

# Who Am I? What the Bible Says About Self-Identity (1 Peter 2:9-10)

Sunday Morning – July 21, 2019  
[Sleater-Kinney Road Baptist Church, Olympia, WA](#)

## INTRODUCTION

- **What is “identity?”** What does it mean to say and think, “this is who I am!”<sup>1</sup>
- How you answer *this question* helps you figure out another question:
  - o “why am I here?”
  - o In other words; “who am I?” = “why am I here?”
- True for a person or an organization; for example:
  - o (1) Planned Parenthood is an abortion provider
  - o (2) It’s fired two Presidents in the past 24 years who have tried to re-brand it as a health care organization
    - July 1995: Pamela Maraldo<sup>2</sup>
    - July 2019: Leana Wen<sup>3</sup>
  - o (3) Pamela Muraldo:<sup>4</sup>
    - *“Sources both inside Planned Parenthood and outside said that Ms. Maraldo had aroused opposition with her emphasis on reshaping Planned Parenthood into a broad health organization that could compete in the era of managed care -- a focus that some of the group's affiliates felt would inevitably diminish their role as advocates for abortion rights and low-income women's access to health care.”*
    - Regarding Muraldo’s proposal to re-frame mission: *“In a confidential letter sent to affiliates nationwide, some Planned Parenthood officials complained that “never has a document seemed so out of touch with our mission,” and pointed out that*

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<sup>1</sup> This question “who am I” is closely related to “what does it mean to be a human being?” The Christian worldview has a very different answer than the secular; see particularly Millard Erickson’s discussion on the “image of God” in man (*Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids, Baker, 1998], 529-536). Stanley Grenz also has a very short, profitable discussion in his book *What Christians Really Believe & Why* (Louisville: WJK, 1998), 21-29. For reasons of space, I won’t go into this question in this sermon.

<sup>2</sup> See Tamar Lewin, “Planned Parenthood President Resigns,” in *New York Times*, 22 July 1995. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/1995/07/22/us/planned-parenthood-president-resigns.html>.

<sup>3</sup> See Shane Goldmacher, “Planned Parenthood Ousts President, Seeking a More Political Approach,” in *New York Times*, 16 July 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/16/us/politics/planned-parenthood-leana-wen.html>.

See also Sarah Kliff and Shane Goldmacher, “Why Leana Wen Quickly Lost Support at Planned Parenthood,” in *New York Times*, 17 July 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/17/us/politics/planned-parenthood-wen.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Lewin, “Planned Parenthood,” in *NYT*.

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abortion was mentioned only eight times in 68 pages, and never in the context of discussing the future.”

- (4) Leana Wen:<sup>5</sup>
  - “I believe abortion is about health care, not politics. Many of my colleagues disagreed.”
  - “While I am passionately committed to protecting abortion access, I do not view it as a stand-alone issue. As one of the few national health care organizations with a presence in all 50 states, Planned Parenthood’s mandate should be to promote reproductive health care as part of a wide range of policies that affect women’s health and public health.”
  - “But the team that I brought in, experts in public health and health policy, faced daily internal opposition from those who saw my goals as mission creep.”
- (4) Planned Parenthood knows what they are; they’re an abortion provider who *also happens* to do some healthcare stuff,
- (5) and they’re very unhappy when a leader tries to re-frame that mission – identity determines mission!
- What is a church’s mission? What is **our** church’s mission?
  - If we figure out who we are, then we’ll know what our mission is
  - Our corporate identity is informed by our collective personal identities
- So, what on earth is “identity?” There are two very different ways to answer:
  - (1) identity is what you and others think about you:
    - an internal self-conception that exists in your mind
    - informed by our culture, the various roles<sup>6</sup> we play in life, and character attributes or habits (good or bad)
    - it’s not real; it’s based on what you think about yourself, and what you think *other people* think about you
    - **EX:** Lady Gaga says “Don’t you ever let a soul in the world tell you that you can’t be exactly who you are.”

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<sup>5</sup> Leana Wen, “Why I Left Planned Parenthood,” in *New York Times*, 19 July 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/19/opinion/sunday/leana-wen-planned-parenthood.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Kerry Ferris and Jill Stein (*The Real World: An Introduction to Sociology*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. [New York: W.W. Norton, 2018]) use the word “status” here to mean “a position in a social hierarchy that carries a particular set of expectations” (115), which comports with *OED* “status, n,” 3a. Because I use “status” in a different sense, I’ll use the word “role” to get the same point across.

