

“Who am I?”

How do you go about answering a question such as this? Do you consider your physical appearance or your personality? Do you consider your chemical composition – 70% water, enough iron in your body to make a 3 inch nail etc? Do you define yourself by your job or your hobbies? What about genetically? (You might be relieved that you only share 98% with a chimpanzee!) Who are you? And are you “good”?

This is not a straight-forward question to answer either. I know I have better days than others. I like to think that most people (?) regard me a good person – I’ll never be perfect, because how can we agree on which football team is best??! That of course introduces the thorny issue of who defines what is “good”. As a Christian, though, I believe God defines what is “good” and it’s his assessment of me that is the most important. When I turn to the Bible to answer our question I discover two truths. Here’s the first:

“I am more sinful than I could possibly imagine.

This is an extreme thought, quite radical, possibly unpleasant to hear, and possibly plain wrong – in your opinion. After-all you are not as bad as someone else you know, and you know that you do good things. We think this way because we grade “sin” or “wrong” by what we do. We say gossip is not as bad as stealing, nor bullying as bad as rape, nor murder as bad as genocide, and cheating is only bad if you get caught.

The Bible is different. It defines the severity of wrong in terms of the one we offend. For example... suppose whilst driving home from school I accidentally run over a slug not many might object; if I run over a rabbit there might be a few tears because rabbits are cute fluffy creatures; if I run over a dog, by law I have to stop and report the incident; if I run over a child I face a man-slaughter charge and prison. I committed the same wrong – running something over – but the severity is defined by the one wronged. The Bible describes sin as disobedience to the holy and righteous creator and rule of the universe. Disobeying, disregarding HIM makes sin serious. I am indeed more sinful than I could possibly imagine. There is a second truth in the Bible that is even more radical than this:

I am more loved than I could possibly dream.”

As well as penning *Les Misérables* Victor Hugo also wrote “*Man’s greatest need is to know he is loved*”. I suspect we can all relate to that. We do have a deep desire to know we are loved and accepted even though we still mess things up. We do have a deep longing to be loved unconditionally and eternally.

That is what the cross of Christ is all about. The Bible says God sees my heart, knows my thoughts, observes everything I do, hears everything I say AND STILL LOVES ME. In fact God loves me so much He himself paid the price (punishment) my “sin” (disobedience) justly deserves so I might know forgiveness and have eternal life. This is expressed in these brief words written by the Apostle Paul:

“God demonstrates his love for us in this: while we were sinners Christ died for us.”

Back to opening question, “Who am I?” I am more sinful than I could possibly imagine, and I am loved more than I can possibly dream. Who are you?

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