

WE ARE

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Last weekend, I spoke about who you really are — not who you think you are, nor what others think or say about you, but who God says you are.

I listed some of the Biblical phrases in which God said, “you are.” We learned about our real value, our real citizenship, our real relationship to God and to Christ, and to one another.

I told you, “It is not where you came from nor whom your parents were that determines your future. It is not what you have done or failed to do that decides what you *will* do.”

Jesus said, “*If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes*” (Mark 9:23).

I left you to think about this question: “Are you willing to become what He wants you to be?” I hope you are.

In order to do so, what God said about you must be personalized. That is, it must be taken to heart. It must be believed — accepted, trusted, and owned by you.

I cannot give you that faith. “*Faith comes by hearing...the Word of God*” (Romans 10:17). By hearing the Word of God repeatedly, and mixing it with the faith you already have, your faith grows. Your trust in God will increase and your assurance of the truth will deepen.

Today, I want to give you an opportunity to do just that, to practice mixing your faith with God’s Word. Today, we’re going to turn His “you are” into our own “we are.”

I am going to walk you through some of the faith-assertions of believers that are found in the pages of the New Testament. We’ll take it straight from their mouths into our own, and we will say with them, “we are.”

As you read, I urge you to repeat each subtitle aloud. Include yourself with the Bible writer, and with me, and with all of God’s people, and say...

We Are Children of Promise

Galatians 4:28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise.²⁹ But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now.³⁰ Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? “Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.”³¹ So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.

Through Jesus Christ, we have received the promise of God, the promise of eternal salvation. His promise embraces our lives.

We Are Children of God

Romans 8:16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Acts 17:29 Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising.

Children of God! By His gracious election, He has made us His own, qualified and fit for the Kingdom. This is not only a matter of relationship but of nature. We are His children not in name only but by a transformed nature. Though what we shall be when He is finished transforming us is not yet apparent, we know we shall be like Jesus.

We must begin to think of ourselves as God thinks of us. And we must begin to speak of ourselves as God speaks of us. Let's see some more.

We Are the Lord's

Romans 14:7 For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.⁸ For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

Your life is in God's hands and no one can pluck you from there. Whether living or dying, we are in His care and He will lead us through both.

We Are the Fragrance of Christ

2 Corinthians 2:15 For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.

When I cannot intellectually understand my circumstances, yet am searching for God's presence or leading, I sometimes look at my options and think, "This situation, or this path, smells like God." It may be vague, but it's something like a hint of fragrance in the air. Some might call it a hunch or a premonition or an intuition.

We are like that for other people. Our very presence influences the atmosphere, even without a word. The fragrance of Christ begins to fill the place.

We Are His Workmanship

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

What has begun in your life is a work of God. You are handcrafted by the Majesty on High. And what He has begun, He will bring to completion. We are His masterpiece. We bear His impressions and His signature. No matter what your circumstances, God is able to work all things together for good.

We Are God's Fellow Workers

1 Corinthians 3:5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? ⁶ I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. ⁷ So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. ⁸ Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. ⁹ For we are God's fellow workers.

This is a stunning revelation, that the Creator of the universe — who requires neither help nor materials — should make us His partners in His work. He wants to share the thrill of His creativity. He includes and involves us in the process. It is His process and His work, but we are His partners.

We Are His Witnesses

Acts 5:29 But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men. ³⁰ The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. ³¹ Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. ³² And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him."

A witness is responsible to testify to what he has experienced. Though we were not present when Jesus was crucified or resurrected, still we have experienced the power of His death and resurrection. We, too, are witnesses.

We need not be Bible scholars, to be effective witnesses. We need only tell of our personal experience and what it signifies to us. Listen to the conversations around you — listen for the intersection of others' need or experience with your own, and then share what faith in Christ has meant to you.

We Are Ambassadors

2 Corinthians 5:20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

An ambassador represents someone else. We represent Christ and His interests, His plan of salvation and His Kingdom. Wherever we go, people may expect to learn what He is like by what we are like. While we do not represent Him perfectly at all times, over time, His heart can be seen in us.

We Are Sincere

2 Corinthians 2:17 For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

Handle the word sincerely and honestly. Do not use it to manipulate or coerce people. Do not use it for your own advantage. Say what God would say as you show His care.

We must begin to think of ourselves as God thinks of us. And we must begin to speak of ourselves as God speaks of us.

Whenever you begin to do this, immediately you will be confronted with thoughts of how you fail to actually measure up and corresponding feelings of guilt and hypocrisy. Let me tell you what to do about this.