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- (2) identity is a status;<sup>7</sup> as “what does God think about me?”
  - your identity comes from something outside of you
  - it’s a state or condition that’s given to you<sup>8</sup>
  - and it’s not in your mind; it’s a **real, concrete thing**
  - **EX:** you’re either a child of God or a child of Satan (1 Jn 3:10)
- This sermon is meant to answer two questions:
  - (1) who am I (i.e. which version of “identity” do Scriptures teach?)
  - (2) why does it matter?

### TEXT

#### Who can you trust?

- You can’t answer these questions without deciding who you should listen to
  - **what’s your source of authority; scientism or the scriptures?**
    - (1) **scientism:** a belief that hard (and soft) sciences are the only real source of knowledge about anything<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Sociologists refer to this position as “religious essentialism.” It’s the idea that identity is a concrete thing, an objective status (see *OED*, s.v. “essence, n.” 2a); “[t]he social world might impact upon it and shape it, but (it is generally assumed) it does not make it,” (Steph Lawler, *Identity: Sociological Perspectives*, 2nd ed. [Malden: Polity Press, 2014], 15). This is the Christian perspective; one shared by many other religious communities, too.

Lawler explained, “Essentialism has a long intellectual legacy in the West, such that it could be said to structure the ‘common sense’ of identity. It posits identity – or some part of identity – as stemming from some aspect of the person’s nature rather than from social relations. That is, identity is understood as an essence. In this context, an essence refers to something fundamental and integral to the person, which is not alterable (it is not possible to ‘be’ contrary to one’s essence) and is held to persist throughout time and despite other social changes. As I noted above, this essence may be understood either as coming from some aspect of the body (biological essentialism) or the mind (psychological essentialism) or as existing in a ‘soul’ (religious essentialism). Whatever the form, an essence of identity is understood as being ‘internal’ and as divided from the ‘external’ world of others (the social world),” (*Identity*, 17-18).

<sup>8</sup> See “status, n.” 2b. *OED Online*. June 2019. Oxford University Press.

<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/189355?redirectedFrom=status> (accessed July 17, 2019).

<sup>9</sup> See the excellent book by J.P. Moreland, *Scientism and Secularism: Learning to Respond to a Dangerous Ideology* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2018; Kindle ed.), KL 263 – 273. “Roughly, scientism is the view that the hard sciences—like chemistry, biology, physics, astronomy—provide the only genuine knowledge of reality. At the very least, this scientific knowledge is vastly superior to what we can know from any other discipline. Ethics and religion may be acceptable, but only if they are understood to be inherently subjective and regarded as private matters of opinion. According to scientism, the claim that ethical and religious conclusions can be just as factual as science, and therefore ought to be affirmed like scientific truths, may be a sign of bigotry and intolerance.”

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- usually denigrates “religious faith” as a “leap in the dark” or willful suspension of your brain
- scientists, psychologists and sociologists are the high priests in our society today
- people somehow assume these disciplines are neutral, and religion is “biased” = wrong
- often done from a perspective of atheism = must have non-supernatural explanations for everything
- can’t answer any of the “big questions” of life,
- which means it can’t explain the world as it is, or why you are the way you are
- (2) **Scriptures:** God’s message to us, given to 40 men over 1500 years, totally true, preserved so we can have them today
  - tells us who God is, who we are, how we got here what went wrong, how God plans to fix it, and how everything is going to end
  - tells us the message of salvation; how we can come into His family and have perfect peace
  - it explains reality; it explains the world and it explains you
- No time to prove this case; see the 2019 Easter sermon on this topic<sup>10</sup>
  - You’re going to have to make a decision about authority in order to answer the question

### Option #1: Identity as “what I think about myself”

- This material here is a synthesis of information from:
  - (1) a current sociology textbook (used now for SOC 101 at South Puget Sound Community College)
  - (2) two books about “identity,” written by sociologists within the past five years

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<sup>10</sup> “[The Terrorist Who Came in from the Cold](#),” preached Easter Sunday, 21 April 2019. For a book-length discussion of this topic (which really boils down to worldview), see especially Jason Lisle, *The Ultimate Proof of Creation: Resolving the Origins Debate* (Green Forest: Master Books, 2009). Lisle’s book is a basically a presuppositional approach to apologetics that uses the creation account as a foil. This is probably the most accessible introduction to presuppositional apologetics for ordinary Christians available today. John Frame’s *Apologetics to the Glory of God* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 1994) is also very, very good.

