
CHANGE YOUR IDENTITY

I. What's in a Name?

- a. Our identity is formed by what we believe about ourselves and by what we call ourselves.
 - i. This creates a problem if it's based on a false narrative.
 - ii. Names can create damage.
- b. To move forward in 2023, we must abandon the false labels of the enemy and embrace the truth of who God says that we are.

II. Naomi's Story

- a. Naomi faced tremendous loss when her family moved from Israel to Moab, losing both sons and her husband.
- b. As a widow in that culture, she faced a tough road ahead.
- c. **Ruth 1:19-21** (NIV) *So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, "Can this be Naomi?"* ²⁰ *"Don't call me Naomi," she told them. "Call me Mara because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. ²¹ I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The Lord has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me."*
- d. Naomi's name
 - i. Naomi's name meant "pleasant" or "delight of God."
 - ii. She chose the name "bitterness."
- e. Naomi created an identity based on her problems.
 - i. **Ruth 1:21** (NIV) *I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty.*
 - 1. She wasn't really empty. She had Ruth's help.
 - 2. She could only see the problems
 - ii. Naomi focused more on the problems than the problem solver
 - 1. This mindset colored everything in Naomi's life.
 - 2. An identity based on loss creates bitterness.

III. Abraham's Story

- a. Abraham and Sarah were childless, but had been promised a child by God.
 - i. They left everything to pursue God's plan.
 - ii. They waited for 25 years.
- b. **Genesis 17:4-5** (NIV), *As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations.* ⁵ *No longer will you be called*

Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations.

- c. The name change from Abram to Abraham came before Isaac was born.
- d. Abraham's name and identity became the promise of God. God's word formed his new name.
- e. **Romans 4:18-21** (NIV), *Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." ¹⁹ Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. ²⁰ Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, ²¹ being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.*
 - i. Abraham's faith was based on the character of God.
 - ii. Abraham was realistic about his challenges, but he was also equally realistic about God's power and authority.
- f. Our identity shouldn't ignore circumstances, but it should be based on what God says about us.
 - i. Romans 8:37 (NIV)
 - ii. 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 (NIV)
 - iii. 2 Corinthians 4:16 (NIV)
 - iv. 1 Peter 2:9 (NIV)
- g. God's grace was on Naomi, and she saw God work despite her false identity.
 - i. **Ruth 4:14-15** (NIV), *The women said to Naomi: "Praise be to the Lord, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! ¹⁵ He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth."*
 - ii. Naomi called herself bitterness, but God called her redeemed.

IV. Who Will You Be in 2023?

- a. Can you let go of the past identity and embrace your identity in Christ?
- b. The enemy may bring difficult circumstances, but he doesn't have the power or authority to define who you are.
- c. Instead of being confined by who the world says that you are, choose to be defined by the God who created the world.