

Jesus said 'Seek first the Kingdom of God

Scriptures: Mt 6v24-34 Key verse v33 / Phil 2v12-16

²⁴“No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money. ²⁵“That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life —whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn’t life more than food, and your body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren’t you far more valuable to him than they are? ²⁷Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? ²⁸“And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don’t work or make their clothing, ²⁹yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. ³⁰And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith? ³¹“So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’ ³²These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. ³³Seek the Kingdom of God^[a] above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. ³⁴“So don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble is enough for today **[Matt 6:24-34]**

¹²Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. ¹³For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him. ¹⁴Do everything without complaining and arguing, ¹⁵so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people. ¹⁶Hold firmly to the word of life; then, on the day of Christ’s return, I will be proud that I did not run the race in vain and that my work was not useless **[Philippians 2v12-16]**

The Security Guard

A man comes out of a factory pushing a wheelbarrow. In it was a small but heavy looking wooden box. He was stopped at security. “What’s in the box?”

“Just sawdust that we throw away every day, I want it for a project at home”

He checks it, and it is sawdust. The guard lets him go.

Next day he was back again, same thing. He examines the sawdust carefully, but nothing is there.

Next 2 days same thing each day, and the security guard is getting more and more agitated.

The fifth day, the man is leaving the factory, pushing the wheelbarrow, with its wooden box in, and he thinks he’s past the guard, when security calls him back.

“Listen you, I am not even going to check the box tonight, but this is your last time you do this. I have been doing security for a long time. I sense when something is not right, and I know you are doing wrong, but I just don’t know what it is. So, I will do you a deal. I won’t report you for this week, if you tell me what it is that you are doing.’

The worker, sighs, thinks for a bit, then says

“OK, I’ll tell you. I am stealing wheelbarrows.”

The Soundbites

When people look at the Christian faith, what do they see and hear. What is this Kingdom of God that the Christians are so passionate about. What they hear though is not the big picture, not the fundamentals of our faith, but these loud sound bites, about woman priests, homosexuality, big bang verses creation, abortion, is transplanting you with a pig’s heart ethical or not ! It **is** the small packages, or the sawdust that becomes the focus. The fundamentals, the amazing truths about are often overlooked. Not just by those looking in on us, but also the focus of those **within** the faith can get equally distorted

So even within the church these smaller issues, the sawdust, can become hugely divisive. We look back through church history and can identify other issues that have divided churches and even caused wars. Should we baptise infants? Did God create Jesus, or had he always existed. Do you go straight to heaven when you die, or do you have to wait for Christ to return. In the USA there is division over a passage in Revelations, on whether Jesus will return when most people

have found faith and there is relative peace on earth, or he will come after a period of real tribulation, wars, famine and suffering, then reign on earth for a 1000 years. People have fought and died over some of these issues. But really they are the sawdust in the boxes compared with what the wheelbarrow represents, the fundamentals of our faith, of why Jesus came, and died for us, and the type of new life that he has for us.

Jesus said Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness. Whilst the issues of baptism, female priests, homosexuality in the church, and when you go to heaven **are** valid issues in the Church, I do not think they are what we should be seeking first.

We need to see the wheelbarrow, what **it** is that carries our faith forward. We need to tune out to these loud 'sound bites' and tune into what are the fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith. We need to seek knowledge of the Kingdom of God. Seek to know it. How much do you actually know about the Kingdom of God, do you know what you believe in? Some-one asked me that when I was a young Christian, and I got a bit offended, but he was right I didn't actually know much about the Christian faith at all. He gave me the book 'Know what you believe', and I was surprised how much was new to me

The Big Question

Lets go back 2000 years. Imagine we are both living in the first century in Galilee. I am working out in my farm, and you are trying to convince me to put down my tools and come and listen to the Teacher who is addressing a crowd up a nearby hill. I protest to you 'I am too busy. Last years poor harvest left me with debts, and I have to work harder and grow more. I have got mouths to feed and children to clothe.

But you are too persuasive, so I go with you and we are sitting in the middle of a very large crowd, listening to this Jesus from Nazareth. It is weird, it is as if he sees me, knows me and is speaking directly to me. He is saying "Don't worry about everyday life, about what you are going to eat and wear. Life is more than food, your body is more than clothes. Look at the birds, they don't harvest food but God looks after them, look at how beautiful the lilies are and they don't need to make their own clothes. If God cares for birds and wild flowers then how much more is he going to care for you?" First, above all else seek after the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and he will give you everything you need."

