

Remember Who You Are!

Franklin Church of Christ
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May 16, 2004
PM Worship

Introduction:

Since moving here, I have been able to visit with my granddad in Chattanooga, TN more regularly. I can depend on my granddad whenever he sees me, writes me or talks to me on the phone to exhort me to “Always remember who you are.” By that, he means two things. First, I am to remember that I am a Crozier. We want the name Crozier to be a good name as the writer of Ecclesiastes advised (**Ecclesiastes 7:1**). Because we want Crozier to stand for good things, remembering who I am will affect how I live. But secondly, and more importantly, my granddad wants me to always remember that I am a Christian. Being a Christian means more than saying I was baptized. It is supposed to be what defines my life. The biblical writers often take the same approach with us. They want us to remember who we are, because that will affect how we live. In fact, notice what Peter says in **I Peter 1:22-2:3**. In these verses, Peter is essentially saying, “Brethren, remember who you are.”

Discussion:

- I. Remember who you are.
 - A. You are purified through obedience to the truth (**I Peter 1:22**).
 1. **Romans 3:23** says that all have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory. **Vss. 9-18** give a stronger description of this. Just in case we might want to think we weren’t that bad. Paul drives this point home in **Ephesians 2:1-3**, saying that “... we too all formerly lived” in this way. We must remember that we are not wholly different from any other person. We are not better. But we have been purified.
 2. Notice how the purification came about—through obeying the truth. Jesus said, “You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free” (**John 8:32**). The truth sets us free because it tells us what we must do. What we must highlight here is that purification doesn’t just happen. It is not mystical, ethereal or unknowable. It is simple. We are purified when we obey the truth. We need to remember that we were made pure because we obeyed.
 - B. You are born again through the imperishable word (**I Peter 1:23**).
 1. When Nicodemus came to Jesus by night in **John 3**, Jesus explained that we must be born again, that is, we must be born of water and spirit (**John 3:3, 5**). I believe there are two reasons the imagery of rebirth was used. First, to explain to the Jews that their physical birth was not going to cut it. It does not matter who your parents are or what they have done. You have to be born again, becoming a child of God, through a spiritual birth (**John 3:6**). Second, this imagery demonstrates that we have died spiritually and need to be reborn. As we read moments ago, we were dead in our trespasses and sins (**Ephesians 2:1**). Therefore, as Paul said in **Ephesians 2:5**, we needed to be made to live again. We needed rebirth. That old man was dead and he needed to be put to death. We needed to become new creatures and that is exactly what we did (**II Corinthians 5:17**).
 2. But also notice how this rebirth comes—through the imperishable or incorruptible word of God. God’s word is connected with “the truth.” As Jesus prayed in **John 17:17**, “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.” We are born again by submitting to the word of God. While our new birth is a spiritual one, it does not happen randomly by some primordial choosing of God. Rather, He regenerates those who voluntarily submit to His word. We need to remember that we were born again because we followed God’s word.
 - C. You are tasters of the kindness of God (**I Peter 2:3**). Peter highlighted the need for obedience. But this passage concludes with an important reminder—salvation is by God’s grace. Yes, we obeyed the truth. Yes, we read, understood and followed the word of God. But we did not earn our salvation. Our sins had separated us from God (**Isaiah 59:2**). We could not bridge that gap by all the penitence and obedience in the world. What we could not do, God did by sending His Son (**I Peter 3:18**). We must remember that we are saved by God’s kindness.
- II. How should that affect your life?
 - A. We must sincerely and fervently love one another from the heart (**I Peter 1:22**).
 1. **I Peter 1:22** surprises me. Peter says there was a purpose for our purification. As the KJV translates the verse it makes the point more clearly that we were purified “unto” something.

The goal of our purification is what surprises me. When reading this for the first time, what I expected Peter to say, “Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of God.” While we must obviously love God, that is not Peter’s point here. Peter says we were purified in order to love one another. Remember Jesus’ statement in **John 13:34-35**. Love is our distinctive mark. God has loved us, purifying us, that we may also love each other, following His example.

2. Notice how Peter describes the love we are to have for one another.
 - a. First, our love is to be sincere. Some translations say “unfeigned.” That is, love is not an issue of going through the motions. John spoke of this in **I John 3:18**. We are to love not just in word and tongue, but in deed and truth.
 - b. Second, this love is to be from a pure heart. Remember who you are. You are the purified. Therefore, your love must be pure. Some people perform actions that look like love, but their motivation is not pure (**cf. I Corinthians 13:3**). They have hidden agendas or improper motivations. Our love is to be pure.
 - c. Third, it is to be fervent. To do something with fervor means to do it intentionally and intensely. This love will not happen accidentally. If we love with this love, it will be on purpose—because we have worked at it. We must look at what love is and choose to live accordingly (**I Corinthians 13:4-7**). Additionally, we work at it whole-heartedly, not with half a heart or begrudgingly, but fervently.
- B. We must put aside wicked works. (**I Peter 2:1**).
 1. We have been reborn. We are new creatures. Remembering that will cause us to put off the old lifestyles and live in God’s way. In **Galatians 2:20**, Paul taught that our old man was crucified, put to death. We should lay aside those things and now live by faith in Christ.
 2. In **Ephesians 4:17-5:21**, Paul describes the new man that we are supposed to be. It is far more than just going to church. According to Paul, the new man speaks differently, works differently, reacts to emotions differently, relates to others differently, views life differently, manages time differently, etc. The new man is just different. God has regenerated us. We have been reborn. We are new creatures. We must remember who we are and act like new creatures. As **I Peter 1:14** exhorts, we must not live by our old standards.
- C. We must desire the word so we may grow (**I Peter 2:2**).
 1. If we were purified because we obeyed the truth and if we were born again because we followed the word, then clearly, when we remember who we are, we will continue to desire the word of God. The Bible will be our lifeline. It has all the answers that we need. The Bible will make us wise for salvation. It will teach us, reprove us, correct us and train us in righteousness. It will make us thoroughly equipped for every good work (**II Timothy 3:14-17**), which, in turn, makes us useful for the Master (**II Timothy 2:21**).
 2. It is too easy to procrastinate in Bible study. After all, the important part is over. We are saved now. But if it took devotion to the word to become a child of God, then it must take continued devotion to be pleasing to our Father, to grow before our Father. That is what Christianity is all about—growth. You must never be satisfied with your present spiritual condition. You must always be striving for improvement. As Peter wrote in **II Peter 1:5-11**, we are to grow and those who do not grow have forgotten who they are. They have forgotten that they were cleansed or purified from their old sins. We must remember.

Conclusion:

We need to remember who we are. We are sinners who have been purified. We are new creatures, different from the world. We are recipients of God’s grace. We need to act like it. We must love one another, lay aside the old lifestyles and grow based on the word of God.

Of course, I need to ask you, is this who you are? Have you tasted God’s grace, becoming a purified, new creature? If not, submit to Christ right now. According to **I Peter 3:18**, Jesus suffered and died to bring you to God. In **I Peter 3:21**, God’s word and truth says that you will be saved when you answer God with a good conscience, submitting to Him in baptism. Why not be purified by the truth, right now? Why not be born again through the word, right now? Why not taste God’s grace, by submitting to Him in baptism, right now?