

Identity = Sense of self and a sense of worth, what are we here for?

Sense of self -a core a durable core that you identify as yourself - roles you play, hats you wear in so many different places and circumstances - what is the core that identifies you as you in everyone of those situations -

Sense of worth - what makes you feel significant - confident of your value

The Gospel challenges those sort of identities We are offered a new identity My old self has been crucified with Christ If that is true then our old identities are irrelevant!

1. **Incoherent** - - conflicting loves -
2. **Unstable** - look on the inside and you will see that it is always changing. Older younger always idiot
3. **Illusionary** -feel like you are in control
4. **Crushing** - quality of work becomes the measurement of my worth -
5. **Excluding** - have to be excluding - so you can feel good about yourself

Galatians 6:14 As for me, may I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that cross, my interest in this world has been crucified, and the world's interest in me has also died.

The KJV uses the word 'glory' instead of boast. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ..."

Pauls obsession the sole source of his own meaning, was the cross. The cross is the fountain of everything he is, everything he has become, and everything he hopes for. It's the center of his universe. It's the thing he pours over and and thinks over, that makes it possible for him to do anything and to face anybody or anything.

Luke 9, Mark 8, Matt 16, John 12

Matt 16: 13 When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" 14 So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." 15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." 20 Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.

21 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. 22 Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" 23 But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

In verse 25 and 26 life and soul a same word Greek *psyche*, from which we get our word *psychology*

Eugene Peterson - *The Message*, translates this psyche, "Your true self."

Jesus is saying, "Here is how you can find ... Your true self. Your truest self. Here's how you can get into connection with who you really are.

Creator says to the creation - this is how you experience who you were always meant to be.

So if a person is in rebellion against God, defying God's will - they are "lost" - in other words - the majority of the things we do, most of what drives us, most of what upsets us, most of what moves, done in a state of confusion, or delusion. We don't know who we are.

Jesus comes and says, "I have the answer. I am the answer! I want to show you how you can find your truest identity. I want to show you the way to strong and deep-rooted life, soul.

Bonhoeffer says when Jesus Christ calls us, he bids us come and die. Take up your cross, when Jesus Christ calls us, he bids you come and die, because when Jesus says, "If you want to find your truest identity, self, soul, life, take up your cross."

When the original hearers heard "cross," they thought of the worst possible kind of execution.

To experience life, solid soul, truest you, suffer and die. When Jesus Christ calls us, he bids us **come and die**. Now what does that mean?

There is a context to Jesus' statement - it is a major failure of Peter. "Get behind Me, Satan! Jesus never called anyone Satan other than Peter. He called the Pharisees hypocrites, blind, white washed, a brood of vipers, children of the devil

Why is Jesus rebuke of Peter so strong, so shocking, so over the top, and in front of everyone else no less.

The timing is amazing as well it is right on the heels of Peter's great confession - 16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Peter by revelation from the Father in heaven, through the Holy Spirit connected the dots - all the prophets are always pointed forward to salvation, but you're always pointing to yourself. All the other prophets have always said, 'Thus saith the Lord ...' You're always saying, 'I saith unto you ...' All other prophets say, 'Here's how to get saved,' and you're the only one who says, 'I've come to save you.' "

At that moment, Jesus Christ looks at him and says, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church ..."

Jesus is saying, "If you don't understand what Peter just said, you're not in the church. You're not a Christian."

"Every other religion has a founder who is a prophet and who says, 'Salvation is through striving. Go do it.' I am the only founder of any religion who has come and said not, 'Salvation is through striving,' but, 'Salvation is through receiving.' Not achieve, receive, not do, but look.

Jesus goes from saying one of the greatest things ever said to anybody by Jesus, to one of the worst smackdown ever given by Jesus, and they were both done publicly.

The rebuke is shocking and public because it is so serious.

When Jesus said, "Who do you think I am?" and Peter says, "You're the Son," Jesus says, "Yes!"

Daniel 7:13, Daniel has a vision of someone who is coming in great glory in the clouds of heaven with millions of angels. "... one like a son of man ..." a divine figure but clearly in the human form. Jesus is going to come to earth and save us by putting down all evil and destroying all sickness and death and evil and suffering.

Yes Peter, that is me!! Psalm 2. It talks about the divine Son, "You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel."

Verse 21 says the minute Peter agreed Jesus was the victor, he turns and says to Peter, "Now I want you all to know I'm going to have to suffer, to be rejected, to die. I'm going to be killed."

In other words, "Here is how I'm going to overcome evil, save everybody, put an end to the evil of the world. I'm going to be defeated, to be weak, to be humbled, to be tortured, to be killed, to be utterly defeated. **That will be my triumph.**"

Here is how I am going to vanquish all evil someday, and **not have to destroy you.**

Jesus Christ give revelation, understanding, how He is both suffering servant and conquering King. Isaiah 53 predicts the coming of another figure of weakness, a figure of suffering.

Isaiah 53, "He was oppressed and afflicted ... He was led like a lamb to the slaughter ... For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken."

No one could imagine how they could both be the same person. How could the Divine Son, this figure of incredible power and majesty, be the suffering servant, this figure of complete abject poverty and weakness?

Jesus is saying, "This is how the kingdom of God will come in me and through me, through weakness and through suffering and difficulty and death." Peter can't comprehend the two together King Servant - No Way!

Jesus says get behind me Satan because you are an **offense** to me Peter. **Skandalon - temptation**

Peter you sound just like Satan in the desert when he tempted me." Satan said, "Would you like the kingdom of this earth? Bow down and worship me." in other words Satan says, "The Father's way is the kingdom of God comes through suffering and tribulation and weakness and defeat, but I'll give you the kingdom through achievement, through accomplishment, through victory, through strength., that is how I conquer"

Peter you need to grasp that the Kingdom comes through the cross, humility, humbling, trouble, suffering, as hard as it sounds, that is God's way to greatness and happiness. You're just like Satan.