Long after we get back, we are still discussing over a fish supper what Jesus said. What does this all mean. How as a Galilean farmer do I seek Gods Kingdom and make it my top priority, over providing for myself and family. Can we really trust God in this?

Today, in a different era, and completely different culture, the question remains as important as ever, and the answer is no less elusive.

How do I seek after the Kingdom of God, and can I trust God to look after me if I do.

I - SEEK TO KNOW (THE TRUTH)

Kingdom of God

So what **are** the fundamentals of Gods kingdom that we should be seeking. What **is** the wheelbarrow that takes our faith forward?

First a kingdom needs a king to rule over it. The gospel gives us this picture of Jesus once enthroned in heaven, coming to earth, being born as a baby here, then living as a man to show and teach us how to live; Great teaching like our passage today from the Sermon on the Mount. He also did amazing miracles and demonstrated he was Gods son. Then the authorities raised him up, with a crown of thorns, not on a throne put on a cross. Jesus dies, and as he does so, his death and spilt blood pays the price for all the things that we have done wrong. His death provides the means by which we can all be forgiven. OK, so we know all that, but what else of equal importance happened when Jesus died?

In this new look kingdom, the one he tells us to make our first priority, we see that things look very different. At the moment Jesus died, the huge curtain in the Jerusalem temple's inner most holy sanctuary, miraculously tore in two. This was a sign that God who was seen to dwell in this space was now accessible to everyone all the time, and not just the high priest once a year. Each one of us now has direct access to God, which was not possible before Jesus died.

I have a choice to make first though. Do I accept that Jesus died for me, ask him into my life and follow his direction from now on, or choose not to. If I make that choice then on that moment that I accept Jesus as my king, I become some-one different. It may not be obvious to anyone else straight away, but I am now a new creation, a new man or woman. Not just a better version of the old me, but I have a completely new identity which is given to me by God. I am freed from the labels others put on me, and I put on myself. This is a God-defined identity that all of us as Christians have. Yes we each have different gifts, talents and characters that make us unique, but underneath that we have this fundamental identity in God, that is given us when we choose to be part of the Kingdom of God.

So because of what Jesus did for me on the cross, because I have chosen to follow him and am born again then I have this new identity, which allows me directly into the presence of God. But what is this identity. The bible tells us who we are in Christ Jesus. But I suspect that many Christians are not fully aware of this. We know we are born again, and we know we are a new creation. But what is that creation? Who does God say you are?

- **Child:** I have become a part of God's family, as a son (or daughter) of the King of Kings. In that respect, I am viewed by God as a prince (or princess) in the kingdom.
- **Temple:** I am now a temple of the Holy Spirit. The spirit of Jesus lives in me, just like God was seen as dwelling in the Jerusalem temple. Where I go, I take God with me, through his Spirit. He is staying put. He said I will never leave you.
- **Priest:** I am now a priest, and do the things they did. Namely, I can now say prayers directly to God, I can make sacrifices to him, fast and give up things etc But I can also choose to bless people and if I bless them that God will add his blessing. If I hold it back, then they won't get the blessing. At one conference I did overseas, I had a long queue of people wanting prayer for healing. After nearly 2 hours of praying, I got to the last person, and older man. I wondered what was so wrong with him that he had been prepared to wait so long, and he said that he wanted a blessing.
- **Ambassador:** I am an ambassador for Christ ([2 Corinthians 5:20](#)) which means that I positively represent him, and his kingdom, to those that don't know him yet, through the things I say and share. He is not here on earth, we are his voice now. We represent the Kingdom of God to others, for Jesus.
- **Light:** I am now a light to the world. I am now his hands and his feet, I go where he sends me and do what he tells me. As I do good deeds for him, then God will shine through me, into dark places.
- **Warrior:** I am now a warrior for Christ, winning ground for him in a spiritual battle against the evil in this world. This means I follow him into doing whatever he asks me to do, with humility and confidence, knowing that he is alongside me guiding me and protecting me.

This is who I am now I am in the Kingdom of God. In God's kingdom, this is how he sees and defines me, how he defines you, because you have chosen to follow him. It is very different to how the world see us. This is now my identity, I am his child, a prince or princess in the kingdom, I am a temple of the Holy Spirit, his priest, ambassador, light and warrior. This is what I am **seeking** to understand and believe. This new creation. This new identity I have in Christ. Even after the decades since I first believed, it is still hard to get my head around my new identity. But I choose to try and do this. In seeking out the kingdom of God, I am seeking who I am in that kingdom. The fundamentals of my faith include my identity, not the sound-bites. The wheelbarrow, not the sawdust.

