Good morning, welcome to Mission Hills and to our new message series Identity Theft. So, how many of you have ever been the victim of identity theft? How many of you ever worried about being the victim of identity theft? It’s a trick question actually, because I’m not talking about the kind of identity theft that you are talking about. I’m talking about spiritual identity theft, and the reality is, we’ve all been victims of that one, and it’s something we all need to be concerned about.

You know what’s sought of non-spiritual identity theft is right? The question is what is spiritual identity theft? What am I talking about? Several years ago I was in California. My wife and I were out at Joshua Tree National Park. We were doing some rock climbing and we were walking between these rock formations and we came around a corner and I saw in front of me a scene that I did not think was a real thing actually. What I saw was there was a girl and she had her arms wrapped around a tree and there were two guys with her and she was saying to the guys, ‘come on she is beautiful, give her a hug.’ And I just kinda stopped dead in my tracks, and I was like they are tree huggers. I didn’t think that was a real thing. I just thought that was a way we described people from Boulder, right? I didn’t know it actually happened…and she was trying to talk them into doing it and I kinda felt bad for the guys, they were clearly in an awkward place. She was pretty cute but we were watching and they didn’t know what to do. Eventually cute won out and they went over and kept looking back at us and they sought of…it wasn’t even that big of a tree honestly, so they were kind of hugging the tree (awkward hand motions) and that was awkward. And there was a part of me that really wanted to go up to them and say hey, there is a cactus over there feeling really left out (laughing). I didn’t…I was good…but it was kind of hilarious…And Coletta and I walked away sought of laughing about it. I told several people about it the next coming days, and I continued to laugh about it, but at some point I realized what I had seen there wasn’t funny. It’s actually really sad. What I was seeing there was identity theft. What I was seeing there was a group of people who knew instinctively that their lives had meaning…had significance, and they were desperately trying to figure out where that came from. And here is what I realized that day, In the absence of what real we will settle for what is ridiculous…you hear me? (Repeated) In the absence of what is real, people will settle for what is ridiculous. We know that we have an identity that goes beyond what our day to day lives reveal to us but we are not sure where it comes from and so we desperately pour ourselves into things. And I would love to say it’s only true of the world outside of the church, but the reality is that even inside the church we are often victims of identity theft. We often don’t really understand who we are and what is true of us because who we are. We live in a world that a thousand times a day tries to steal our identity…tell us something other than God tells us. The world tells us…the world tells us we are lost. God says no you are not; you are found. I found you. The world says, we are alone, and God says no you are adopted…you have family. The world says you are a victim and God says, no you are a victor. The world says you are powerless and God says, you are powerful beyond your imagination. The world says you are slaves, and God says you are not, you are free. But we constantly wrestle with our identity, we wrestle with what does it mean to understand who God says we are and live in light of that. So the series is identity theft and what we are going to do is we are going to work our way through Ephesians. Because Ephesians is all about helping us to understand who we are as God says and how to combat the identity theft that the world continually tries to use to steal who we really are out of our grasp.

