

Series: destiny

September 2, 2018

Title: Destiny

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Text: Ephesians 1:3-6

The true you

Hacked!

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I have bad news for you – really bad news. You’ve been hacked. Not just your phone or email account. I’m talking about *you*. Your real identity – the true you – has been hijacked and replaced with a false identity, one in service of the dark forces that corrupt our world.

Hijacking an identity only works if the person whose identity has been stolen doesn’t know it’s happened. Perhaps you opened what seemed like a perfectly innocent email, only to find that you allowed a hacker full access to your entire network. Pretty soon the hacker is running your computer, using it to propagate his malware to all of your contacts, or programming your computer to be part of some massive attack on the grid. Who knew?

Well, the same thing is happening right now, not to your computer or phone, but to *you*.

You’ve been hacked.

The true you:

The Good News is that the Original Manufacturer has launched a massive recovery effort to restore your true identity.

The recovery software comes in the form of a Person, a fellow human being who is uncorrupted by the malware of this world. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul describes the recovery mission with these words:

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Ephesians 1:3

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us **in** every spiritual blessing, **in** the heavenly realms **in** Christ.*

Paul uses the word “in” three times to describe the blessing of a recovered identity:

- We are blessed **in** every spiritual blessing: Our true identity is energized by the Holy Spirit of God Himself.
- We are blessed **in** the heavenly realms: Our true identity is rooted in God’s true, uncorrupted Creation, described as “the heavens,” where God rules His world.
- We are blessed **in** Christ, the King: Our true identity is rooted in a Person, the King who now rules God’s world on His behalf. His story is our story. His identity is now our identity.

So how did this all come about? And how can you know you have recovered your true identity?

Made for this!**Chosen:**

The first thing to know is that *there is such a thing as your true identity*. Your true identity isn’t something you have to manufacture. It isn’t a mask that you put on or a pose you strike. It is the real you.

Paul writes that this true identity was God’s purpose for you from before the creation of the world:

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Ephesians 1:4 NIV

For he chose us in him [Christ] before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight in love.

Your identity was chosen by the Creator Himself before He made the world. It is a good, blameless identity, a part of God’s good Creation. It is rooted

“in Christ.” Only when we are “in Christ” can we truly reflect God back into His world.

Destined:

Secondly, this true identity is your *destiny*. Your destiny speaks to the *destination* that your life and life journey take. It speaks to how you turn out, and where you end up. Paul tells us:

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Ephesians 1:5 NIV

He predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will –

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The word Paul uses for “sonship” is a legal term that referred to the adoption of a male heir in Roman culture. The young person was often a slave in his former life, but when legally adopted, he became full-fledged family and the legal heir of his adopted father’s estate. In other words, he discovered a new destiny.

Our true identity is not to be slaves to culture or the brokenness within us. Instead, our true identity is bound to the destiny that God determined when He sent Jesus to set us free and make us family. When we choose to be “in Christ,” we become part of God’s Family.

Loved:

But the greatest thing about our true identity is that we are *loved*. Paul continues:

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Ephesians 1:6 NIV

To the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

One more time, we see that our identity is discovered “in” Someone: the One God loves. God has poured out on us the lavish gifts of being our true selves at last, of being part of His family in full standing, and of being one

with Christ. The word for these gifts is "grace." The experience of this grace is love.

As John writes:

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1 John 4:10 NIV

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Grace in action = love.

Destiny

A look in the mirror:

Wouldn't it be amazing to be able to look in a mirror and see the person we were actually meant to be? No hacked identity. No hypocrisy. No illusions. No one else writing the script. Just the real you. Unfortunately, in this world even the mirrors are warped and blurred. But Paul assures us that this is not our destiny:

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1 Corinthians 13:12 Phillips

At present we are people looking at puzzling reflections in a mirror. The time will come when we shall see reality whole and face to face! At present all I know is a little fraction of the truth, but the time will come when I shall know it as fully as God now knows me!

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When that moment finally comes, and we do see "reality whole and face to face," we will see our true identity and our true self in the face of the Person who gave His life to set us free.

Reality, it turns out, is a Person, the One who defined Himself as the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Destiny:

In the meantime, we have recovery work to do. Each day we have the opportunity to squint into the mirror and allow God's Spirit to help us see a little more of who we were truly meant to be. Each day, we can choose to let God do the work of making us holy and blameless as His children. Each day we can choose to respond with love instead of fear or anger.

And when we do, we fulfill our destiny. We live our one true identity. We experience what it truly means to be human:

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1 Corinthians 13:13 Phillips

In this life we have three great lasting qualities – faith, hope and love. But the greatest of them is love.