What about you? Do you choose to see yourself as God defines you, **or** as the world defines you? Do you self-label in terms in what you do or you achieve. Trouble is if you see yourself as a top flight tennis player, a full-time carer, a stay-at-home mum, or engineering manager, or whatever, when your circumstance changes you are left feeling without identity. Recently I lost a job with a company I had been with for over 30 years. For the first time since college life, I was unemployed. A few weeks later, I had a form to fill out which asked me for my occupation. I didn't know what to write, I didn't know how to label myself.

Jesus is encouraging us in his sermon from up the hill, to seek out our new identity in the Kingdom of God as our priority. He adds to this, and 'live a righteous life'. Seek first the kingdom of God **and** live a righteous life. We are not just supposed to seek, discover and understand our new identity in Christ, in the Kingdom of God, but we are required to live it too. To live in the kingdom of God, is to seek after living a good and righteous life. It won't come easy to a lot of us, but that is what we are seeking after, 'to know it' **and** 'to live it'.

II - SEEK TO LIVE (THE TRUTH)

Live out your identity

I had a Far Side cartoon that I kept at work, it was of Superman when he was older, sat in a string vest watching TV with a beer, whilst his wife darned his Superman top, but you could see that next to the big S she was sewing in some extra letters, so his top now read Stupid.

In the cartoon Superman is still Superman, it is still his identity. However, he is no longer living out his identity, he is not saving people lives, instead he is overweight and binge watching box sets on TV. That is stupid. But what about us, when we discover who we are in Christ, will we live it out, are we living it out?

I was reading in a 'manual for Christian dissidents' about a Catholic survivor of hard labour and torture in the communist Gulags. In his old age, he was at peace with his life and faith, and with his former captors, and his time in prison. He says there are two types of Christian. First there are those who believe in God, and there are those with the same conviction, who believe that they believe in God. You can tell them apart when decisive decisions have to be made, when to carry on seeking God becomes costly. Those who are just fans of God will leave, those who are also followers will stay.

Followers not admirers

I follow football. In particular, one team. As a boy wrapped in blue and white, I would sing out with the thousands of fans in the Tote End terrace at Eastville stadium, to the tune 'Bread of Heaven'. 'Bristol Rovers, Bristol Rovers, we'll support you ever-more, ever-more'. It was easy in those days, we had a great team and were quite successful. Decades later I have seen the team get through 33 different managers and be relegated 5 times. Last season we had 3 managers and got relegated again. I have though demonstrated my commitment to Bristol Rovers. What I sang as a lad turned out to be true, and I will carry on supporting them evermore. The old Liverpool Manager Bill Shankley once said "*Some people think football is a matter of life and death. I don't like that attitude. I can assure them it is much more serious than that!*". He was of course wrong. Ultimately, It **is just** a game that 22 men or women dressed in shorts play.

I follow the Rovers, but I also follow Jesus. This really is more serious than a matter of life and death.

As a young Christian, I said to Jesus 'I will support you ever-more'. it was easy for me at first, I was involved in a Christian band and helped run a large youth group that was very successful, with many young people being baptised etc. However, in the decades that followed. Things have often

not gone well for me, there have been times where I really have not enjoyed Church at all, faced opposition and false accusations. It has felt at times like I am lost and in my own relegation season. But with God's grace, I pulled through each time, and have carried on seeking more of the Kingdom of God, learning who I am in Christ and living it out. Proved to myself that with His help, I can be a follower and not just a fan.

Living out the Kingdom of God will look different for each of us. Whilst the fundamentals are the same for each of us that follow Jesus, our experience of the kingdom will be as unique as we each are. He has a fresh plan for the remainder of our lives whether that is 80 years or 80 days. As I see fellow Christians follow specific areas of ministry with equal passion, I am convinced that in some mysterious way, God adds to our identity, a part of his heart which is transplanted into ours. It may be a heart for youth work, for visiting the sick, for feeding the homeless, or as an intercessor praying for other countries. It may even be that you are called to campaign for women's rights, or against racism in churches, or some other type of what I called sawdust in the crates. That is part of you living out your life in the Kingdom, but what you do for Jesus does not define you. Whatever the contents of the wooden crates are, the wheelbarrow is still the wheelbarrow.

