

IDENTITY AND DESTINY (Christian Praise Church, 28 July'12, Sun)

Scripture: Matt 16:13-19.

Messenger: Pastor. Seng Yan

Interpreter: Pastor. Jung

Personal Testimony

My name is Seng Yan. I was told by Pastor Jung that my name is very easy to remember because it sounds like the Japanese word '1000 yen.' (You can buy me with one thousand yen? Haha)

I was born in a family that worshipped idols. My parents were introduced when my father fell sick. He suffered from epilepsy at the age of 45. After one major seizure, he was hospitalized for 6 months. He was not able to move or walked properly. He lost some part of his memory. Then, he also started to behave differently. He was not his usual self. We suspected he was spiritually influenced or in some bondage. So, we sent him to temples and monks for healing. Nothing seemed to work. We even hired a temple monk from Thailand to come to heal him. It was not successful. Then, we tried for the last time to send him to another temple monk in East Malaysia.

The monk tried for two weeks and he ended by saying, 'I can't help you. Maybe, you can try Jesus Christ.'

My family eventually got saved and my father was delivered from evil spirits in a church.

4 years later, I was also saved through the witness of my friend. Though I was born in a Taoist family, my parents gave me this name, Seng Yan. It is not 1000 yen. It is MORE than that. It means recognizing God's Grace. God knew who I am. And as I pursued Him, I began to see my purpose and destiny in God.

That is what my sharing today is about: Identity and Destiny. It is about how by knowing our identity in God, we can discover our purpose in life.

Message

Lets turn to Matt 16:13-19.

Key Verse

v18 'and I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.'

We get our identities from many sources. During our growing years, we get our identity from our parents and our teachers. The world also tries to tell us who we are through the media and internet. But the only person who truly knows who we really are, is God.

Psalm 139 says that we are fearfully and wonderfully made in God's image.

While our parents and people close to us, may know us to a certain extent, our identity is rooted in God. He alone knows our entire self. And if God is our ultimate source of who we are, then the more we are connected to God, the clearer the picture we have of ourselves.

In Matt 16:13-19, Jesus asked Peter who do he thought Jesus was. Was Jesus a teacher, a prophet or John the Baptist? Peter answered correctly. He recognized that Jesus was the Son of God, the Messiah. He knew this not by human knowledge but by the revelation of God.

Peter was a first in many things. He was the first one to get out of the boat. He was the first one who said that he will followed Jesus to the very end. And in this passage, Peter recognized Jesus true identity. And in so doing, Jesus revealed Peter's identity.

But Peter also had many failures. Immediately after this encounter, he rebuked Jesus for saying He was going to the cross. Later on, he denied Jesus three times. Peter was very disappointed with himself. He was filled with great remorse and almost gave up his faith. But God knew who Peter was, in better than Peter himself. He knew that Peter would be helping Him to build the Church. Peter will be a great apostle, laying the strong foundation for the early church. Despite his many failures, Jesus knew who Peter was from the inside. That is why Jesus declared to Peter that He will be a Senior Pastor!!

v18 `and I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.'

By revelation, Peter knew who Jesus is.

In response, Jesus revealed who Peter was.

And when Peter knew who He was in God, His destiny was also uncovered. His life purpose was found.

In the Bible, many of God's people found their purposes when their identities were revealed to them by God.

In God, Abraham knew that he will be the Father of many Nations.
In God, Gideon was not a coward, but a mighty warrior who will lead armies to defeat God's enemies.
In God, Jacob wrestled and was transformed from a deceiver to a prince. God gave him a new name, Israel.

As we get to know God more and more, we get to know ourselves more and more. As we get to know ourselves in how God sees us, we will then know God's purpose for our lives.

v18 `and I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock **I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.**'

In God, we know who we truly are. In knowing who we are, we know our destiny and life purpose.

I believe God has a special purpose for the Japanese people. Japan is known to be a very strong country. The nation has a very strong, disciplined and resilient people. Japan is a great nation! However, the identity of the Japanese people is incomplete without God. Japan has to find its identity in God. The people have to find their true identity in Jesus Christ. Then, the destiny of the nation and the people will be unveiled.

I believe today many of us here can be anxious or troubled by what people say about us, about who we are. At times, our identity is rooted in our job. Then, we can get easily affected by what our bosses tell us. Our significance can be placed on people or things and NOT on God. When trouble comes, we can become insecure. We can become shakened. I would like to encourage all of us to come back to God and root ourselves in God for our identities.

In God, we know who we truly are. In knowing who we are, we know our destiny and life purpose.

Let's respond to God in prayer:

Father, I know my identity lies in You. I am beautifully created by You. Bring me to encounter you in your Word and truth. Lead me to root my identity in you. Lead me to your purpose and destiny in my life. In Jesus Name, we prayed. Amen!