So if you have a Bible would love to have you join with me as we start our journey through the book of Ephesians today, if you have on that is great, if you do not, you can take the one in the seat in front of you, and we would love for you to keep that. That is our gift to you. If you are not sure where to find Ephesians, it’s about here (holding up his Bible) and honestly this is one that you might want to use the table of contents. It’s one of those small books and it’s easier to skip over. It’s after Galatians. If you find Galatians keep going, if you find Philippians back up a little bit. It’s a fairly short book, but a book of profound importance. And one that God has really used in my life to help me combat this identity theft that the world is constantly trying to perpetrate. Ephesians begins in exactly the way we would expect a letter in the ancient world to begin. This is what Paul said...(he reads) “Paul, an Apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to God’s Holy people in Ephesus, the
faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 1:1-2) What Paul does here is both surprising and unsurprising at the same time. It’s unsurprising in he begins this letter in the way that he begins the letter the way every ancient letter began, that is you identify two things...who is the author and who is the audience. What is surprising about what he does here even in these brief words is what he says about himself and what he says about his audience is profound. Here is what he says about himself, Paul and apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God. This is how he identifies himself he is an apostle of Christ Jesus; he is Jesus’ apostle. Apostle is one of those church words that we use a lot without thinking much about it. But the word apostle means basically “man on a mission.” He is Jesus’ man on a mission, that what Paul says, that’s who I am, I Jesus’ man on a mission. His mission is to tell people the good news of what Jesus did on the cross and by their relationship with Jesus through faith they can have a completely new identity. That is what he is about. That is his mission. The reason I say that is surprising is that is a pretty bold declaration for a guy like Paul. For Paul to identify himself as Jesus’s man on a mission is bold because that is not how he started off. He didn’t start off as Jesus’ man on a mission. Paul started off as opposing Jesus’s mission. The first time we see Paul in the book of Acts, what he is doing, he is not furthering the ministry of Jesus, he is not furthering the mission of the gospel...when we first see Paul, he combating it, he is finding Christians and hauling them in front of courts and having them executed. That’s what he did. He was a murderer. He calls himself that...he say ‘I was a murderer.’ Man on a mission? That’s bold given what he’s done. Here is something you have to understand if you are going to grasp what God says throughout the book of Ephesians. What Paul understands is that our identity rests, not with what we have done, but in whose we are. You hear me? Paul makes that clear from the very beginning. What I’ve done is not my identity. Whose I am is what matters. I am Jesus’s man on a mission and that is all that matters. Our identity rests not in what we have done, but in whose we are. Past behavior is erased by present relationship. This is an incredibly important truth but it is a truth that we all struggle with. Don’t we? The world continually tells us...no no no your identity rests in what you have done, and listen you screwed up. Time and time again you have failed short. Over and over and over again you have failed to be everything God expects you to be. That’s who you are...you are a failure. God says no you are wrong. Your identity doesn’t rest in what you’ve done it rests in whose you are, and if you are mine, that is all that matters. Paul continues this theme as he identifies his audience as he writes “God’s holy people in Ephesus” It is an interesting statement. On a simply level he is identifying he is writing to this group of people...these Christians in the city of Ephesus. Ephesus was a Greek city. It’s located in what we would now call Modern day Turkey. The important thing about Ephesus is that it is not a Jewish city. You see in the Bible up to this point there were only two categories of people up to this point. You were either Jewish or you were Gentile. Gentile is the word we use to talk about everyone who is not Jewish and that distinction was really important because if you were Jewish, you were the people of God. That is what it meant to be the people of God...that is what it meant to be one of the tribes of Israel...you were the people of God. So you were either the people of God or you were not the people of God. All the Gentiles every other nation and every other tribe they are not the people of God. So you got the people of God and the not the people of God but Ephesus is full of people who are not Jewish. Ephesus is full of people who belong in that category of not the people of God, but how does Paul identify them here? He calls them the people of God. He is using language that only once applied to the Jews but now he is applying it to anybody with faith in Jesus. Again he is saying that our identity rests not in what we have been but again in whose we are now. You see that? He is willing to call them what the Jews have been called for thousands of years because what they have been is not important it’s whose they now are that matters. And we struggle with that one too. I use to be this. I use to be that kind of a person. I use to be this kind of a man or that kind of a woman. This is who I was. God says I don’t care. Who you have been is not where you identity rests. Your identity rest in now whose you now are. Are you mine? Then that’s all that matters. It’s not that he calls them God’s people even though they are Gentiles, he also calls them God’s holy people, at least that is what my translation says...God’s holy people. Some other translations actually use the word saints here...God’s saints or the saints of God. Literally the Greek says...the holy ones. He is writing to the holy ones in Ephesus. I don’t know about you but I hear the word saints and I hear the holy ones, and I immediately think about people who are so good that they have halos around them. Aright? Anyone here willing to go, I am a saint? Right here, yeah want to see what a saint looks like? Looks like...(gestures) have a look. Yay there is a sense we have that saints and holy ones, these are people who are so good that they belong in a different category from the rest of us. Right? They are a totally different group of people because they have managed to attain perfection. And the word holy can speak about perfection. Certainly it is when we speak about God being holy. But as Paul is using the language here, when Paul calls the Ephesian Christians holy ones
he is not referring to perfection...He's actually referring to position. Not perfection...Position. And maybe the best way to think about it is, is to the think about there is a story, and you don’t have spend much time in church to hear this story. There was a man named Moses, he was out walking and dealing with the flock that he was in charge of. He saw in front of him a kind of weird thing, there was a bush that had caught on fire. The bush was on fire and it wasn’t burning up, and he thought he should go take a closer look, which I think is a natural action. Right? So he started over to take and look and as he got closer, God spoke out of the bush. And this is what God said, “Do not come any closer. Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is Holy Ground.” (Exodus 3:5 NIV) That is the same word holy. That is what he said...Holy Ground, that is a weird thought for a second...Holy Ground. How does ground get to be holy? Because it’s dirt right? Like how do you have perfect dirt? I mean is it less dirty than all the other dirt? I don't think that makes any sense, right? Dirt is dirt by definition. I remember driving once in Ohio and saw a sign that was up on a farmer's fence that said, “clean dirt wanted.” And I wanted to go up to the house and knock and say, good luck with that. Like dirt is dirt...you don't have less dirty dirt...is it better dirt that all the other dirt, is that what makes it holy? Does it have superlative moral qualities? Is it kinder dirt than...what does it mean to be holy. Obviously when he calls it holy, he is not saying that it is better than all the other ground. What he is saying is this ground is in a special position. This ground is in the presence of God and has been set aside for these purposes. You hear me? That is what I mean when I say holiness coming from a position. Holy can be someone who is in a holy position because they are in the presence of God and set aside for his purposes. And that is how Paul is using it here. He is not calling the holy ones because they are perfect, if they were perfect, we would not have the book of Ephesians. Because the book of Ephesians was written to say hey you are not living like you should. You are not living out of the identity that you have in Christ. You are living incorrectly, you need to stop these behaviors, you need to stop treating each other this way, you need to fix these things. They are not perfect yet he still called them “holy ones.” It’s not because of their perfection it’s because of their position. They are in the presence of God. And so the question becomes, how do you get into that place? How do you get into the presence of God and become one of these holy ones, these saints? And he goes and answers it as he continues to define them he says, “God’s holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus.” (Ephesians 1:1 NIV) And I think when we hear the word faithful we go, these are people of great faith. These are people with more faith than other people. These are people that have proven themselves time and time again...they have so much faith. But that is not what the Greek word means. The Greek word doesn't mean great faith, it means those who have faith. It means those who have faith, period. It means those who have faith in Jesus and its simple faith in Jesus that has made them holy ones, it has brought them into the presence of God...which is good news, right? Because it means we don’t have to worry about earning our way into God’s presence. Which is excellent news because you are never going to pull it off. If we are trying to earn our way into God’s Presence we are trying to do enough good things, that’s good enough for God, we are going to fall short every single time because unless you are managing to pull of perfection, you have no chance...anybody? You are never going to get there on your own efforts you are never going to get there on your own efforts. If you are trying be holy enough to be in God’s presence, worthy of being in God's presence you are never going to succeed, you are never going to get there. So we would be ever excluded from the presence of God if that is what it required. Paul says here that is not what is required, what is required is faith in Jesus. If you have faith in Jesus you are brought into his presence and all those things that we thought we had to earn our way into they become true of you simply by association. It is position not perfection.

