

Who Do You Think You Are?

April 17, 2005

Judges 6:11-16 (NKJV)

Now the Angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezerite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites. [12] And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said to him, "The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!" [13] Gideon said to Him, "O my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?' But now the Lord has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites." [14] Then the Lord turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?" [15] So he said to Him, "O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." [16] And the Lord said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man."

Recently, I received a phone call from a lady who had visited our church. I answered the phone, thinking that she wanted to find out more about our church or tell me that she had enjoyed the service. So I said, "Hello, this is Pastor Ron."

And she said, "My name is _____ and I visited your church yesterday."

And I said, "That's great. I hope you enjoyed the service."

And she said, "I was the lady who was wearing a dress that didn't fit."

I said, "I don't remember seeing anyone in a dress that didn't fit." She said, "O yes you saw me. But you didn't want to talk to me because of the way I was dressed." And she proceeded to tell me how hurt she was and how rude I had been to her. She said that she came to our church wanting to feel love and to be accepted but I had humiliated her and made her feel terrible.

I said, "Lady, please listen to me. You're letting the devil torment you. I would never intentionally hurt anyone. I didn't notice that you were wearing a dress that didn't fit, and if I didn't talk to you, it wasn't because I didn't want to. Believe me when I say that I am sorry that I offended you. But I did not do it intentionally.

She said, "It doesn't matter what you say, I know that you didn't want to talk to me, and I know that it was because of the way I was dressed."

There was nothing I could say to that lady to make her change her mind. She saw herself as unattractive and unloved and therefore she felt that everyone else saw her that way.

That's tragic! That dear lady is tormented because she has a poor self-image of herself.

I want to talk to you today about the importance of having a good opinion of yourself. The reason it is so important for you to have a healthy self-image is because the way you feel about yourself determines the way you feel about others and it determines the way you act.

Galatians 5:14 (NKJV)

For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

You have to love yourself before you can actually love others.

If you see yourself as inadequate then you will most probably not accomplish very much. If you are always saying that you are dumb and stupid and that you can't do anything right then most likely you will not reach the potential that God has for you.

Today, I want to help you to develop a better image of yourself.

How am I going to do that? I am going to do that by helping you to see yourself the way God sees you.

God doesn't see you as a failure. He doesn't see you as a loser. He doesn't see you as unattractive. **He created you in His image and His plan for you is to become more and more like Him.**

He wants you to feel good about yourself. He loves you. He loves you with an unconditional love. That means that anything you have done in the past or anything you may do in the future cannot make God love you any more or any less than He already does.

God created you as a unique individual. There has never been, nor will there ever be, another person exactly like you. **You are God's unique and special masterpiece!**

Ephes. 2:10 (NLT)

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

What does it mean when it says "We are God's masterpiece?"

That is an incredible statement! God created everything!

Psalm 19:1 (NKJV)

The **heavens** declare the glory of God;
And the firmament shows His handiwork.

Think about it. God created the galaxies, the stars, the solar system and everything else in the universe. **"The heavens declare His glory."** The vastness and the grandeur of space is mind-boggling but God does not consider it His masterpiece.

Nature radiates the glory of God. I am a person who never tires of seeing the beauty and the grandeur of nature. Every year for over forty years I have made at least one trip to Colorado. I am absolutely blown away by the sheer awesome beauty of the mountains, trees, rivers, waterfalls, etc. I love it!

I've traveled the coasts of California, Oregon and Washington.

I've been to Alaska and sailed through the magnificent Inside Passage.

I've been to Germany, Holland, France, Belgium, Austria and Switzerland; some of the most beautiful countries on earth.

I've been to Mexico, Jamaica, Israel, England, Scotland, Wales and Hawaii.

I've watched the sun set over the Pacific Ocean.

One of the most beautiful sunsets I ever saw was while I was standing on the back porch of a hotel in Haifa, Israel over looking the Mediterranean Sea. It was awesome!

I've seen the tops of Mount Hood and Mount Rainier protruding through the clouds as I flew over them approaching Portland and Seattle. It was a magnificent sight!

I've seen and taken pictures of some of the most beautiful flowers on earth. Their beauty is beyond imagination.

I have seen the handiwork of God in His creation but in all those wonders I did not see His masterpiece.

I did not have the privilege of being in the delivery room when my children were born but I held them in my arms moments after their birth and witnessed that incredible creation of God.

The creation of human life is absolutely astonishing. A baby's mind is more complex than any computer that has ever been invented. It records virtually every thing it experiences from birth 'til death.

Human eyes pass on incredible amounts of data. First, through the **cornea**, then through the **focusing lens** where the image strikes the **retina** stimulating **125 million nerve endings simultaneously**. This is processed by millions of micro-switches and funneled down the **optic nerve** which contains **one million separate insulated fibers**. When the information reaches the brain an equally complex process begins which I will not attempt to explain. And it all happens in a millisecond.