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- (3) this perspective is wrong!
- Identity isn't something real; it's an idea in your mind about:<sup>11</sup>
  - (1) what you think of yourself, and
  - (2) what you think other people think about you
- You can look at "identity" from different angles (I think this is a legitimate observation, by the way!):<sup>12</sup>
  - (1) personal identity (objective characteristics; e.g. nice, mean, tall, short, jerk, pleasant, etc.),
  - (2) social identity (social status or standing in community; e.g. soldier, sailor, policeman, executive, critical job function)
  - (3) felt identity (how you think of yourself *as* a person)
    - these are each different pieces of the puzzle that make up your idea of "who am I?"
- So, to summarize, "identity" is formed by:<sup>13</sup>
  - (1) what we *think* people think *about us*
  - (2) input from family, school, peers and the media<sup>14</sup>
  - (3) the various roles (or "identity categories") we play in life,
  - (4) our subjective sense of who we are<sup>15</sup>
- The point is that "identity" is not a concrete thing that exists in any real way;
  - (1) there is no concrete status or standing
  - (2) instead, identity is a fluid thing that changes as you interact with society<sup>16</sup>
  - (3) "the self is created and modified through social interaction over the course of a lifetime."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Charles Cooley and the "looking-glass self" theory says "that we respond to the judgments that we *believe* others make about us, without really knowing for sure what they think. And we're not always right. We may draw wildly unrealistic conclusions. But according to Cooley, it is these perceptions, not reality, that determine the feelings we ultimately have about ourselves. The social looking glass – the way we see ourselves reflected back from others – together with the feelings we develop as a result of what we imagine they see in us, forms our concept of self," (Ferris and Stein, *Real World*, 104).

<sup>12</sup> Lawler, *Identity*, 8.

<sup>13</sup> This is my definition of the secular sense of "identity," from my reading.

<sup>14</sup> These are the "big four" agents of socialization Ferris and Stein identify (*Real World*, 109), and I think they're right. This has important implications for the doctrine of separation.

<sup>15</sup> E. Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1968), quoted in Lawler, *Identity*, 7.

<sup>16</sup> Lawler wrote, "Instead of seeing identity as something located 'within' the person – a property of the person, we might say, - I consider it as something produced through social relations," (*Identity*, 2).

<sup>17</sup> Ferris and Stein, *Real World*, 102.

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- (4) the idea of “self” is “largely a social project.”<sup>18</sup>
- In fact, all the categories we use to mentally file people and file ourselves (black, white, asian, male, female, short, fat, Christian, Muslim, etc.) are discriminatory:<sup>19</sup>
  - (1) these categories were created by prejudice; by people who were making value judgments about others
  - (2) the categories come from worldviews that fostered inequality and injustice
- They’re discriminatory because:
  - (1) who’s to say whether these categories are legitimate; doesn’t it depend on where you’re standing?
  - (2) that means these “labels” are pointless and shouldn’t be used to determine “identity”
  - (3) so, “identity” **isn’t** something concrete
  - (4) it’s an internal thing in your mind based on your life and your interactions with other people
- The problem is that, if identity is only in your mind:
  - (1) you’re not anchored to anything real
    - show Wile E. Coyote graphic
    - “house upon a sand” analogy (Mt 7:24-27)
  - (2) you’re lost in a sea of relativity and standing on air
  - (3) nobody can tell you you’re wrong, either
  - (4) because there is no real truth,
  - (5) there’s only **you**, your **feelings**, and whatever your **family**, **school**, **peers** and the **media** tells you to think about yourself
  - (6) you’re like Play Dough, ready to be molded by your culture

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<sup>18</sup> Ferris and Stein, *Real World*, 102.

<sup>19</sup> “Not only, then, are all identities relational, but all are produced within systems of inequality,” (Lawler, *Identity*, 14). Another sociologist remarked, “the very identity categories we use are products of social processes, themselves connected with power and systems of inequality,” (J. Scott, “Multiculturalism and the politics of identity,” *October* 61: 12-19, quoted in Lawler, *Identity*, 13). This viewpoint is likely the result of a sociological perspective called *intersectionality* that is quite popular today; see Patricia H. Collins and Sirma Bilge, *Intersectionality* (Malden: Polity, 2016).

