

GREETINGS FROM GREENVINE



I have been thinking lately about what seems to be very common in the world today. The idea of “identity.” Who am I? What am I? Those questions seem to loom around the world today as they seek to understand and relax in what nature has for them. It has actually been like that for a long, long time. The oldest religion in the world is paganism.

Today paganism has a huge rise among people who do not wish to acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Son of God, nor do they desire to worship the God of the Bible. They would rather believe in a polytheistic mindset to where they can believe whatever they want, and so justify whatever thoughts or actions that they might have at any time or place.

It’s not new. In 5th grade, I remember studying Roman and Greek Mythology. The many gods who do what they please; both good and bad. A god for everything and people who are allowed to believe whatever they want. Now I know that some of you are asking yourselves, “Does Jack really remember the 5th grade?” Somehow, it is stuck in my brain. Mrs. Taylor was my teachers name at Lincoln Elementary School in Champaign, Illinois.

Paganism is very popular among young people today. They would rather think up within their own minds what is right and wrong, true or false, good or bad. Therefore, they can do what they want. Identify as anything that they please, and not think anything is necessarily bad. They are simply allowing “nature” to do as she pleases. You now know that the effect has taken its toll on society today.

With this kind of prevalent thinking, it’s no wonder the men want to be women. Women want to be men. Humans want to be animal. All this with no rules to force them to be what they were born to be. Scary. Paul talks about it in the book of Romans. The first three chapters describe exactly what the world is going through.....without God.

However, without looking at paganism for answers, we can find our correct identity in Christ Jesus.

1 Peter 2: 5 says, “You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priest, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” Peter goes on to say in verse 9, **“But you are chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special**

possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God.”

In those few verses, Peter sums up our identity in Christ Jesus. You are a spiritual house, or a house for the Spirit of God. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians that the Spirit of God takes up His residence within our bodies at the time of our initial salvation. He uses that truth twice in 1 Corinthians to push home the point that as the result of the Holy Spirit living within us, we should not sin. When he writes it in Chapter 3, he poses it as a question: “What, don’t you know that your bodies are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst?” Later in Chapter 6 he writes, “**Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, Who is in you, Whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.**”

Our identity is that God through His Spirit lives within us. We belong to Him.

Back in 1 Peter, he says that you are “God’s special possession.” You are called to be a part of the body of Christ. You are Christ’s bride. You belong to Him. Prior in the verse Peter says you are a “chosen people.” God called you to Himself and redeemed you because He loves you.

Then Peter goes on to say that you are “a royal priesthood.” A “holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” Our identity is tied up in who we are in Christ Jesus. You remember the priesthood of the Old Testament. You had to belong to a certain nation, a certain tribe, a certain family and appointed a certain time for you to offer sacrifices that were to be done a certain way, at a certain time, at a certain place. Those were not spiritual sacrifices, they were simply following the Law of Moses that were mandatory in the worship of Jehovah God.

But, you are able to come to God through Christ at any time that you please, anywhere you are, for any reason. You can worship God and offer Him spiritual sacrifices that He loves for you to give Him.

Romans 12: 1 & 2: “I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.”

Hebrews 13: 15 16 & says: “Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess His name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”

A very important aspect of our identity is actively worshipping, praising, thanking God for Who He is and for what He is doing for you. Priests. That is what it says. Royal. In those verses, we

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are told as a result of our identity as priests we are to give Him our bodies to be used however He wants, using our words to openly tell others of Who He is and what He has done for us, and to use our means to help others.

We all have spiritual gifts and natural abilities that can be used to help others along our way. We do have an effect on the people around us. Our families, our friends, our fellow workers, our neighbors, even with those who we meet and don't even know.

Back to 1 Peter; you are also a "Holy nation." We are called to be holy in all that we do. In Chapter 1 verse 15, we are told, even commanded, "But just as He Who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written, 'Be holy, because I am holy.'"

Because we represent a holy God, we must be holy so that others can see in us that we are imitators of a holy God. Holiness is not an impossible goal. However, it takes a mindset that constantly considers words, actions, thoughts, intents, and all of our collective conscience to be holy, obedient to God in everything we say and do.

Colossians 3: 17 says, "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

Your identity is in Christ. You are a God follower, a Christ follower. A disciple of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. You have been bought. You are His special possession. Let your light shine in this dark, pagan world. Honor Him in all that you do.

Blessings this week. Jack & Karen

Announcements

- Wednesday Night Bible Study -Wednesday nights @ 6pm
- Burton Bridge Volunteer Appreciation Dinner - August 17 - Burton Community Center 6-8pm
 - RSVP by august 12 2 979-337-3370 or burtonbridgeministry@gmail.com
- Women's Ministry White Cross Workday - Saturday August 21 @ 9am
- Men's Prayer Breakfast - Wednesday August 25, @ 7am



JOIN US FOR THE
Going Beyond
SIMULCAST
PRISCILLA SHIRER

WORSHIP WITH ANTHONY EVANS

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 8:45AM-4:00PM
COST: \$20 INCLUDING LUNCH
CHILDCARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST
WOMEN AND TEENS 14 AND UP
REGISTER: <https://bit.ly/3BxK4MD>
CONTACT: wendybethany16@gmail.com

 **Champion Fellowship**
championfellowship.org

Prayer Requests

Jack - Surgery for removing the kidney stones - August 11

Byron Rutland - Colon Surgery Monday August 9 @ Methodist Hospital

Carol Witte -Beginning to feel better.

Debbie Reed - Recovery on her wrist

Cliff and Debbie Reed (and their family) in the loss of Cliff's dad.

Carolyn Cox - Having tests run for some pain she has been having. Pray that the doctors will find the answer.

Gerri Smart's daughter Terri is beginning to feel better. She received news that her tumor is shrinking

Denny's Sister is in need of a Kidney Transplant

Becky's granddaughter Taylor who has Cystic Fibrosis and is having health issues

Colin Smith - 18 yr old with a Traumatic Brain Injury. (Patient of Karens)

Joe Durrett - Stomach cancer and heart attack - home on hospice care

Ray and Bev Morris - Bev and been diagnosed with Alzheimers

Sandra Carson's daughter Candace is having some mental health issues

Bob & Sadie Easley - Health issues

Ed Ehring's sister Julie Robison is suffering from Alzheimer's.

Vicky Hoffman - legally blind but her eyes are getting worse

Prayers for those working in health related jobs, for protection. Especially those from our own families:
Karen at St Joseph - Susan - State School - Zella Johnson