So basically what Paul says is this, he says, I am writing to the saints of God, by which I mean who have faith in Jesus. How many of you are willing to acknowledge you have faith in Jesus. Ok then you are the saints. That may not be an identity that you are comfortable with but it's an identity that God says is true of you. You are the holy ones of God not because you are perfect, because you are in his presence, you have been set aside for his purposes. That’s who you are. You are the saints the holy ones of God. He is not just writing to the people of Ephesus, he is writing to you. In essence, what Paul says here is this, listen; we have got to get this right. The world says our identity is rooted in what we've done. But God says our true identity is rooted in who we know. Do you hear me? Do you understand? It is important that you understand because in that statement really lies the essence of the Christian faith. That we don’t earn our way in, we don’t work our way up. We are simply clinging to Jesus by faith and we’re brought into the presence of God. And the world continuously tries to steal that identity. The world says no, no, no. It is about what you have done. They do it positively and negatively. Sometimes, as we have said, it’s the negative. Listen, you can’t be one of the holy ones. You can’t be in God
presences. You don’t deserve it. You have done this and that. And this and that is who you were. No, no, no, so you can’t possibly be and God says, hey, listen, the shed blood of Jesus covers all of that over. That is all forgiven. I don’t see that anymore. That’s not who you are. So the world says let’s talk about it positively you going to have to keep God’s love by earning it. If you are gonna to stay in God’s good grace, and in God’s presence, you are gonna have to check off all the boxes. You are gonna have make sure you figure out how to do it right. If you don’t do it right you, know what, God can’t keep loving you. So, our identity is stolen from us in both directions. We either depend on what we have done or we feel like we have to keep doing it. And God’s says it’s not about any of that. It’s just about who you know. Do you know my son Jesus? Are you in a relationship with Him? So if you are, everything else you are talking about it follows from it. It doesn’t leads up to it. He says, if you are in a relationship with my Son, Jesus, grace and peace is to you. Paul continues on. “Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Ephesians 2:1 (NIV). You can't earn grace but if you are in a relationship and have faith Jesus, you get grace. Do you know what grace is, right? If you are not quite sure, it is one of those Christian words you’ve heard a lot but you can’t get a handle on it. Or maybe you have heard it a bunch, maybe you need a fresh image. Grace is mercy on steroids. Mercy is when you don’t get something bad that you deserve. When we commit sin we live in a wrong way. The natural consequence of that is condemnation, it’s judgment. We deserve that but when God withholds that judgment that is mercy. But, God doesn’t just withhold it; He doesn’t just give us a second or third chance, God doesn’t just withhold judgment, which is mercy, He also is willing to take that judgment and put it on His Son. He had His own Son take the consequences of our sin. He paid for it Himself. And He said all you have to do is trust in my Son and all of that stuff you have done is gone. That’s grace. Its undeserved goodness being poured into our lives. Can’t earn it. But, you get it by simply having faith in Jesus. Grace leads to peace. Ask a question; how many of you feel that you have more peace that you know what to do with? I haven’t seen a hand go up except a couple of times. And, blessings upon you. Most of us feel peace is not exactly what I am experiencing. If anything, if I am going to be honest, I feel pretty frantic, I feel like I am doing everything I can just to somehow just keep up, hold on and life is slipping away and everything is constantly incredibly frantic. I don’t ….Yea I am not feeling the peace. You know why we don’t feel peace?

