

Responsibility and Identity

Mark 1:9-15

Acts 27:22-25

Real life story with a very powerful message.

In the mid 1980's Texas in USA had the worst rate of littering of all the states in America. Rubbish was being disposed all over the place. The government in Texas decided to enact an advertising campaign. They showed footballers taking responsibility for their rubbish and saying things like. Let's keep Texas clean. Let's make our state good for our children. Advertising campaign after advertising campaign, advertising company after advertising company failed. Nothing seemed to work. What they saw was an initial very minor decrease followed by an increase. Things were not looking good right across the board. No one wanted to take personal responsibility for their habits and the way and where they chucked their rubbish.

They decided to study the facts more and engaged an group to look at the problem. They found that the Texan Red necks were the worst offenders. Man now they had a problem.

They came up with a slogan and engaged a new advertising company.

DON'T MESS WITH TEXAS!.

Incredibly the Texas changed. Within one year the state had 28% less litter. Within 18 months it had 40% less and within 2 years it had 50% less litter and was now considered one of the cleanest states in America.

What changed? What was so different from all the other campaigns? **The reason the campaign was so amazingly successful was because all of the previous attempts at advertising were based on responsibility.** Don't mess with Texas focused on identity.

Don't mess with Texas because that's who we are. They again had the footballers, base-ballers and major influential people taking pride in their state. Don't mess with Texas! They focused clearly on the identity of the state. They said we are a clean state so you had better not dirty it up. The Texan Red Neck changed.

Responsibility and Identity

There is a big difference between identity and responsibility.

Responsibility says you have to.

Identity says we will do that because that's who we are.

We are always appealing to people to change.

Sometimes we as a church have been caught in trap of appealing to people on the basis of responsibility.

We say to our teenagers

- Don't have sex before marriage, save yourself for your future partner = responsibility.
- Give your tithe it is the right thing to do = responsibility.
- Don't cheat on your taxes, because its wrong and Jesus will see you = responsibility.

While all these things are right and good, we need to find a way to talk to people about who we are. **We need to build a culture where people** obey the laws of God and walked in the ways of God not because of responsibility but because of identity.

In **Acts 27: 23** Paul says 'For there stood before me this night an angel of God to **whom I belong and whom I serve.**'

Whose I am comes before whom I serve.

Paul said first and foremost he belonged to God. Service doesn't come first. **We don't serve to belong, we belong to serve.**

Who are we at C3 Marion?

- We are church that lives life with an attitude of generosity.
- We are a church that includes the unchurched.
- We are a church that loves worship.
- We are a church that loves families and generations.

We don't tithe, give offerings, give to Rise and build with hilarious sums of money, sing, clap, come to church on Sundays, on Fridays because we have a responsibility, we do it because that who we are.

We live according to identity because identity doesn't change.

Mark 1:9-11

Verse 11

'You are my son, whom I love and in whom I am well pleased.'

This was spoken before Jesus performed His first miracle. Before he healed the sick, visited the poor, cleansed the lepers, turned the water to wine, walked on water, fasted and prayed, raised the dead, visited his family, formed his ministry team, set leaders and sent them out to do the work of the ministry. Before he spoke in the temple, confronted the religious leaders of the day, prayed out to his father, sweated drops of blood in the garden, was arrested, suffered and bore our sins on the cross.

This was spoken before his purpose was fulfilled; before the fulfillment of his calling. God said you are my son. I love you Jesus.

Because his identity wasn't in the miracles, the healings, the wondrous works. His identity was in His father.

Identity supersedes activity.

Who you are speaks louder than what you do!

Identity is bigger than activity. When we know who we are it empowers us far much more than activity.

We wouldn't refrain from sin because we shouldn't sin we would refrain from sin because that's not who we are. **Sin is what you do, a child of God is what you are!**

We wouldn't come to church and serve in the church to get approval. We would however come to church and serve in church because we are approved.

Abortion and divorce is what people do, a purposeful living creation of God is what they are.

Stealing is what people do, givers is what we are.

Lying is what people do, righteous is who we are.

DON'T MESS WITH TEXAS – because were Texans.

C3 Marion the life to live. That's who we are.

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When Jesse was born... Ayleen said don't you just love him? Isn't he just so beautiful, so lovely.

We'll see... see what he eats like, how fussy he is with his food, sleeps like, how many times he wakes me up, how many times I have to change his dirty nappy, how soon he walks, says dad, what his reading is like and how well he can count and do tables. We'll see how well he gets on with the others and how his grades come out in respect to others. how good his SAS score is and what sort of career he chooses, We'll see how good he is, whether he is working hard, how he earns a living, how he loves his children, how he treats his wife.. how he honors his leaders.

NO! NO! NO! I did not say that! **He is my son! He is my son! He is my son!
He is my son!**

God doesn't say that about you. The day you gave your life to God and asked Jesus to come into your heart. He's my son! She's my daughter.

That's my boy and I love him.

Our identity is vital. It is so important.

Today we have whole generations who are walking without identity. They live without an identity. They don't know who they are and thus they don't know where they are going. That's why they run to drugs and alcohol, sex and have no understanding of consequences.

They don't know who they are.

God gives us an identity. He is our father. You don't need to do anything because you have to. You do things because that's who we are.

We are C3 Marion. We have a purpose. We have an identity. God is for us because we are His.

The life to live.