Branded – Identity Crisis

"So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."

James 2:17

Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

John 6:28-29

The greatest work we could do is believe in Jesus; in His finished work; in His once-and-for-all forgiveness; He gave us a new identity; He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

When people look at your Christian life, what do they see? Do they see an advertisement for this world, or one that belongs to Jesus?

Brand Logos are designed for us to immediately think of their company.

Are we advertising our old identity or advertising our identity in Christ?

If you've given your life to Jesus, there is a mark on your life that displays you belong to Him.

We've been more than branded; we've been sealed.

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.
Ephesians 1:13-14

Sealed -> sphragizō -> to be secure from Satan; to mark; to conceal (like the contents of a letter), to hide/keep in silence/keep secret; to set a mark upon by the impress of a seal or a stamp; to confirm, authenticate, place beyond doubt; to prove one's testimony to a person that he is what he professes to be.

God has marked you with His identity.
God has sealed you with His love.
Your redemption in Christ has been authenticated.
Your relationship with Christ is confirmed by His blood.

It can be challenging to live by the Spirit and from our identity when we live in a world that constantly changes and offers us the opportunity to be whoever and whatever we want to be.

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel…
Philippians 1:27

Conduct - politeuomai – to be/behave as a citizen; to conduct oneself in a state or community

The Philippians were extremely proud of their earned citizenship in Rome.

Roman citizenship was highly valuable and came with many benefits.

Roman citizens focused on their social status, human achievements, festivals and parties, and embracing the cultural norm. Today, we see these struggles as well.

Paul tells the Philippians their identity is found in Christ, not Rome.

The Christian Philippians faced pressure to blend in with the culture and customs of Rome.

Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.
Philippians 3:17-21

Identifying with a lifestyle that blends with culture will not bring long-lasting fulfillment. It will leave us unsatisfied and empty.

Being consumed by culture, politics, and earthly matters creates division, not unity.

Our identity in Christ empowers us to live differently, not out of obligation, but as a natural expression of who we are in Him.

For some of us, our greatest struggle with identity is more than being caught mixing worldliness and godliness. For many of us, it's inward insecurities and lies and/or past experiences.

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him. And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?"

Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel of the Lord.

Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, "Take away the filthy garments from him." And to him He said, "See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes."

And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head."

So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the Angel of the LORD stood by.

Zechariah 3:1-5

Angel of the Lord = Jesus

As Satan begins sharing all the shortcomings of Joshua, God interjects. God had chosen Joshua – cracks, flaws, sins, and all – as His own, and He wasn't changing His mind.

Brand - 'ûḏ - the burnt, smoldering end of a stick or a log pulled out of a fire before it is completely destroyed.

Joshua's filthy garments = sin/iniquity

Christ's rich robe = righteousness

God remained close both during Joshua's sinfulness and during His salvation.

If you want to embrace your new Identity in Christ, you must keep your eyes on Christ.

God doesn't bail when you are in an identity crisis.

Jesus doesn't abandon us when we give in to sin. He cleans us up Himself.

Dirty turban = old identity/pattern of thinking

Clean turban = new identity/mind of Christ

Joshua -> yᵉhôšûaʿ -> God is Salvation
Jesus -> iēsous -> God is Salvation

The Angel of the Lord kept Joshua from punishment and death.

500 years later, Jesus, our High Priest, would endure the cross. He would have no one standing in His midst to rescue Him. He was branded a sinner so we could be branded as righteous.

Your identity in Christ exists because Jesus took on your identity as a sinner.

You are the brand that was plucked from the fire. You were rescued on Christ's behalf.

Because this is all true, here's what your true identity looks like:

I AM God's child, born again of the incorruptible Word of God. I Peter 1:23

I AM raised up with Christ and seated in heavenly places. Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 2:12

I AM God's masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus for good works. Ephesians 2:10

I AM fearfully and wonderfully made. Psalm 139:14

I AM loved with an everlasting love. Jeremiah 31:3

I AM favored by God. Ephesians 2:4-10

I AM chosen. Colossians 3:12

I AM hidden in Christ. Colossians 3:3

I AM accepted by Jesus. Ephesians 1:6

I AM forgiven of all my sins. Ephesians 1:7

I AM washed in the Blood of Jesus. Ephesians 1:7

I AM redeemed from the curse of the law. Galatians 3:13

I AM a new creation. II Corinthians 5:17

I AM the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. II Corinthians 5:21

I AM dead to sin and alive unto God. Romans 6:2

I AM the salt of the earth. Matthew 5:13

I AM the light of the world. Matthew 5:14

I AM a child of God. Romans 8:15

I AM the temple of the Holy Spirit. I Corinthians 6:19

I AM free from condemnation. Romans 8:1

I AM gloriously and immeasurably victorious in Christ. Romans 8:37

I AM abiding in the presence of God. Psalm 91:1; John 15:5

I AM a friend of Jesus. John 15:15

I AM a child of the light. Ephesians 5:8

I AM eternally redeemed. Hebrews 9:12

I AM guided by the Holy Spirit. John 16:13

I AM noticed by God. Deuteronomy 32:10; Psalm 17:8

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

Romans 5:6-10