It’s identity theft. Because our identity as the people of God is stolen from us and we continue to think we have somehow got to earn it. We think we gotta to fix our families or God is not going to love us. We gotta be better husbands or God is not going to love us. We gotta be better wives or God is not going to love us. We gotta make sure we have the church box marked off. We gotta to make sure we are in a Life Group. We gotta make sure all these good things we gotta grab hold of so that somehow if I do this, God will like me, He will love me a little bit more. That’s identity theft. God said I couldn’t possibly love you anymore than the day as a sinner I sent my son to die for you. I wasn’t impressed with you; I just love you because of who you are, my child. We can’t embrace that until we are constantly looking to grab old things so we don’t have peace because we don’t settle into our identity, as recipients of grace. He goes on he says “if you have a relationship with God through faith in Jesus, not that you’re just saints, you are not just the holy ones. You are not only the recipients of grace and peace. He says there are bigger things are coming. He says in verse 3, “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.” Ephesians 1:3 (NIV). How many of you feel that you are experiencing every spiritual blessing? Yeah, but you see that is what God says. He says that if you are in Christ you have every spiritual blessing. And yet, I think almost universally we would say there is a gap with what God expresses and what I experience. God says every spiritual blessing, all of them, every single one of them. We go; I’m not feeling that. Why is there a gap? And the answer is identity theft. In one way or another, if you are not experiencing every spiritual blessing, it is because, I promise you this, it is because you have bought into one of the lies the world uses to try and steal your identity in Christ. In one way or another, you have latched on to something that you think identifies you. But it is not what God says is true. And we are going to unpack those as we go through the book of Ephesians is, because really that is what the book of Ephesians is. It unpacks the lies that the world tries to sell us. But before we get to that just today, I want to get to four things that we are going to see consistently in the book of Ephesians and four things I want to encourage you to begin processing. Four ways that I think the world attempts to steal our identity in Christ to keep us from experiencing every spiritual blessing.

