

THE IMPORTANCE OF A SECURE SELF IMAGE

[Greenlane Christian Centre - Dec 1981 - EKB]

1. The attacks of the Jews upon Jesus' life came because:
 - a. He acted contrary to their religious traditions and laws such as healing on the Sabbath day, *Jn 5:16, Mk 3:1-6*.
 - b. **He said that God was His Father, and made statements declaring Himself equal with God, *Jn 5:17,18* – “the Jews sought to kill Him.”**

2. Throughout Jesus' 3¹/₂ year ministry, He was constantly under attack and persecution because He **claimed He was equal with God**. In *Jn 5:19-30* Jesus makes 5 statements showing His equality with the Father.
 - a. *v19,20* equality in works.
 - b. *v21* equality in raising the dead, *v25,28,29*
 - c. *v22* the Father has given the role of being the Judge of all to the Son, *v27,30*
 - d. *v23* equality in honour
 - e. *v26* equality in having underived life, life that is able to continue without outside input. Only God has underived life.

3. **This declaration of self-identity by Jesus**, of who He was, enraged the Jews constantly, *Jn 10:32,33,38,39*. It was total blasphemy for a man to claim He was equal to God, in the eyes of the Jews. In the end the Jews gave this as their reason for why they wanted Jesus crucified, *Jn 19:7, Mat 26:63-65, Lev 24:16*.

4. We should note that whenever Jesus was put in a position where His identity was being questioned **He clearly declared who He was**, *Jn 4:10,26*. **Jesus never denied who He was**. He was sure, certain, confident and unmoved, *Jn 8:58*. He declared He was/is “Jehovah”, or “I am”. “Jehovah” means “I am”. **THE ONE WHO IS**. [Yahweh is the correct word for YHWH in the Hebrew]. Read *Ex 3:14*. God told Moses His Name was/is “I am that I am” i.e. “Jehovah” or “Yahweh”. [In all the following references Jesus said He was/is “I am”. (The “He” is not in the Greek.) *Jn 8:24, 8:28, 13:19, 18:5,6,8, 6:20*. The Amplified is very helpful in these references. Also the seven “I am’s” of John’s Gospel. *Jn 6:35, 8:12, 10:9, 10:11, 11:25, 14:6, 15:1*.

5. **So the first reason why a secure self identity is important** is so that you do not lose confidence in who you are in Christ, when your life in Christ is ridiculed and mocked by this wicked world. See how necessary it was for Jesus in *Mat 27:39-44*. Note the word “if” in *v40,42,43*.

6. **Now the second reason why a secure self identity is very important** is so that we can confidently humble ourselves to serve others, without losing our identity in Christ and become everybody’s doormat. It is a demeaning and belittling thing to be a servant of others without having a secure self identity, *Is 51:23*. See this in Jesus’ life, *Lk 22:27, Mat 20:28*. *Jn 13:1-3* is a strong statement of Jesus’ own identity with the Father. *Jn 13:4-17* is Jesus then washing the disciples’ feet. Jesus lost nothing in humbling Himself to wash the disciples’ feet **because He was totally secure in who He was** with the Father. The same message is given in *Phil 2:5-8*. Jesus knew He was equal with God, *v6*, and so He was able to become the Servant of all men in providing the way of salvation for everyone,

without losing His identity, and security in God. See how confident Jesus was in His self identity, at the beginning of His ministry, in *Lk 4:18-30*.

7. When John the Baptist appeared, *Jn 1:15-34*, after many years alone with God in the wilderness, *Lk 1:80*, *Mk 1:4-9*, **he was secure in his identity in God**, *Jn 1:19-34*. The Jews came and asked, "Who are you?" and John gave them a clear and concise answer, v23. He answered all their challenges boldly, v25-27. He knew who he was, and where he fitted in the purposes of God, so that he was able to stand confident and secure, when he was challenged by the Jews.
8. **How can each of us obtain the same secure self image**, so that we are unmoved by the ridiculing of the world against our Christian faith and experience, and stand secure in Christ, and our life of service and ministry? See No 25, 95,127, Pastors' Notes.
 - a. Be thoroughly born again by complete repentance and strong faith in Christ, baptised in water and in the Holy Spirit, *Ac 2:38, 3:19*.
 - b. Commit yourself to a Bible believing, Christ exalting, witnessing local church and support the work faithfully in tithes, prayer and leadership encouragement, *Heb 10:25*.
 - c. Maintain a close personal relationship with God by daily prayer, Bible reading and faith confession of the Word. *Is 50:4,5*, *2Tim 2:15*, *Heb 10:23*, *Ps 1:2,3*.
 - d. Find a place of service to others where you can give out the life of Christ from within you. The pastor will help you in this. It may be in the church, or caring for needy lives in the community. Be faithful!
9. The Lord will soon come to you and start to reveal to you His plans and purposes for your life. *Jer 29:11(NIV)*, *Ps 32:8*, *Jer 10:23* and *Pro 20:24*, *Rom 12:3-8*, *Eph 2:10*. Demos Shakarian says, "The happiest people on earth are those who know what God wants them to be doing, and who are doing it." Pastor Jerry Cook says, "Christian maturity is knowing **who you are in God**, knowing **what you have been given by God**, and knowing **how to use what you have been given**."
10. Keep a note-book of the scriptures and revelations of the Holy Spirit which God gives you, *Ps 119:105*, *Jer 31:21*, so that they can be like sign posts in your life.
11. Specifically ask God for guidance, *Lk 11:9*, and prophetic prayer from the eldership will be a great help. *2Tim 1:6*, *1Tim 4:14,15*.
12. Regularly confess aloud the Bible statements of who you are in Christ which are listed on No 25 Pastors' Notes.
13. You will grow steadily in assurance of who you are in Christ and of the call and purpose God has for you in ministry.
14. Remember each one of us has many aspects of ministry and service to others, and that we are serving God as we are helping those for whom God has made us responsible eg children, marriage partner, parents, neighbours and those in need and the saints of God. *Lk 10:36,37*, *1Tim 5:8*, *Heb 6:10*, *Mat 25:34-40*.