School of Theology

Identity

Part 3 – Who I will be

Sunday 22 November 2026

Introduction

In what ways is a Christian's identity, given to them in the Lord Jesus, good news?

Last week we saw in Christ we become: friends with God; sons of God; children of God; washed, sanctified, justified; New Creations; brothers and sisters of the Lord Jesus; chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession; kingdom and priests.

Picture of self + Evaluation = Identity / Self-Image

"Our culture's lack of identity and security is a powerful force.
It fuels our obsession with image."
Vaughan Robers, Battles Christians Face, 4



This leads to: *confusion* about who we are; a *constant need* for the approval of others; a *distortion* of our relationships; and a sense of *instability*. Remember Ron Weasley…

"…the image the Christian should have of himself is of someone who is in Christ and is therefore a new creature. The proper Christian self-image, in other words, does not imply pride in ourselves but rather glorying in what Christ has done for us and continues to do for us." ***Anthony Hoekema***

But the good news of the Bible is that God has told us who we are. We are exploring what God says about identity in: **Creation**; **Fall**; **Redemption**; and **New Creation**.

In **CREATION** God **GIVES** us the identity of people made in his image.

In **THE FALL** humanity **REJECTS** the identity of God's image bearers and **REPLACES** it with other things / idols.

In **REDEMPTION** God **FORGIVES** our rebellion and **RECREATES** us in the likeness of Christ.

In **THE NEW CREATION** God makes humanity **FULLY** and **FINALLY** like Christ.

Overview

Sunday 8 November – Understanding identity from Culture and Creation.
Sunday 15 November – Identity from the Fall to Redemption.
Sunday 29 November – Identity in the New Creation and lived out today.

1. Identity and the New Creation

Last time we saw how Christ has recreated us in his image. We currently bear this image partially. When Christ returns, we will be **fully** and **finally** in his image and likeness .

(a) New bodies and the New Creation

Our bodies are a significant part of who we are. In the New Creation we are told that our bodies will be remade.

Bible Passage (page)	**How will our bodies be transformed?**
Romans 8:11 (1134)	
1 Corinthians 15:42-44 (1157)	
Philippians 3:21 (1010)	

But our transformation will be much richer than *just* our bodies.

(b) Renewed identity and the New Creation

The Bible speaks with clarity about our future image and identity.

Bible Passage (page)	**What will characterise our identity?**
Romans 8:29 (1135)	
1 Corinthians 15:49 (1157)	
1 Corinthians 15:51-53	
1 John 3:2 (1226)	

Our identity and image will be like Christ.

- What this **doesn't** mean: we will become God.
- What this **does** mean: we will be without sin (see Revelation 21:27; 22:3) and fully who God intends us to be.

Note: when we are told that we will be "like Christ" this doesn't mean we will not longer be ourselves. In the New Creation we will still recognise one another. Fundamental elements of who we are will remain (e.g. our appearance and our personality).

(c) Special company in the New Creation

The New Creation is not just about who/what we become. A big deal is ***WHO*** we will live with.

Bible Passage (page)	**Who will we be with in the New Creation?**
John 14:3 (1082)	
Philippians 1:21-23 (1178)	
Colossians 3:4 (1184)	
1 Thessalonians 4:17 (1188)	
Revelation 21:3 (1249)	

So much of our identity is shaped by whose company we keep and whose opinions we seek. Because, in the New Creation, we will be in God's presence – what he says about who we are will matter the most.

IN PAIRS
Look back on what we've just seen about our identity in the New Creation. How does it make you feel? What questions do you have?

(d) How should we live now?

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.
2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

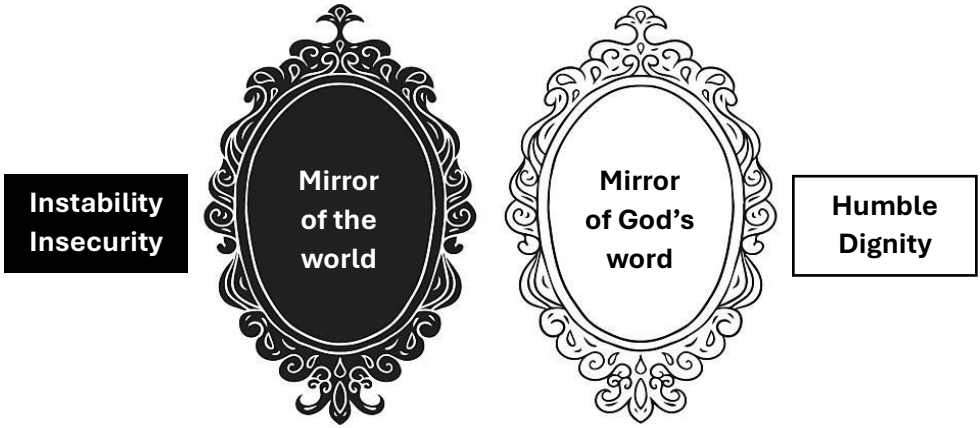
5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature...12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves...
Colossians 3:1-4, 5a, 12a (NIV 2011)

Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives
12 as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.
2 Peter 3:11-12 (NIV 2011)

2. Living out our identity in Christ

(a) The tale of two mirrors

When thinking about our identity. We have two different mirrors we can look into.



(b) How we feel about ourselves

Which mirror we look into make a big difference. Compare the following...

Mirror of the world	Mirror of God's word
Distorted picture of myself	True picture of myself
Fluctuating view of myself with circumstances and/or situations	Stable view of myself
Depends on comparison with others or my performance	Depends on God's declaration
Overall feeling of insecurity	Overall feeling of security
Need other people or threatened by them	Free to love and serve other people
Worried and unsure about who I am	Assured of who I am
Life revolves around me, my importance, my glory	Life revolves around Jesus, his importance, his glory
Focus on me, my performance, what I do and achieve	Focus on God and all that he has done and continues to do for me

Table copied from *Mirror Mirror* by Graham Beynon, p135.

(c) How we relate to other people

Which mirror we look into has a profound effect on our relationships with others.

Identity from relationships and opinions	**Humble dignity in Christ**
Need people to affirm me	Can serve people without their affirmation
Avoid those who make me feel worse about myself	Can be with, and embrace, anyone
Respond badly to criticism	Can accept and listen to criticism
Look up to some people wishing I could be more like them	Am able to be myself
Feel threatened by those I think are better than me	Can rejoice in other people's abilities and gifts
Treat people like an audience I have to impress	Treat people as individuals I can love
Look down on people I think are worse than me.	Seek to serve, support and encourage everyone.

Table slightly adapted from *Mirror Mirror* by Graham Beynon, p125.

If we form our identity from the mirror of the world, we will struggle to obey the second commandment: "Love your neighbour as yourself." (Leviticus 19:18; Mattherw 22:39; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27)

When we grasp and believe ***WHO*** we are in Christ, it frees us to "need people less and love people more".

There are two simple tests:

SERVICE TEST
Are we willing to serve everyone? Are we willing to serve in unseen ways?

EVANGELISM TEST
Am I willing to speak about the Lord Jesus? Or am I too afraid of what people will think of me to speak?

(d) Getting personal

Where might we be tempted to look, outside of the Lord Jesus, for a sense of identity?

- What do I do specifically to be liked or thought well of?
- How would I feel if my appearance was different?
- Why do I tend to feel good about myself?
- Why do I tend to feel bad about myself?
- What would I change about myself if I could? What difference do I think that would make?
- What am I proud of? Why?
- What, if removed, would shake my view of myself?

IN PAIRS

When we find our identity built on something other than the Lord Jesus, what steps can we take to change this? What do we need to turn from? What do we need to turn to?

(e) How to cope with…

- Praise & criticism

- Success & failure

IN PAIRS

How can we help one another to remember our identity in Christ? When and where are the natural opportunities to do this?

Conclusion

In these past three sessions we have seen how the world around us longs for a sense of identity. An identity that gives security and satisfaction. We have seen how this is exacly what God has provided for us in the Lord Jesus.

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In **THE FALL** humanity **REJECTS** the identity of God's image bearers and **REPLACES** it with other things / idols.

In **REDEMPTION** God **FORGIVES** our rebellion and **RECREATES** us in the likeness of Christ.

In **THE NEW CREATION** God makes humanity **FULLY** and **FINALLY** like Christ.

Yet, living out our identity in Christ, requires constant effort as we seek not to conform to the world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our mind (Romans 12:2).

Bibliography

Mirror Mirror, Graham Beynon
Battles Christians Face, Vaughan Roberts
Counterfeit gods, Tim Keller
The Protean Self, Robert Jay Lifton
The Institutes, John Calvin

Beccles Baptist Church