Lawler continued, and observed, “In wanting to see ourselves as unique, we magnify small differences until they become defining characteristics. What is shared is played down, what is different is played up, until identities come to seem ‘opposites.’ What is being suggested here is that what is similar must be suppressed to produce differences that come to seem so obvious and ‘natural,’” (*Identity*, 14-15).

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Option #2: Identity as “what God thinks about me!”

- The Scriptures tell us identity is about status or standing; our position before God – **when God looks at me, what does He see?**
- Christians believe this because:
  - o (1) God has given us 66 books and letters,
  - o (2) bound into a single volume which we call the Scriptures,
  - o (3) and that book tells us the story of reality
  - o (4) it makes sense of us as we are
  - o (5) it explains why everything is the way it is
- Story of reality:
  - o (1) **creation: how did we get here?**
  - o (2) **fall: what went wrong?**
  - o (3) **promise: can we and this world be fixed Is it possible?**
  - o (4) **redemption: who is going to fix it?**
  - o (5) **restoration: how will everything end?**
- So, the Bible teaches that identity is a status or standing granted by God:
  - o (1) God can give us this status, because He’s our creator
  - o (2) He created us as special people, in His image,
  - o (3) which means He hardwired us to want relationships with Him and with each other
  - o (3) He assigns status based on whether we give Him allegiance or not
- The Scriptures tell us there are only two possible statuses:
  - o (1) child of God,
  - o (2) child of the devil (1 Jn 3:10; cp. Mt 13:36-39)
- This is the key to your personal identity, and it’s the key to every church’s identity:
  - o (1) when God looks at you, what does He see?
  - o (2) when God looks at you, what does He think about you?
  - o (3) what standing or status do you have with Him?
  - o (4) and how does that inform what our mission is, as a local congregation and as a global church?
- John 3:16 means God clearly has love for unbelievers, but I’m asking about **status** - when God looks at you:
  - o **does He see one of His adopted children?**
    - **or, does He see a terrorist in rebellion against Him?**

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- does God see someone who confesses Him as Lord, Master and King?
  - or, does He see someone who will not give Him allegiance?
- What the Bible says:
  - (1) **1 John 3:9-10:**
    - “No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.”
      - You’re either one or the other; this is a status
  - (2) **Mt 13:38-39:**
    - The parable of the weeds (Mt 13:24-30)
    - “The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil.”
      - You’re either one or the other; this is a status
  - (3) **Salvation = new creation**
    - (a) **Eliphaz:** “What is man, that he can be pure? Or he who is born of a woman, that he can be righteous?” (Job 15:14)
    - (b) **Paul:** “But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,” (Titus 3:5-6).
    - (c) **Jesus:** “Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God,” (John 3:3-5).
      - There is a before and after; a status change
  - (4) **Saints = holy ones**

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- **Rom 1:7:** “to all those in Rome who are loved by God and **called to be saints.**”
- **1 Cor 1:2:** “to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, **called to be saints** together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”
- **Eph 1:1:** “**to the saints** who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus”
  - Holy ones = others aren’t holy = **this is a status**
- **(5) Two kingdoms:**
  - “He has delivered us from the **domain of darkness** and transferred us **to the kingdom of his beloved Son**, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins,” (Col 1:13)
    - Which kingdom do you belong to? **This is a status**
- **(6) The Book of Life:**
  - **David:** “Let them be blotted out of the **book of the living**; let them **not be enrolled** among the righteous,” (Ps 69:28).
  - **Jesus:** “Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are **written in heaven**,” (Lk 10:20).
  - **John:** “But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are **written in the Lamb's book of life**,” (Rev 21:27).
    - God determines your status based on whether you give allegiance to Him
- **(7) Slaves of Christ:**
  - “Jude, a **servant** of Jesus Christ ...” (Jude 1:1)
  - “Simeon Peter, a **servant** and apostle of Jesus Christ” (2 Pet 1:1)
  - “James, a **servant** of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (Jas 1:1)
  - “Paul and Timothy, **servants** of Christ Jesus” (Phil 1:1)
- For the Christian, your self-identity:
  - **(1) isn’t** about what you feel,
  - **(2) it isn’t** about your job,
  - **(3) it isn’t** about who you want to have sex with,
  - **(4) it isn’t** about your ethnicity,
  - **(5) and it isn’t** about your skin color
- Instead:

