why is an identity built apart from God unstable?
7. How well do you do at thinking and acting in ways that match your new identity in Christ?
8. Are you able to articulate how to reflect the image of God in daily life?
9. Are you able to explain how you are ruling by subduing creation for the sake of human flourishing?
10. Are you passionate about your current role as a ruler? Why or why not?
11. What did Christ do to make God's adoption of us possible?
12. What aspect of the new identity Christ offers do you find most attractive? Why?
13. Do you know of anyone that is extremely rooted in their identity in Christ? If so, what is that person like? How do they think? How do they act? How do they work? How do they play? How do they treat others?
14. What is God saying to you and what are you going to do about it?