Jesus says, "You're not thinking about God. You're just thinking like men."

Jesus is saying that the way up is down, that the way to triumph is through defeat, that the way to power is through sacrifice and emptying.

In verse 20 Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ. verse 21, 21 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things - because the kingdom of God advances in and through me by suffering and defeat.

If you want to follow me, **it will be the same.** Jesus advances the kingdom of God through suffering and humiliation and defeat and death, and HE will advance through you in the same way.

Until you understand I did not go to the cross so you wouldn't have a cross, until you understand I went to the cross so your crosses will be discipleship. Until you understand this, I don't want you talking about me.

The essence of Christian immaturity is, "Jesus Christ suffered so I wouldn't." The essence of Christian immaturity is, "Jesus Christ went to the cross so I'll never have to."

Now Jesus says let me tell you how to have a true identity, life, soul. The way to maturity, the way to get a strong identity, to find yourself. is by denying yourself, taking up your cross, and following me." Strength through weakness.

The strength doesn't come through strength, accomplishment. The strength comes through weakness, defeats, brokenness.

"You have to lose yourself **for me.**" **for me** is key - we lose ourselves for us, not Him

They used to talk about co-dependent enablers, You can lose yourself in a sense of, "I get a self because I help you, because I'm doing all these great things. I lose myself in the cause. I lose myself in the needs of people. I've just given and given and given, and I've just lost myself."

Jesus says, "Lose yourself **for me.**" "Look at my cross and let that shape everything else." I suffered so when you suffer, **you could become like me**, and the kingdom of God will advance in you and in others.

Only when you experience your crosses and your troubles and your difficulties **in life in light of my cross**, I've dealt with the real guilt, the real condemnation, unless you see my cross first and then you go to your crosses in light of my cross, you will always end up losing soul and life - the truest you.

Emotional ability to admit who you are. You can't have strong identity if you're kind of in denial about who you are. Notice he says here you have to stop saving yourself. **25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.**

Not until you understand he died for you and he loves you and you're accepted in him that you will have the strength to see just how screwed up you are. Your heart will not be capable of seeing how screwed up you are unless it knows the safety of His love and grace - that His arms of love are around you.

Conflict - relational break down - You cannot admit it's your problem, the depth of your sin, depth of your weakness, the depth of your selfishness. Why?

Because then you'd be lost, because you're saving yourself by being a good person. Until you know you can't save yourself, you will never have the strength that comes from seeing your real brokenness, the real extent of your flaws. You just won't be able to see that. Everybody, anybody, knows unless you have deep self-knowledge you don't have a strong identity. If you're living in denial, you don't have a strong identity.

If you're getting the strength of a strong identity in which you really see who you are, you will be feeling weaker and weaker, You'll be seeing more of your sin. You'll be seeing more of your flaws. Grace

So you will be feeling quite weak. You see, that's how you get a strong identity. That's how you get to the place where you are free from having to justify yourself anymore, you never have to hide, never have to blame shift.

You get freedom from outside influence. Now everybody agrees if you're controlled by what other people think, you don't have a strong identity.

Blurry face - I was told when I get older all my fears would shrink But now I'm insecure and I care what people think My name's 'Blurryface' and I care what you think

When Jesus says, "Deny yourself and take up your cross," and then he says, "For what does it gain to gain the whole world and lose your identity?" what he is trying to say is very simple. The way most of us apart from Jesus Christ get an identity is by **gaining the world**.

You've tried to gain the world, but you lost yourself. You don't have a self. Well, how in the world can you be free from the world? **The answer is only when what Jesus Christ thinks of you is more important.** Apart from that, you're just going to go from one part of the world that controls you to another.

Strong identity, trues you, occurs when you can look at whatever it is in this world and say "You're not my life. You're a good thing, but you're not my life. You're not my identity. You're not my soul"?

Crosses - Suffering - show you that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and the things you try and find yourself in through the world will always leave you hanging, fall short in your time of deepest need.

You get purpose, a mission. "Follow me." I'll tell you something. There is nothing that gives you more strength than to know you are changing people's lives because you are laying yourself out the way Jesus did

If you get involved in the lives of very needy people that's going to lead to suffering.

If you take a job that doesn't pay as much but it makes you more productive for the people around you, that leads to suffering.

If you start to give your money away in radical ways, that leads to suffering.

It leads to strength - because When Jesus asks, "What would you give in exchange for your soul?"

Think of the value of the soul. Think of the value of the self. What would you give in exchange? If he turns to the Father and says, "What would you pay for their souls?" the Father says, "I know what I'd pay. I'd give anything. I'd give my own Son."

When you suffer your brains says, God has let me down. The cross says to your heart, "He love me and . would never let me down."

Think about it Jesus Christ went through all these same things. Jesus Christ lost his job, lost all his money, all his clothes, lost all his friends. Jesus Christ was abandoned. Jesus Christ suffered and died, and the kingdom of God went forward.

When you think, "God couldn't be doing anything good in my life right now," the cross of Jesus Christ challenges your wisdom and comes at you and says, "Why not?"

The cross of Jesus Christ also challenges your fears, because the other thing your heart is saying is, "Ah! You're a fool. You're a jerk. You're a failure." The cross of Jesus Christ comes and says, "No. God the Father emptied heaven of its most prized possession."

God the Father spent the family fortune. God the Father gave his Son. Now you think he is going to abandon you? Of course not! He gave his Son in exchange for your soul. He is not going to give up on you now.

Christian friends, look at what your cross is now in the light of the big cross. That's how the kingdom of God goes forward. Don't be immature anymore.