Your identity, whether you believe it, whether you live it, or not, is still your identity as a Christian. Whatever you do, you are still seen by God as his son or daughter, adopted into his family with the inheritance of heaven and all its riches. You are still a temple of the Holy Spirit. You are still his ambassador, his light, his priest, and his warrior.

III - SEEK TO SHARE (THE TRUTH)

As Christians we hold in our hearts the truth. We are not only gifted through the death of Jesus, to be in God's presence now, but also to be able to spend an eternity with God. Just as the grave could not hold Jesus, it will not be able to hold us either. This is truly good news. But this is too great a gift, to keep to ourselves.

Despite the many trials and dismal performances of my football team, I have never tried to hide that I follow Bristol Rovers. I probably talk too much about them ! I try and be the same about Jesus.

If my identity within the kingdom of God, includes being his ambassador to people, being a light in people's lives, and being a warrior against the dark side of life, then I can not be those things without sharing with others what I believe. Not only, can this feel difficult, it will no doubt bring some opposition.

In football, I will face banter and teasing from other football fans, particularly those of teams nearest to Bristol, such as Swindon, Oxford, Yeovil and from fans of another team that plays in Bristol, who I shan't name. One Monday in the office I got back to my desk to find a can of lemonade had been put on it. It was a brand called 7 up. My team had lost 7-0 at the weekend.

Opposition though can be a lot more aggressive when we seek to live out our identity in the Kingdom of God, and share Jesus with others. There are many people who do not want you to seek first the Kingdom of God. They do not want you to live it, if it means you becoming more like Jesus. They certainly do not want you to share it, and encourage others to live that life-style. Their message is 'Conform with us, or at the very least – stay out of sight and shut up!'

In Soviet Russia, this meant finding happiness in a communist state where you all have work and you all think the same. All religion was banned, and all the priests killed, thousands of them. In Muslim dominated countries happiness comes from your mosque life and loyalty to Allah. If you don't accept that religion as truth, then you face rejection and possibly death too.

Today, more than 300 million Christians face high levels of persecution and discrimination because of their faith. For many Christians in the West, we aren't there yet, though the day may

come. For now we thankfully do not face the same level of persecution for Jesus. Expressing unpopular Christian views is more likely to result in you being trashed on social media, or in other ways being made social outcasts via character assassination, or end up being dismissed from your job for wearing a cross etc.

In today's Western society the prominent message is that freedom is the liberation from any unchosen obligation. Happiness comes from being free of anything that makes demands on you, and also by the acquisition of goods and wealth. Here if work, friends, family, or your partner are causing you some pain or difficulties, just walk away. You deserve better. In one poll, 80% saw 'Self-fulfilment' as the main goal in life. Society is a set of autonomous individuals out to enjoy life, one free of suffering. And we should all think the same as this or face opposition

As a Christian you will be holding on to family values and sexual values that are seen as outdated, and as oppressive, and you will become a target for those who want to liberalise your faith, and dilute the truth. If you try to persuade someone to behave differently from this liberal world-view, and say they should seek to live a righteous life, then they are viewed as a victim and you the aggressor. So expect a back-lash if you say 'well actually, I don't think it will end well for you, if you sleep with your friends partner, or if you carry on with that selfish life-style.

If I am a fan not a follower, I will probably keep my mouth shut to fit in to conform with worldly views even though deep down I know they are a lie. The fear of rejection will be too much for me.

When seeking the Kingdom of God we are told them to seek His righteousness not our own. But our righteousness is nothing we earn because we do good things. We are only righteous in the eyes of God because we submit to Jesus who has the same righteousness as God, and that makes us acceptable to God. Then this allows us to do commit ourselves to right living out of relationship with God.

If we live out our identity, loving and fearing God, more than we do the world view, then we will refuse to live by lies, and be open and truthful about who we are and what we believe, and seek to openly live out the Kingdom of God, and submit to this right living, despite opposition.

How can we possibly do that? Because if we believe in our God given Christian identity then we will trust in our scriptures that God is with us and will never leave us. That the power of the Spirit within us will give us the strength we need to be the light, to be an ambassador, to be a warrior for him.

