

# I am God's

Adam Estep

If you weren't here last week, we wrapped up our Who is Jesus? series with, "Jesus is Savior." In many ways, last week's message transitions us well into what July is all about, "Who am I" and today's topic in particular, "I am God's." I would really encourage you if you weren't here last week to listen to our message last week, which you can access through our webpage, [lingletownlife.org](http://lingletownlife.org).

As a quick recap, the main thrust of last week's message was how Jesus' identity, his very name, is about who He was at His core: a Savior, a rescuer. **Jesus literally means, "the LORD saves."** But from who or what does Jesus save us from? The answer simply is OURSELVES. That as much as we do not like to talk about it or admit it, there is evil within us. We can attribute it as much as we want to some outside force or idea, but the truth is that within each of us is a part that wants to go away from the goodness of God and towards the evil desires of our own hearts. The great and good news is that Jesus was sent to save us.

Yet, the really amazing thing was that **Christ not only saved us from ourselves but FOR ourselves.** God has this great design for the world, and He has chosen you to be a part of it. This was fact that goes all the way back Genesis and the creation of the world. God had done it all, created heaven and earth, sky and water and land, sun and moon, birds in the air, animals on land and in the seas, and he saw it all as GOOD. Yet, He didn't stop. God continued to make one more thing: humanity. In that one act, God communicates one thing to all of us: **the world is better with you in it than it would be without you in it.**

Perhaps the greatest evil within each of us is the idea that permeates all too well that says, "You are worthless. You are pointless." That is a bold faced lie. One of the Scriptures we read last week confronts this idea head on, "**But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us,**" (Romans 5:8). God sent Jesus to save us despite our evil within. God didn't wait for us to find some sort of moral center. No, He sent Jesus to become that center for us. God sent Jesus to save us not just from ourselves but FOR ourselves, for something better. Why? Because God knows the world is better with each of us in it because He chose us, and in that choosing is a new identity. In this identity, in this choosing, each of us can say, "**I am God's.**"

When we respond to God, embracing all He has done for us through Jesus Christ, our Savior, that **we have a new identity.** As we talked about last week, our identities are a huge part of who we are. God gave His Son the name, Jesus, because it means, "The LORD Saves." That was Jesus' core. Jesus is Savior. God has given us this awesome opportunity to change our identity. This is the greatest hope of humanity, this is why are not worthless, this is why the world is better with you in it.

That's the key **Scripture for this morning**, the key to understanding that we are God's, "3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace 8 that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, 9 he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment — to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. 11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, 12 in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. 13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory."

We are chosen by God, adopted as His children, given new identities. This is not something to be glossed over. How precious is this gift from God? We are brought into a whole new family. This is a source of tremendous hope and belonging.

So much of our lives are spent **finding a place to belong**. Initially, we belong to our families. There is security and comfort in being with our parents. They hold us, rock us, play with us. Then as we mature, we seek to find that sense of belonging elsewhere in friends. Whether playing sports or joining a dance class, we are looking for a place to belong with others. It is a search to find others with similar interests and abilities.

What the Church should truly be about is a place for people to find that within the family. This fulfillment of salvation, this belief that Jesus is our Savior, our response to embracing all of who God is not only binds us to God but to each other. This adoption, this idea that we are God's, not only brings us into covenant with God, but with each other.

As Paul writes, the sending of **Christ as our Savior provides for us redemption, forgiveness, and grace**. All of us. We all have God to thank for these things, and with that, we should be close together as anyone. These should be glue that bind us to God and to each other.

These things are not pointless, however. We are not saved just for the sake of being saved. We are not forgiven to just say, "Hey, I'm forgiven." If that's where

it stops, then we are missing a huge part of the Good News of Jesus Christ and why Jesus even came. There is outcome to these blessings of God. One we see is towards the end of Paul's writing we read this morning, we find this, **"When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit," (Ephesians 1:13b)**. What Paul is really trying to drive home for the Church in Ephesus and for us here this morning is that **being God's requires transformation, a new lifestyle**.

This step is crucial to why Jesus came to Earth in the first place. God wanted to do a new thing that could only happen through Holy Spirit in each of us. This was not something we could do on our own or earn on our own. This transformation doesn't to come from within us but from God. Paul does a great job explaining all this in Galatians 2. He writes how justification does not come from following a set of rules or the Law as the Jews had believed. It so much more than that. The Law teaches humanity how futile that idea is and why there was such a need for Jesus to come. In the end he writes this, **"If righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!" (Galatians 2:21b)**.

This transformation that God enacts within us through the Holy Spirit cannot originate with our own actions or by our own doing. We are God's through God's actions. There is no amount of good that can be done to earn what God has already freely given. There is no way we can earn the justification and salvation made possible through Jesus Christ. If that were possible, then Jesus died for nothing and we believe in nothing. When we put our faith in our own rules more than the grace freely given by Jesus Christ, we neuter our faith. We make the Church to be liar, and we waste our time here.

Instead, God has paved the way for salvation, and when give our lives over to that fact, when the Holy Spirit has free reign to completely transform us, then we are on a path that can truly change lives, including our own. You see, if we put our faith in our own self-attainment, then what purpose is there in serving others? It's becomes about what you can do for your own selfish ends. However, when the Holy Spirit transforms us, then we have something inside that can't wait to let that kind of transformation out. We serve others because God has so greatly served us, and what other response is there than to serve others as God has created us to do.

God chooses us. We are God's. We hear all the time the idea that someone can do anything if they put their mind to it. While Scripture says, "All things are possible," God doesn't want us to anything that we put our mind to. God wants us to our mind, strength, and energies towards one end: His, and that is a struggle for those of us who have grown up in the most individualistic culture the world has ever seen. In so many other cultures, the expectation is to what's best for family and community. In ours, we train our kids from the beginning that you do what you want. You put your mind to it, and you can accomplish that.

Each night Kendra and I read to our kids. So many of the books affirm the idea that no matter what you do, "It's ok. I love you." That's only a half truth, though. Yes, I will love my kids no matter what, but it won't always be ok if they do what they want. When they throw a toy or hit their sibling, I love them, but that's not ok. How often does this message get muddled in the heads of our children? We can't do any and every thing we put our minds to, nor should we. People have some really crazy ideas out there that aren't to the benefit of others or themselves.

The truth is not every one was meant to do everything. We are all created and gifted for one thing: God's plan. As my brother has shared many times, he could have stayed at Penn State out of high school and been an engineer. He could have been a good engineer, but that wasn't what God had created, gifted, and called him to do. I am pretty good at math. I'm sure there were times where my parents probably felt I should have gone into actuarial science. I would probably have been good at that, but I was not created, gifted, or called to be an actuary. Nor are all folks called to professional ministry.

Some of you are great at what you do in your professional lives and are right where you should be. I wouldn't want you to think about leaving that work to be working in ministry somewhere. However, each of us is created, gifted, and called by God to be transformed and have a role within His plan in mission and ministry. Some are gifted and called to do that as employment, and others as volunteers, but we are all called to a role. We are God's.

Therefore, we have got to find out where we fit. We have got to find out where God is gifting and calling us to go. To sit here is not an option. God has sent his Holy Spirit to do more than have us sit in a chair or pew. It doesn't matter how young or old we are. Parents, have you begun teaching your little ones where and how to serve? Has that become an expectation of faith?

God has calling for all of us. While there is still breath in our lungs, God has a plan and purpose for us. Even if all we come into contact with are caregivers and family, there is someone there we are meant to have an impact on. We are meant and we were saved for more than sitting in isolation on Sunday mornings. We are chosen on purpose, with purpose: God's. We are God's.