The first one is this: That we're not actually in Christ. Paul says very clearly that “we are to blessed in in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.” In Christ is the key phrase there, that’s where we get
these blessings. We have to in Christ. We have to be a relationship with Christ in order to get these blessings. I think a lot of people aren't really in Christ even though they thought they were. I meet people all the time and they say I have to be in Christ. Do you know how many times I’ve gone to church? I grew up in the church. I used to be there every time they opened the doors, my mom and dad drug me. I even went when I was in college. How good am I? And now I got kids and I am back, and we’re there, every time the doors are open I am in church. And I am, you know what, my radio dial only has Christian music programed into it. My Pandora stations there all Christian music. I have Christian tee shirts. I have Christian bumper stickers. Listen; there is no way that I cannot be in Christ with all of this in church business. Listen, that logic that says I that if I have been in church my whole life, I must truly be in Christ is the same logic that says if you spend a lot of time in Chipotle you must be a burrito (laughter). Listen, you’re not. It doesn’t work that way. Context is not the same thing as a commitment. And the reality is, in a room this size, there are some people who spent their whole lives in the context of church but they have never made a personal commitment to a relationship with Jesus. They have never said, hey Jesus that thing, that thing on the cross, I realize that you did that for me. And I need it because I am a sinner. Would you come into my life and take away my sin, thank you for raising from the dead, would you raise me to a new life, man, I’m all in. Chances are there are some of you here, spent a lot of time in church and you have never made that commitment. If you aren’t in that relationship with Jesus, the spiritual blessings are not available to you.

I think the second reason you don’t experience the every spiritual blessings is: There’s a kink in the hose. I remember as a dad it was the best thing that when my kids were little, and they would play with the hose. They are watering stuff and of course I would take it and bend it and then I’d the hide kink. And then I would watch them and it was great. They’d be like (Showing how the kids would shake the hose) It is bad I know. Tell me dad, how many of you have done that. Come on. Yeah. See that kink is an interesting thing. Cause it is all still there ready to flow but we’ve done something that’s kind of blocked it up. And in the Christian life, those of us who are in Christ, we call that thing, we call it sin. And even though we are in Christ, we sometimes still cling to those things that we know we shouldn’t be part of us. They have no business being part of a life that is in Christ, and yet, we cling to them and maybe we find a source of identity in those things. We don’t confess them. We don’t repent of them. We don’t receive forgiveness. Its there if we would only own it so we could disown it and experience forgiveness. But we cling to it, we hold on to it and the result is we have kinked up the hose. We are not experiencing every blessing because we have kinked the hose.

