

Topic Three

My People – Identity

Identity and responsibility are deeply integrated in the relation of being and doing. In other words, being who we are will enable us to do what we are called to do. For example, an engineer cannot dispense medication or perform surgery on a sick person as a doctor does. Being who we are will determine our efficiency in our roles and job descriptions. In the passage of 2 Chronicles 7:14, God called us His people who are called by His name - *My people who are called by My name*. Being called by God's name means being acknowledged as His children having His own divine nature in us - *as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature* – 2 Peter 1:3-4.

In revivals, God shares His secrets and riches with His own children whom He also calls friends (John 15:14-15), He appoints sons and daughters who understand their identity and roles to run the greatest enterprise on earth, the Father's Business. Revivals are entrusted to His children whom He knows will represent Him well as kingdom ambassadors and administrators, the *kingdom entrepreneurs* who will align with the kingdom's agendas on earth.

We are a people who are called by His name. From a biblical perspective narrated by a Hebraic culture, names always represent or symbolize a person or a location (city) virtues, nature, and attributes. As Christians, we are named after Christ, *little Christos*, and the name of Christ that is His nature, and virtues must be integrated into our nature and virtues. For example, we cannot pray in the power of His name unless His name has its power in our lives. As people of His name, we always exalt His name, and bring glory to His name, not ours.

A complete enlightenment of comprehending the identity of a child of God is to identify oneself with the very image of the Divine Creator, which brings one to understand that one is a divine eternal being, bearing the glory and personality of the One who is the Maker in which one resembles in every aspect of the Creator's nature and attributes - *Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness* - Genesis 1:26. This entails coming into perfect oneness with God in mind, will, and existence - *for in Him we live and move and have our being* - Acts 17:28; *For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God* - Colossians 3:3; it is a revelatory identification of both the initial design and divinity of God's very own image in an individual - *"And have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him"* - Colossians 3:10.

Similarly, Christians are admonished to imitate the very likeness of God as His kindreds - *Therefore be imitators of God as dear children* - Ephesians 5:1, taking on identities that appropriate to the call and responsibility of the Body of Christ as the representatives or ambassadors of Christ here on earth. I have studied, observed, assessed, and concluded that many past revivals started brilliantly but ended either abruptly or miserably because the

revivalist strived to live up to their God-given identities, failed in their roles and responsibilities, and misused their prerogatives. An underlying belief system changes or determines the identity of a person. For example, if you believe in kindness, you will take on the identity of a kind person and would want to express that kindness through roles or virtues to which you could contribute that kindness.

The Bible vividly illuminates two primary identities in a child of God, and these two identities will transcend into another two secondary identities with attached roles and responsibilities, completing a four-fold universalistic wholeness in a Christian. When we are born again, which is both the prerequisite and prerogative of a Christian to enter and operate in the kingdom (John 3:5), we are born into a new identity, in fact, into two primary identities, that is we become sons and brides to God, this is a non-gender spiritual identity and position in Christ. Then, out of these two identities, another two arise which are predominantly our roles and responsibilities. We shall expound on these in detail:

The Adoption as Sons

But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ - Galatians 4:4-7; also Romans 8:15-16.

These Scriptures clearly tell us of a change of identity from bondage and slavery to that of *adoption*, the Greek *huiiothesia* means an acceptance of approval and legitimacy as sons, the placing of maturity or a crown on a son and even unto the privilege of becoming a joint heir with Christ. Sonship is a non-gender identity bestowed upon the first man, Adam, and has always been the crowning of the creation of man ever since. It is the only legitimate identity acceptable to God in both worship and relationship - *One of illegitimate birth shall not enter the assembly of the LORD* - Deuteronomy 23:2; and the only identity whereby we have the privilege of addressing God intimately as “Abba” or “Father!” Abba is a term of endearment reserved for an *intricate* and intimate bonding between a child and its daddy.

This newly redeemed identity as a son in a Christian will emanate into his or her role and responsibility thus the call of ministry and service becomes an ‘outworking’ or ‘bringing-forth’ of that identity to tend to the Father’s business. Sons serve the Father not for rewards but for inheritance. Sons are not only heirs, but they also seek first the Kingdom, its priorities and agendas, its righteousness, its moral values, and conduct. Sons manage their Father’s business and uphold both the legacy and constitution of their Father’s family (kingdom). We have heard of the common phrase, “*like father like son*” hence sons replicate the image of their fathers and are the only legitimate representatives of that image, thereby they are an ‘*extension*’ of who their father is. All these underlying principles are even more applicable in the spiritual context of a child of God in relation to God the Father.

The Bride of Christ

"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church - Ephesians 5:31-32, For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ - 2 Corinthians 11:2. The other primary identity is we are also the bride of Christ and Jesus is our beloved Bridegroom to whom we are betrothed. This bridal paradigm sets in motion a renewed perspective and realization of intimate proximity toward Jesus that many strive to cope with, especially men. I had trouble picturing myself as a bride in a bridal gown until I understood it was a spiritual identity with a prepositional prerogative. I saw myself in a vision in a glittering gown...with army boots, not high heels, and I knew that we are a warring bride, called to march and triumph with Christ.

