

Who Am I?

Mark1:9-11 (New American Standard Bible)

The Baptism of Jesus

⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; ¹¹ and a voice came out of the heavens: **“You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.”**

Introduction

Let me begin my sermon with a poem written by Dietrich Bonhöffer. He was a young theologian of great promise in Germany during the time of Hitler, yet he was martyred by the Nazis for his participation in a plot against the life of Adolf Hitler (*on April 9, 1945, a month before the surrender of Nazi Germany--wikipedia*).

It was written in prison before his execution and published posthumously in the *Journal Christianity and Crisis*, March 4, 1946.

- *Who am I? They often tell me*
- *I stepped from my cell's confinement*
- *Calmly, cheerfully, firmly,*
- *Like a squire from his country-house.*
- *Who am I? They often tell me*
- *I used to speak to my warders*
- *Freely and friendly and clearly,*
- *As though it were mine to command.*
- *Who am I? They also tell me*
- *I bore the days of misfortune*
- *Equally, smilingly, proudly,*
- *Like one accustomed to win.*

- *Am I then really all that which other men tell of?*
- *Or am I only what I myself know of myself?*
- *Restless and longing and sick, like a bird in a cage,*
- *Struggling for breath, as though hands were*

- *compressing my throat,*
- *Yearning for colors, for flowers, for the voices of birds,*
- *Thirsting for words of kindness, for neighborliness,*
- *Tossing in expectation of great events,*
- *Powerlessly trembling for friends at an infinite distance,*
- *Weary and empty at praying, at thinking, at making,*
- *Faint, and ready to say farewell to it all?*

- *Who am I? This or the other?*
- *Am I one person today and tomorrow another?*
- *Am I both at once? A hypocrite before others,*
- *And before myself a contemptibly woebegone weakling?*
- *Or is something within me still like a beaten army,*
- *Fleeing in disorder from victory already achieved?*

- *Who am I? They mock me, these lonely questions of mine.*
- *Whoever I am, Thou knowest, O God, I am Thine!*

Content

Who Am I?

I believe one time or another we all raised the same question of “Who Am I?”

For the question of “Who Am I?” I would readily answer as follows: *Kyewoon Choi, Korean American, Male, Father, Husband, Son,* How about you?

Who Am I? It is an identity question, isn't it? To answer such a question, and to identify an individual, we use different ways such as ‘names’ [e.g. John Newton Smith], numbers (e.g. SSN, Age, DOB), fingerprints, DNA, ethnic backgrounds and so forth. Sometimes we identify individuals based on their convictions and beliefs (e.g. Democrats, Republicans, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, ...).

But truly “Who Am I?” “Who Are You?”

To define and understand our identity, it seems that we use two standards: the world's standards and those of God's.

- **Equation of Wholeness** (*state of a complete harmony and unity, state of being unbroken or undamaged--bing*). In our pursuit of true identity, we want to be whole. Here's what I mean by that. In whatever we do, and whoever we believe we are, we want to be whole— happy, confident, joyful, peace and quiet, love, and perfect in all areas. I would call it wholeness. We long for wholeness in who we are. I have created the equation of wholeness in two ways. In the world, **what you do determines who you are**. In Christ, **who you are determines what you do**.

A. World's Standards: In the world, the wholeness equation goes like this:

- Wholeness = Perfect Looks + Performances [e.g. movie stars, athletes]
- Wholeness = Intelligence + Achievements [e.g. professors and Ph.Ds.]
- Wholeness = Wealth + Status [e.g. billionaires]
- **what you do determines who you are**.

B. God's Standards: In God's eyes, and in Christ, the wholeness equation goes like this:

- Wholeness = Self + **Christ**. "*The only identity equation that works in God's kingdom is you plus Christ equals wholeness and meaning*" (Victory over the darkness, Neil Anderson, p. 26)
- **who you are determines what you do**.
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CT7x3VnrqbA>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=othmFqawoYk&feature=related>

For the rest of my sermon, we are going to listen to God and what He says about us in the Bible. What makes us perfect and whole is Christ.

In Christ, I am

- A new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). E.g. The old has gone, the new has come. Dead to sin and alive to God (Romans 6:11).
- God's child (John 1:12). E.g. We have the privilege to call God "Abba Father." We have such intimacy with God. JFK's little son (John John) in the oval office.
- God's temple (1 Corinthians 3:16). E.g. No smoking, please.
- A member of Christ's Body (1 Corinthians 12:27). Christ is the head. E.g. You are not alone. No mutiny (cancer), please.

- A citizen of Heaven (Philippians 3:20). E.g. I became a naturalized citizen of the USA after I have sworn to be law abiding. Likewise, we are the citizens of Heaven, therefore, set your mind on things above (what's important in God's Kingdom), not on things down here (Colossians 3:2).
- Christ's ambassador (2 Corinthians 5:20). E.g. People read our lives.
- God's coworker (2 Corinthians 6:1). E.g. God chose imperfect ones to work with/through for His Kingdom.
- In a nutshell, the answer to the question, "Who Am I?" is this: You are God's. You belong to Christ. Remember the wholeness equation? Wholeness and meaning = self + Christ

My Journey

- Three Stages
 - Non-Believer (until 17, I was a stranger to Christ/outsider in salvation).
 - Baby Believer (college years. First love for Christ)
 - Mature Believer—Mark 1:9-11, Rema (God's Word specifically given for us).

Conclusion

The way you understand who you are determines what you do and how you live out your life. E.g. A man wasted his entire life because he would be repeatedly told by his father, "You're no good bum." E.g. 2. A Quaker merchant with faith in Christ was known to townsfolk "a man of word." He didn't need a written contract. Mere handshake would do it.

Remember Bonhoeffer? ***Whoever I am, Thou knowest, O God, I am Thine!*** God says, you are His. You belong to God. You are His child. Therefore, live a life worthy of God's name on you. E.g. God told Jesus that He was well pleased with Him. In accordance with such conviction, Jesus lived a life that was fully pleasing to the Lord. Amen.