There’s another reason it happens. I think the third reason we don’t experience all the spiritual blessings is: We’re looking for the wrong kind of blessings. Paul says very clearly, what kind of blessing?, (awaits response from congregation) spiritual blessings. Listen, I know there are churches that will tell you if you have enough faith in Jesus, you’ll get to drive a Mercedes. If you have faith in Jesus, you are going to get to have that perfect house, you’re going to have the perfect husband or wife, you’re going to have that perfect family, you’re going to get that big promotion, you’re bank account is going to be filled to overflowing, if you just have enough faith in Jesus He is going to pour all these blessings into your life. Listen, this is not that kind of church. I am not that kind of preacher. Because it’s, it’s just not true. Those are not the blessings that God promises as a result that comes with from being in Christ. If that were true, how do you explain the millions incredible men and women who love Jesus around the world but live in abject poverty? They live in oppression; they live in fear that if they speak the name of Jesus to loudly, they'll lose their lives for it. God doesn’t promise that life gets easy if you are in Christ. He promises they’ll be spiritual blessings. And the problem is, it’s a, it’s a, it’s another identity theft issue. We, we, we hear spiritual blessings and we immediately go “oh.” Don’t we? Oh, there spiritual blessings, which some how that means there not quite as good. That’s identity theft. Cause the world has said you that the ones that really count are those material blessings. This is the ones you really need. You need the house, you need the cars, you need the clothes, and you need the promotion, you need success, you need fame. All those kinds of things. We have some how bought into the lie if our identity doesn’t have those things wrapped up around it, we’re some how is not quite as good. Gods says you don’t understand what real is, you don’t understand what good really is. I remember when Coleta and I first dating, she was leading a bible study. She used an illustration that she used a lot in different context. It is a story of a little girl whose dad came home one day; he gave her a gift. It was pop beads. Some of you remember pop beads. Guys you wouldn’t, but. There were these little, they kind of looked like pearls they were plastic and they were a circle, uh, there was a sphere
and then there was a little stick with another tiny ball. The other end of the ball there was a little hole and you kinda mashed them together and they kinda looked like a necklace of pearls. And that is what she did. Then she had this pearl necklace. (Shows putting it on around his neck). She was so proud of it. She just loved it and as she got older and older, she still loved it. That was the thing she constantly wore it, you know. As she got older it didn’t seem as appropriate but for whatever reason, she just loved it. And then one day her dad came home and he said hey, I got a present for you. And she says what is it and he says well if I give it to you can you give me the pop beads? (Steps back holding his neck) And she says why would you want to take these. These are the best. I love these. I don’t want whatever you got. So the next night, he came and said I got something for your but I need you to give me that necklace. No (as he grasps his neck). This went on day after day. Finally one day, she was hanging around in the afternoon, she realized dad was going to be home soon, she was playing with the pearls, or those pop beads, and thinking how much she loved them. She could not understand why he would want to take them away. Then she remembered that he was the one who gave me these. And I’m really not trusting him am I? So he came in and said what had kinda become their ritual and he said, I got something for you but your gonna have to give me that necklace. So she finally went (shaking his head yes. Big sigh) Ok. Pop ( Acts as though he is taking off pop beads. Gives them to the dad) He took them and put them in his pocket and he pulled out a case and she opened it up and there was a real string of pearls. See we are a lot like that little girl. We hold onto things, because we think this is what matters. And God says, you, you don’t have a clue. That is a cheap imitation of what I have for you. A lot of times we don’t experience, we not able to take hold of everything God has for us, because we are not willing let go of cheap imitations. One of the reasons we not able to experience every spiritual blessing, we are not looking for spiritual blessings, we’re clinging to these cheap imitations.

