

## The Problem of Mistaken Identity

Romans 7:24-8:1; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 3-26-23

*Who/what we are is foundational to what we do.*

*“Our wisdom, in so far as it ought to be deemed true and solid wisdom, consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves.” – John Calvin*

1. **The Christian’s Cry: ‘wretched man that I am’ (7:24)** *Wretched* refers to a miserable, groaning and despised condition because of our hatred of sin and our desire to worship and love God and others as we should. (John 17:25-26; Romans 8:23, 29)
  - Paul wrote Romans to believers, so the gospel must be for the saint as well as for the sinner. (Romans 1:15-16)
  - Paul wrote the book of Romans from Corinth (a culture known for its immorality and a church with all kinds of significant problems), yet he always assumed their salvation rather than automatically doubting it in the face of the sin they struggled with. (1 Corinthians 1:4)
  - In our society, identity is a major issue. How do you identify?
  
2. **The Christian’s Condition: ‘who will set me free from the body of this death’ (7:24)** *The body of this death* is the dead corpse of the old man that is hung around our necks because we still live in unredeemed bodies. (Romans 6:6; Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:9)
  - The Question of the Nature of Man
    - ***View 1: The True Man is Good***

Man is truly good and a victim of other’s sin.

*The Truth - Matthew 19:17; Mark 10:18*
    - ***View 2: The True Man is Two Men: Good and Evil***

Man is truly good and truly evil and terribly conflicted.

*The Truth - Psalm 36:1-4*
    - ***View 3: The True Man is Either Evil or Good***

Man is either unbelieving or believing which determines the condition he is in. We are either evil in sin or good in Christ.

- **Unbelieving Mr. Hyde – Truly Evil with Good:** truly evil though having relatively good desires and deeds. (Romans 3:9-18; 8:7)

The ‘good’ in the truly evil comes from the remnants of the image of God in fallen man and the fruit of common grace that restrains the evil.

As a result, as unregenerate sinners, we are naturally hostile to God (Romans 8:7) and therefore, we cannot save ourselves and we will not come to God for mercy on our own.

- **Believing Dr. Jekyll – Truly Good with Evil:** truly good though having evil desires and deeds. (Romans 7:14-20; 15:14)

The evil in the truly good is the result of the remnants of the ‘old man’ (known as indwelling sin) in our fallen, yet to be redeemed, bodies.

As a result, as regenerate saints, we must not be confused about who and what we truly are as Christians as we continue to fight against indwelling sin by the power of the indwelling Spirit.

*The Truth* – Matthew 7:15-20; 12:33-35; 13:47-50; Luke 6:43-45; John 3:6; Galatians 4:28-29

- The reality that all people outside of Christ are evil (hostile to God) should not make us less loving. (Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 6:27-36; Colossians 3:9; James 3:8; 4:16; Matthew 16:4; Matthew 12:34; 7:11; Luke 11:13; Jeremiah 2:11-13)

**3. The Christian’s Confidence: ‘thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord’ (7:25)** *God through Jesus* gives the victory now and ultimately, all because of the finished work of Jesus and by His Spirit. (Romans 8:2-4, 11-14)

- In Christ, we have a new position and a new person and a new power. (Romans 6:4)
  - In our *new position*, we are forgiven of all sin and righteous as Christ. (Romans 5)
  - In our *new person*, we are freed from sin and enslaved to God. (Romans 6)
  - In our *new power*, we have the indwelling Spirit so we can overcome indwelling sin. (Romans 7-8)

**4. The Christian’s Conflict: ‘so then, on the one hand I myself ... but on the other’ (7:25)** A real conflict of interests and daily battle with polar opposite desires. (Galatians 5:16-24)

- Remember that your spouse and your children and other believers have a fight to fight as well. (Romans 7:25; Colossians 3:12-13)