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- (1) it's about **whether you're a child of God or a child of Satan**
- (2) it's about **what God thinks of you**
- And, because Christians have this *status* or *standing*, the Apostle Peter says this is how Christians need to think about themselves:
  - *"But you are a **chosen race**, a **royal priesthood**, a **holy nation**, a **people for his own possession**, that you may **proclaim the excellencies** of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but **now you are God's people**; once you had not received mercy, but **now you have received mercy**," (1 Pet 2:9-10).*
    - (1) **chosen people**: worldly geo-political, ethnic realities are gone
    - (2) **royal priesthood**: secular job is gone
    - (3) **holy nation**: nation characterized by His status and behavior, not by worldly distinctions
    - (4) **His own possession**: you're His, and He defines your identity
    - (5) **proclaim excellencies**: mission to declare God's mercy and adoption
    - (6) **sojourners and exiles (1 Pet 2:11)**: foreigners here temporarily; maintain your own cultural distinctives (see above)
  - Everything you are is subsumed under the umbrella of "Christian;" of covenant membership in God's family – **you're a slave for Christ!**

Conclusion: who cares?

- **Is Lady Gaga right? What definition is she using? What definition do you use, when you think about "who you are"?**
  - (1) Station or role (father, policeman, executive, an executive, etc.)?
  - (2) Character and personality?
  - (3) Desires (in this culture = sexual desires)?
  - (4) Ethnicity (critical race theory)?
  - (5) Physical looks
- You have a choice:
  - (1) Identity is "what God thinks about me"
  - (2) Identity is "who I think I am"
- Our culture takes the second option:
  - So does Lady Gaga

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- So do many Christians – and this is incredibly dangerous
- **Why?** Because for Christians:
  - what you think about yourself should depend on what God thinks about you<sup>20</sup>
  - what you think about yourself is meaningless unless it's anchored to something concrete (Wile E. Coyote in mid-air)
  - when your “self-identity” isn't based on your status in God's family, you end up making up your own “identity”
  - even well-meaning Christians do this, because society tells them they should
- There are two systems competing for influence in your life, and one of them is winning:<sup>21</sup>
  - **(1)** the “big three” agents of Christian socialization (Triune God, Scriptures, covenant community)
    - you're a child of God, and you need to think of yourself that way
  - **(2)** the “big four” agents of secular socialization (family, schools, peers, media)
    - you're whoever you want to be, and you need to think of yourself that way<sup>22</sup>
- **Which system has the most influence in your life?**
  - Many younger Christians (30 and under) have bought into the false view, and they re-shape their version of God to fit what they want
  - Today, this most often happens with sexual deviancy
  - They end up re-making God in their own image, because they don't find their identity as a child of God – they find it in something else; usually something sinful

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<sup>20</sup> That is, your subjective self-conception should depend on your objective status or standing before God. For Christians today this often isn't the case; the objective status is often ignored in favor of subjective feelings. We thus “self-identify” using categories that are extra-biblical, and our mission is warped. We forget why we're here. We also blaspheme God and the Gospel.

<sup>21</sup> “We are not just passive recipients of all the influences around us. We are active participants. We possess what is called agency, meaning that we are spontaneous, intelligent and creative. We exercise free will. Symbolic interactionism tells us that we are always doing the work of interpreting, defining, making sense of, and responding to our social environment. That gives us a great deal of personal power in every social situation. The process is not unilateral; rather, it is reciprocal and multidirectional. Remember that you are shaping society as much as it is shaping you,” (Ferris and Stein, *Real World*, 119).

<sup>22</sup> “Identities, in other words, are better seen as ongoing processes (and achievements) rather than as a sort of sociological filing system ... instead of a passive categorization, it is possible to see identity-making in terms of more active processes of identification,” (Lawler, *Identity*, 10).