The fourth reason I think we struggle to experience that everything that God expresses here is simply, We've been tricked into living as though these blessings are not ours in Christ. We been tricked into thinking that we don’t have access to these, not here, not now, not me. In other word it’s identity theft. God says we have access to them. God says there ours right here and now and yet we say, I don’t see how that could possibly be true for me. It's a little bit like not long after the Civil War some governors from the North, went down and were touring in the South. In Mississippi and they came across a plantation and there were slaves. They were living exactly as they had before the Civil War had earned their freedom. They were continuing to live in exactly the same conditions. The governors could not figure what was going on. So they went start talking with to them. Did you hear about the war? They said, yeah. They said, Did you hear the war was over? And they said, yeah. Did you know the results of the war was that you are not slaves anymore? And that you are free. We did hear that that was true but we were told that it did not apply to this county. That's identity theft. So they continued to live as slaves even though they were free. So somebody told them and they bought into the lie. That's not true of you, not here, not now, not you. We often don’t experience all the blessings and God is going to unpack those. I am really excited about this series because some of the things God says are ours in Christ are incredible. And you're going to be tempted to say that cannot be possible of me right here, right now. And God says this is who you are because of whose you are. At the end of the day the book of Ephesians has this for us. It is a simple plan, do not let the world steal your identity. That is the heart beat of Ephesians. Don't let the world steal your identity. If you are in Christ cling to the truth that who you know overshadows everything else. That's what we are unpacking the next few weeks. You have got to hear the command now.

Do not let the world steal your identity. If you are in Christ, cling to the truth that who you know overshadows everything else.

Four quick things to begin to wrestle with as you begin to unpack this.

The first one is this. ARE YOU IN CHRIST? I won’t belabor the point but if you sense something in yourself, because I’m not really sure about that. You know what there will be some people down here to pray with you after the service, come and talk to them if you realize you are not in Christ. I have been playing the game, they would love to talk with you how to change that right here, right now. Because you have to be in Christ for everything else the that the book of Ephesians is going to talk about to be true. So are you really in Christ.

The second question is; IS THERE A KINK IN MY HOSE? IS THERE SOME SIN I AM CLINGING TO THAT IS ALLOWING ME TO DEFINE ME. I’m not willing to let it go. I’m not ready to let it go because its to core to
who I am. The identity Christ wants you to embrace is so much better that that thing. If there’s sin in your life that’s unconfessed, confess it. Turn away from it and be forgiven of it. Open up that flow again.

The third question: AM I DISCONTENT BECAUSE I’M FOCUSED ON THE WRONG KIND OF BLESSINGS. HAVE I BOUGHT INTO WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS TO DEFINE ME AND I NEED TO LET THAT GO BECAUSE THAT’S NOT SHOULD BE DEFINING ME. IS MY IDENTITY ROOTED IN SOMETHING ELSE?

Fourth question: WHERE AM I LIVING ACCORDING TO WHO THE “WORLD” (AND ITS “RULER”) TELLS ME I AM RATHER THAN WHO GOD TELLS ME I AM IN CHRIST? I’ve got ruler in quotation marks. In a couple of weeks we are going to see that God actually call satan the ruler of this world. The prince of the prince of power of the air. He’s the one that constantly is looking to steal our identity. And when we buy into it, we find ourselves living according to the lies that we were told rather than the truth that God say who we because of whose we are. I think all of us are victims of identity theft in one way or another. The question is where am I living according to the world who is and its supposed ruler tells me I am rather than who God tells me I am in Christ. This question is the most dangerous question from satan’s perspective. Cause he cannot stand the thought that would begin to live, according to identity that God says is true of us in Christ. Satan has a tremendous amount invested in stealing that identity in people. It’s true of the church, it’s true of the world.

You know this weekend is Compassion Sunday, how many of you support a Compassion child. That’s fantastic One of the things I love about Compassion International is that it combats identity theft. Have you ever thought about it like that? There are millions of children who are caught up in the world that says this, poverty is what defines you. Your lack of resources is what defines you, your circumstances are what define you. This is who you are. Compassion International is engaged in saying that’s not true at all. We want you to understand. God understands you. So actually I’m going to invite Kevin. Kevin is from Kenya. Kevin has been the recipient of blessings that Compassion has done helping him understand his identity. I’m so excited he is here to be able to share what that ministry has done in combatting identity theft in the world to tries so hard to perpetrate upon God’s people. Kevin thank you........