Identity

By Bro. Terry 4/9

Scripture verses: Eph.5:1~28

Identity is proved by life, not by claim

Everyone has his own identity. The identity for a professor is 'professor,' a household wife's identity is 'household wife,' a husband's identity is 'husband,' and etc. A person may have more than one identity. Some of identities can coexist in a person, but some can not. For instance, you may be a student and a teacher at the same time, but you can not be a husband and a wife at the same time. And your identity is not obtained by what you claim to be, but by how you live, that is, your life. For instance, a person claiming to be a professor can only be proved by his teaching life in a school. If he does not teach but is doing street peddling, then his identity is 'street peddler,' instead of self-claimed identity, 'professor.' Therefore, how we live determines what our identity is. If the life does not comply with its corresponding identity, then either the life or the identity is a false. All of the false identities have one name in common, 'swindler.' And it is impossible to find a person in this world without identity. Even a person who begs has identity called 'beggar.' Since identity has its own corresponding life, a person without identity is a person being associated with a life not existing in this world; the life not existing is called, 'an image.'

Therefore the identity for all of those who claim to be Christians is 'Christian.' Then what is its corresponding life supposed to be? Some may say, 'attending church service or mass once a week, or doing tithing once a month or a year, and etc. ' Well, this is true but not complete. It is only a small portion of Christian life. Lets look at what Bible says.

Life Index

In Bible Eph. 5:1~28 speaks of a Christian life of every day, every hour, every minute, or every second. Lets say it is talking about a daily life, that is, a 365-day everyday life. So if weekly church service/mass is what is all about, then since the life only occurs 52 times a year, compared to the life pattern dictated in Bible, the index of your self-defined Christian life is only 52/365=1/7 or 0.14. This is not a full life; this is a broken life, right? You may argue I am more zealous than others for I attend church twice a week. Ok, your life index is 2/7 or 0.28. Still it is a broken or partial life, isn't it? A Chanel perfume store in Taiwan one time was caught by the law because he was carrying phony Chanel in the store. But the store owner argued in the court that he did not cheat customers for in his store the perfume bottles are real Chanel, only the liquid inside are cheaper perfume. He did not agree his Chanel is phony. Why should I be guilty of carrying partial Chanel? However, the jury convicted him of 'swindle' because his Chanel is not complete.

Yes, if it is not complete, then it is phony. Therefore, you can not use your 0.14 or 0.28 life to correspond to the identity, 'Christian.' If you do, it is to say you are a 'swindler.'

Adultery

Some of Filipino husbands or wives left their spouses in the home and have sex partners outside. Divorce is not legal in the Philippines but the reality is terrifying. Divorce does not start when a couple signed the paper, but when either husband or wife starts falling in love with another woman or man. According to Bible or Taiwan

laws, such deeds are called 'adultery.' Eph.5:3 *'...must not even a hint of sexual immorality...'* clearly says the identities 'Christian' and 'adultery' can not co-exist. If a person has both conflicting-with-each-other identities, he gains another identity, 'swindler.'

Root Cause

You may wonder why people got involved in adultery. Well, v5:5 immediately points out the root cause of adultery, 'idolater.' Yes, idolatry leads to adultery and adultery leads to a kind of anguish which ends up in death. Some fail to realize the pain of adultery, but still some other may find adultery is a problem in life. So he starts to focus on such problem trying to resolve it. But most likely such effort ends up in vain. Why? Because he did not trace out the root cause: idolatry. That is to say he shall start to focus on idolatry first. Adultery is merely a symptom; can not be removed without the cause be deleted.

Then why idolatry is the cause? As mentioned in the beginning, a person without or losing identity is a person associating with an image. A Christian's identity is 'Christian' because he has a complying Christian life. But when he involves in adultery, his life is no more Christian life. When a Christian loses his Christian life, he is associating with 'no life' which is image. That is why in Ten Commandments God forbids his people to associate with image or idol because it will lead to adultery. (Ex.20:4,5) As a matter of fact, idolatry and adultery are equal according to Bible. There are many places in the Bible God called those who practice idolatry prostitutes.

God of Grace

But our Jesus Christ is God of grace (Mt. 11:28~30.) He is not a god waiting to punish people. Therefore for those who are willing to walk out adultery to lead a full biblical Christian life based on Eph.5:1~28, Jesus provided a way out. 1 Co.10:31 says, *"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.'* This is a promise! So now if you are willing, you can get out of adultery according to his promise. But how?

Eph.5:11 says *'Have nothing to do with fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them'* and v.5:13 continues on, *'But everything exposed by the light becomes visible.'* So the **first step** is to expose your guilt in the light. What is the light, flash light or overhead light? No, of course not. The light here refers to Jesus Christ for v. 5:14 says *'...and Christ will shine on you,'* and Jh.1:9 *'The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.'* To expose means to confess your guilt before Jesus Christ in prayer for He is the true light alone. Then the **last** step is to let Jesus shine upon you, that is, to associate with a Christian fellowship and spend time on Bible and prayer. Jesus does not come to you through a person, a ritual or a certain material. Jesus comes among Christian fellowship, in prayer and through Bible.

Easy? Correct, if you determine to get out of such darkness. If not, then it is difficult. Now it is up to your determination.

Conclusion

Many of us have wandered away from Bible and follow tradition. That is why a so-called Christian country the Philippines has big ratio of adultery either in the homeland or overseas. Such adultery makes families broken and human life impaled.

The Filipinos have come to a cross road and need to make decision by themselves: either to give up idolatry tradition and return to Bible or to continue in enjoying adultery which leads to suffering and groaning. Jesus Christ has been waiting patiently for those who are willing to return to him. In Bible Rev.3:20 tells us he is knocking at your heart door *"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and ..."* Are you willing to open your door. The decision is in your hand.