That's just one small part of the human body. When you think of every part and how complex it is you realize how great the Creator is and then to think that we are made in the image of God Himself! Humans not only have a body but we also have a soul and a spirit that is eternal.

Man is the apex of God's creation and yet, as wondrous as man is, he is not the ultimate masterpiece that is spoken of by Paul in Ephesians 2:10.

The ultimate workmanship of God, His masterpiece, is a human being who has been made alive in Christ. That individual is not only fearfully and wonderfully made by God, but he or she has undergone a second creation.

John 3:3 (NKJV)

Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

2 Cor. 5:17 (NKJV)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

God's most stupendous creation, His ultimate masterpiece, is man made alive in Christ! **If you are a born again Christian, you are God's ultimate masterpiece.** He is investing a lot of time and energy into you. He loves you. He is working on you day after day wanting to bring out His glory in you. He wants you to be successful.

Jeremiah 29:11 (NKJV)

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

2 Cor. 3:18 (NKJV)

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed into the same image** from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Too many Christians see themselves as weak and unable to do anything for God. Gideon was a man like that.

The Israelites were in bondage to the Midianites. For seven years they had been hiding in caves. When they planted crops the Midianites destroyed them. Israel was in bad shape. Finally, they cried out to God to save them and He appeared to a man named Gideon and said to him... "**The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!**" "**Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. ...**

God saw Gideon as a mighty man. A man He could use to do a mighty work for Him. But Gideon did not see himself that way.

God sees you and He sees me as men and women that He can use to do great things for Him. He sees you as a strong, courageous, successful, overcoming person just like He saw Gideon. **Our problem is that most of us are like Gideon, we don't see ourselves the way God sees us.**

When God told Gideon what He wanted him to do, Gideon revealed how he thought about himself. He said, "I can't do that! I come from the poorest family in my tribe and I'm the least qualified in my family."

Gideon felt weak; God saw him as strong. Gideon felt unqualified; God saw Him as well able to do the job.

God sees you as well able to do the job. You may not see yourself that way, but that doesn't change the way God sees you.

The question is, "Who do you think you are?"
How do you see yourself?

God sees you as strong and courageous. He sees you as a man or a woman of great honor and valor. He sees you as being more than a conqueror.

How do you see yourself? You must start seeing yourself as God sees you or you will live your whole life and never reach your full potential. You **can** do something worthwhile for God! You **can** be successful! God wants you to succeed! He wants you to prosper! He wants you to have a good job! He wants you to have an **abundance**.

2 Cor. 9:8 (NKJV)

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have **an abundance** for every good work.

It's God's will that you will be able to pay your bills. It's God's will that you live in health. It's God's will that you prosper. It's God's will that you live as a righteous person. It's God's will that you overcome all the power of Satan. It's God's will that your life be controlled by the Spirit and not by your flesh.

Stop seeing yourself as a sinner. See yourself as a child of God.

Stop making excuses and start acting like the man or woman of God that you are. Stop focusing on your weaknesses; focus on your God!

The Bible says, "Let the weak say I am strong." Paul said.....

2 Cor. 12:10 (NKJV)

Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. **For when I am weak, then I am strong.**

Who do you think you are?

There's a story in the Old Testament about when the Israelites were about to enter the land that God had promised to give them. Moses sent out twelve spies on a reconnaissance mission and after six weeks they returned with their report. They said that the land was fruitful. They said it was flowing with milk and honey. They said it was everything that God said it was going to be. But then they said, "There are giants in the land, and compared to them we look like a bunch of grasshoppers."

Ten of the twelve spies said, "We don't have a chance. We'll never defeat those people. They're too big and they're too strong," They went on to say, "we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."

They saw themselves as grasshoppers, as weak, as defeated. Those ten spies were focused on their circumstances. They lost the battle before it even started. But there were two spies that had a totally different report.

They said, "Moses, we are well able to possess the land. Yes, there are giants there but our God is much bigger than those giants. Yes, the people are strong, but our God is stronger. Let's go in at once and possess the land."

That's how God wants us to talk! Stop talking about how weak you are and how defeated you are and how sick you are. Change that negative confession to a positive one. Start seeing yourself as a winner. Start seeing your marriage as restored. See your business flourishing. See your children living for God and enjoying His blessings.

Guard your mind. Control your thoughts. Focus on what God says you are.

Believe it when He says that you are more than a conqueror, that you can do all things through Christ. Stop seeing yourself as a failure. See yourself as a winner! God wants you to be saved. He wants you to be an overcomer! He wants you to accomplish great things in life.

He has given you incredible potential. He wants you to become all that you can be.

Who do you think you are?

I think that I am a child of Almighty God! I am created in His image. I am His masterpiece. He has an incredible plan for my life. He wants me to succeed. He is my loving Father. He is thrilled when I succeed.

Start seeing yourself that way and you will transform your life.

Give invitation!