The Bible says, “You are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” (Galatians 4:7). But Paul also gives this wisdom about the process: “Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father” (Galatians 4:1-2).

God, who sees the end from the beginning and calls those things that are not yet as though they are, says, “You are a son and an heir.” We who cannot see tomorrow from today and usually call those things that were as though they still are and always shall be, struggle to receive God’s words about us.

We must first recognize there is a process involved; the passage of time is required to fulfill those words in our experience. Yet they are true of us now, if we belong to Christ by faith, and they are pulling us toward that eventual and inevitable future. God’s words have the power to make you what He wants you to be.

We simply need to embrace them by faith, not by sight, and speak them often, as you would take daily nutrition and exercise to develop better health. Let’s continue.

We Are Covenant People

Philippians 3:2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! ³ For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. (heritage, education, works)

The Jewish Christians of Paul’s day thought that men must first be circumcised (become Jewish) in order to become Christian. Paul flatly refuted that notion, saying that the true circumcision is not physical but spiritual, of the heart. It involves the “cutting away” of idolatry and self-dependence and the putting on of faith and true worship.

We Are Debtors to the Spirit

Romans 8:11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

¹² Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

You owe a debt, because the Spirit of God is now in you. You owe nothing to the flesh, which has only deceived and misled you by its cravings. You are indebted to God to follow His lead for your life.

We Are Members of One Another

Ephesians 4:25 Therefore, putting away lying, “Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,” for we are members of one another.

To lie (or cheat or demean) a brother or sister in Christ is to injure yourself, for we are members of one another.

We Are Members of His Body

Ephesians 5:29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. ³⁰ For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

Everyone nourishes and cherishes their own body. We want to be healthy. We want to be strong. We want to look our best. These are natural. It is unnatural to injure oneself intentionally. Just so, Jesus cares for His people like His own body. He cannot hate you, but He nourishes and cherishes you.

We Are His House

Hebrews 3:5 And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, ⁶ but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.

We are the dwelling place for God, as a result of our faith in Jesus. Faith brings us so close to God that it can only be described as God-in-residence. He is with you to the end of the age.

We Are In Him

1 John 2:4 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵ But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. ⁶ He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

²¹ Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

Jesus is in us and we are in Him. This is a marvelous union. It is evidenced by the activity of His love toward others and leads to eternal life.

We Are a Treasure

2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. ⁸ We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed— ¹⁰ always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

Our greatest treasure in life is the power of God that works in us. God is "able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we could ask or think, according to the power that works in us" (Ephesians 3:20). That's what keeps us going. He always turns death back into life, and He demonstrates it in us.

We Are Receiving a Kingdom

Hebrews 12:28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

It is God's good pleasure to share with us the Kingdom, and His Kingdom is unshakeable. He is in the process of raising us up as a kingdom of priests ("a royal priesthood"). It will not be a fragile or endangered situation, but an established domain for His people.

We Are Not Ignorant of Satan

2 Corinthians 2:10 Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, ¹¹ lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Satan has many devices, and above them all is the grudge. If he can get you to refuse to forgive, to hold your anger, he will gain a foothold in your life. He will offer whatever excuse seems reasonable in order to turn you from forgiving. But we are called to forgive one another, “even as God in Christ forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32). We are forgivers because we have been forgiven.

We Are Believers

Hebrews 10:39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

Of all the things that by faith we may claim to be, this is both the foundation and the pinnacle: we are believers. We are those who have trusted God’s plan in Christ to save us, and trust His leadership by the Holy Spirit today. No matter what, we trust Jesus. We have seen what He is like. We have trusted His words. We follow Him day by day. “*In the same way that you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, so walk with Him today, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith*” (Colossians 2:6-7). We walk by faith and not by sight. We are dependent on God; we are not dependent on circumstances.

We must begin to think of ourselves as God thinks of us. And we must begin to speak of ourselves as God speaks of us.

His words, in the mouths of a believer, will transform that believer’s life into the life God has planned for him or her.

Ponder these things. As you read the Bible and discover phrases like “you are” or “we are” pertaining to God’s view of His people, take them as your own by taking them into your mouth and speaking them about yourself — out loud — not as the declaration of what you have been but of what you are becoming by the grace of God and the activity of His Spirit.

It is not a lie, but a confession of what you believe in your heart will be your future in Christ, according to God’s Word.

Romans 10:10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

“Unto.” Confessing your faith (not your sight) is part of the process of becoming what God intended. “Unto.” Whether it takes months or years to develop, don’t cast aside your faith during the process. Say what God says “unto” its fulfillment.

When God says, “you are,” we respond, “Yes, we are!”