The Lord tipped Hosea about this paradigm a long time ago – *"And it shall be, in that day" says the LORD, "That you will call Me 'My Husband,' And no longer call Me 'My Master,' – Hosea 2:16.* Then God proposed an engagement, a betrothal to His bride - *I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy; I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the LORD – Hosea 2:19-20.*

A betrothal is a contract (covenant) of marriage with a consummation at a proposed time, that is why when Christ comes, there will be the marriage supper for His bride, for she has made herself ready - *Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready – Revelation 19:7.* We know in the next verse the bride is the righteous saints because of the fine (pure) linen we wear - *And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints (19:8).* Our identity as the bride speaks of the privilege of an intimate relationship and proximate fellowship with God - *Listen, O daughter, Consider and incline your ear; Forget your own people also, and your father's house; So the King will greatly desire your beauty; because He is your Lord, worship Him. The royal daughter is all glorious within the palace; her clothing is woven with gold. She shall be brought to the King in robes of many colors - Psalm 45:10-11, 13-14.*

The Song of Solomon speaks of the most intriguing love, the passion, the depth, and the beauty of it, which God desires from His beloved bride, the Church. Our prerogative as the bride of Christ comes also with the "identical and positional" authority and responsibility that is mutually shared with the Bridegroom...which is why we are positionally seated with Him in the heavenly (Ephesians 2:6) and co-reigning with Him in the earthly (John 6:56). This posturing of ourselves in Him and with Him makes us complete - *As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him... and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power – Colossians 2:6,10.* Notice that it says we are to walk in Christ,

not just with Him but *in Him!* The Greek verb affirms it, and this is only possible when the two are joined to become one - *But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him* - 1 Corinthians 6:17 (the context of a marital union from the preceding verse)). This positioning in the Lord enables us to ignite revivals, nurture revivals, and steward them well because we are *well hidden* in His intimate authority.

A Royal Priesthood

You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ...But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light - 1 Peter 2:5, 9 and *...has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen* - Revelation 1:6. From the two primary identities as sons and brides, a Christian will now adorn the robes of the royal priesthood, and this secondary identity must be born out of the first primary identities. Understanding and living in the identities as sons and brides must first precede the identity of the priesthood, otherwise, the latter will become a religious ‘activity’ rather than a joyous partnership with God. Many intercessors (royal priesthood) became a sponge of offenses and a breeding ground for egoistic pride and envy because they failed to first embrace the blessedness of sonship and the bridal prerogative of intimacy with Jesus.

Sons and brides are kings and mediators of heaven on earth thus taking the role of a royal priesthood, and reconciling the world back to God as ambassadorial mediators - *Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation [katallage in Greek means restoration or atonement to divine favor], that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ* - 2 Corinthians 5:18-20. I need to stress this again; reconciliation is a key to plugging out the bitter roots of offenses and division and a key to unlocking restoration through forgiveness and healing. All these are the essence and elements of igniting revivals. The royal priesthood partner in intercessory prayers with the Holy Spirit on earth and Christ, the High Priest and Mediator in heaven in bringing atonement to the fallen nature of man and his environment; and bringing the Father’s will and administration to earth thus reconciling the fallen back to the Perfect. True intercession is not only praying intercessory prayers but also becoming intermediaries (mediating ambassadors) between heaven and earth thus bringing heaven to earth...revivals!

Enlisted Warriors/Soldiers of the Heavenly Host

You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him

as a soldier. And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules - 2 Timothy 2:3-5.

The New Testament is saturated with allegories of fighting battles, conquering, and putting on armor which are all military metaphors to describe the roles and responsibilities of every child of God. We are called to take the offensive to the domains of darkness and regain territories - *"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force."* - Matthew 11:12; and to storm the gates of hell which cannot prevail against us (Matthew 16:18-19). In other words, a born-again, Spirit-filled Christian or revivalist is called to be a *pecking eagle*, not a sitting duck.

We are called to - *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses* - 1 Timothy 6:12, and as soldiers, our primary goal to subject ourselves to spiritual disciplines in subduing the flesh - *But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified* - 1 Corinthians 9:27.

And after we have done all these, we simply stand - *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil... Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand* - Ephesians 6:11, 13. Paul said we are to be fully clothed with the armor of God, not any other conventional armor but spiritual armor, and to fight the spiritual war simply by *standing* - the Greek for 'stand' is *histemi* which means to abide, to hold on, to lay hold, to rest, to covenant and to establish. It is not a physical entanglement, and neither is it a passive one, but it is a spiritual covenantal abiding rest in the Lord that we fight our battles...and fight it from the place of victory, from a heavenly perspective.

Many enlisted soldiers are gung-ho and enthusiastic about fighting but we are called to stand, to abide, and let God fight the battles - *With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God, to help us and to fight our battles* – 2 Chronicles 32:8; *for the LORD your God is He who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you* - Deuteronomy 20:4. As soldiers, we are to put on (clothed) with the Lord - *But put on the Lord Jesus Christ* – Romans 13:14; and wear the armor of light - *The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light* – Romans 13:12. This admonishment is related to the call to be awakened, a call for revival - *And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed* – Romans 13:11. This is indeed a high time, a now time to be awake, for our revival draws nearer than we thought. Therefore, having a renewed mind and renewed heart by regeneration, let us embrace our new identities and prerogatives that come with it, and fulfill the Father's desire for us to become desirable sons, brides, priests, and warriors of His Kingdom here on earth and simultaneously fulfilling the various mantles, offices, ministries, and call of God as the light and salt of the world for our generation, a people prepared for revivals and to steward revivals.