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- Pay very close attention to the news, especially the news stories that champion sexual deviancy – notice that this sexuality is **always** the core of their self-identity
- Christians and Christian leaders are falling for this false mindset all over the West, in America and Europe - they think it's a legitimate way of understanding ourselves (*plug for future sermon on "feelings"*)
- **So, who are you?**
  - (1) You're either a child of God or a child of Satan
  - (2) If you're a Christian, this is who you are (show Christian chart)
  - (3) If you find your identity, dignity, value and ultimate purpose in something other than Christ (ethnicity, sexual deviance, job, nation), then you're wrong – and you'll end up forgetting why you're here
  - (4) You **are not** whoever you want to be
- Who you think you are determines why you think you're here:
  - Who we think we are, as a congregation, will determine what our mission is, too
  - Christians have been saved by God, given a status as His children,
  - and that means our job is to tell people about the message that can bring them perfect peace, reconciliation, and bring them in from the cold and into God's family

### Closing prayer

- Dear Lord:
  - (1) Your word tells us the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God:<sup>23</sup>
    - we know that people whose hearts, minds, lives and identities are shaped and marked by:
      - sexual immorality
      - idolatry and betrayal of you
      - adultery
      - homosexuality
      - theft
      - greed

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<sup>23</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

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- drunkenness
- insulting speech
- and financial trickery
- will not inherit the kingdom of God
- Your word also gives us hope, because it tells us that:
  - you rescue us out of these sinful self-identities
  - you wash us with your Holy Spirit from all our unrighteousness
  - you set us apart and make us holy
  - you justify us and declare us innocent in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by your Spirit
- (2) We ask you to work on our hearts and minds so we remember all this:
  - so we **don't forget** about your mercy, grace, love and kindness,
  - so we **always** ground our self-identity in Christ,
  - and **never** anything else
- (3) If we belong to you, we know **you chose us** - because:<sup>24</sup>
  - every person whom you've given to the Son will come to Him
  - and whoever comes to Him, Jesus will never cast out
- (4) If we belong to you, we know **you called us** to your Son – because:
  - the promise of the Gospel is for everyone who you call to yourself<sup>25</sup>
  - and your Word says we only come to you if you *first* open our hearts to pay attention to the Gospel<sup>26</sup>
- (5) If we belong to you, we know it means **we repented** of our sins:<sup>27</sup>
  - we decided to stop concealing our transgressions
  - instead, we confessed and forsook our terrorist insurgency against you
  - and so, you gave us mercy
- (6) If we belong to you, we know it means **we put saving faith** in your eternal Son, Jesus of Nazareth – and:

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<sup>24</sup> John 6:37.

<sup>25</sup> Acts 2:39.

<sup>26</sup> Acts 16:14.

<sup>27</sup> Proverbs 28:13.

## Who Am I? What the Bible Says About Self-Identity (1 Peter 2:9-10)

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- if we keep your commands, we abide in you, and you in us<sup>28</sup>
- (7) If we belong to you, we know it means **you've given us new life**:
  - your Son gives life to whom He will,<sup>29</sup> and
  - your true children are born, not from blood or the will of the flesh or the will of men, but from your will<sup>30</sup>
- (8) If we belong to you, we know it means **you've justified us** and declared us innocent:
  - by knowledge of who He is and what He's done,
  - the Righteous One, your Servant, makes many to be accounted righteous<sup>31</sup>
  - and saves His people from your wrath<sup>32</sup>
- (9) If we belong to you, we know this means:<sup>33</sup>
  - **our citizenship is in heaven**,
  - and from it we await a Savior – the Lord Jesus Christ
- (10) So, Lord, we ask you to help us **make this** our identity,
  - *not* our job,
  - *not* our selfish desires,
  - *not* an identity marker grounded in this world,
  - and *certainly not* our sins
- (11) Father, Son and Spirit:<sup>34</sup>
  - you're making one nation from all the peoples of the earth
  - you sent your only Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near
  - we ask that people everywhere would seek after you and find you
  - bring the nations into your family
  - pour out your Spirit across this world upon all people
  - and we pray for your kingdom to come quickly
  - through Jesus Christ our Lord

- Amen

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<sup>28</sup> 1 John 3:24.

<sup>29</sup> John 5:21.

<sup>30</sup> John 1:12-13.

<sup>31</sup> Isaiah 53:11.

<sup>32</sup> Romans 5:9.

<sup>33</sup> Philippians 3:20.

<sup>34</sup> *Book of Common Prayer: Episcopal Church* (New York: OUP, 2007), 100.

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### Blessing

- The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all (2 Cor 13:14).