As a child of God, whatever experiences you have been through, whatever trials you have faced, no matter how much you did wrong, or how low it took you, your fundamental identity in God, as defined by God never changes. You do not lose it, and it does not in anyway lessen. Your identity in God is your identity full stop. You are still a new creation, still his child, his temple, his priest, his ambassador, his light, and his warrior, and other things too that the bible tells us. You can not lose your identity if you stay following Jesus.

The long game

Seeking the Kingdom of God is not a once-off activity ! We are in it for the long game, and we need to both work at it and enjoy it.

As a child when you play the game of hide and seek, it is only successful, if it takes some effort to find the hider, and that the person is indeed found. If it takes no effort, or they are never found,

then there is no game. You don't just play it once either. When some-one is found, some-one else hides, and you go on seeking. My youngest son who is at University in Norway, last term decided one night, he would have some fun, and wrote something on the student web-site for spontaneous activities. "Any-one who wants to play hide-and-seek meet me at the 7 storey campus building at 10.30pm." He did not know if anyone else would turn up, but 60 students did, and they played hide and seek for 2 and a half hours, till 1am. ! He said it was amazing fun.

The game of hide and seek in the Kingdom of God, is a life-long one. God is hidden in the world, he is mystery, and it requires work to discover him, and who we are in Him, and then to discover more, and then discover even more. It can be amazing fun ! He is hidden, his truths are hidden, but he wants to be found.

Most of the time when Jesus spoke about the kingdom of God, he did so in parables, short stories that related to every day life, but had hidden meanings. Those who were serious about discovering the truth would think about and discuss the parable, and work out what it meant. That way it would sink deeper in. He wants us to be serious about it, and work at it. So we do not just seek the Kingdom of God and find it once, but when we think we have found it then we go on looking for it, for more of its truths, for more of its blessings. It is a long life of seeking and finding and seeking again.

The Apostle Paul is a great example of some-one that kept going, and he said in a letter to the Phillipians.

'Keep on working with fear and trembling to complete your freedom, ¹³ because God is always at work in you to make you willing and able to obey his own purpose. (Phil 2 v12b-13)

When we think of the Apostle Paul, we see a great example of some-one who kept on seeking the kingdom of God whatever happened to him. When we remember Paul we often think of the stoning, beatings, shipwrecks, and prison terms, but that isn't doing him justice! Just think of the incredible journeys he went on, all the miracles he saw, all the churches he planted. Despite all the problems he face, it sounds like he had amazing fun too. And he just kept going. A follower not a fan.

Trusting in Gods Character

Lets get back to this important question of the things we worry about. Jesus tells us that if we seek first the kingdom of God, seek out our identity and try to live it (the best we can with him helping us) then God will take care of all our worries.

We not only need to understand our own character and identity, we need to believe in Gods character. When we have the right picture of God, it bolsters our faith.

Can we believe in Gods goodness? Yes God is good, by definition.

Will he be faithful to yes? Yes, he will never leave you.

Can I rely on him. Yes, he is reliable, the same yesterday, today and forever.

God understands you better than you understand yourself.

God loves you more than you love yourself.

God wants the best for you.

Why should I worry about tomorrow. The bible tells me that the God who gave up his only son for me, will freely give me all things (Romans 8v32). The provisions of heaven are now my birth-right. He will provide for my needs. (Phil 4v19).

He said again and again, 'Do not fear', his angels are there to protect me, and his peace is there for me, a peace that is beyond all understanding.

Question: As you face another year of uncertainty ahead of you, what worries and doubts are **you** carrying today?

The bible clearly tell us that you **can** trust him with your worries, and with your lives, whatever age you are, wherever you are, and whatever you have experienced, you **can** trust yourselves and your worries into his care. You can step forward, bold and confident, as a child of God and a temple of the Holy Spirit.

This is reflected in the wonderful poem by Minnie Louise Haskins

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:
"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."
And he replied:
"Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.
That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."
So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night.

Friends. Keep seeking. keep finding, keep believing. keep living and keep sharing the Kingdom of God. You can trust him, he will take care of your worries. Go in peace. God is with you. Amen.

List of scriptural truths that give you your identity.

I am saved by God's grace, raised up with Christ and seated with Him in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:5-6; Colossians 2:12). I am complete in Him Who is the head over all rule and authority—of every angelic and earthly power (Colossians 2:10).

I am alive with Christ (Ephesians 2:5). I have received abundant grace and the gift of righteousness and reign in life through Jesus Christ (Romans 5:17).

I am a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). I am God's workmanship, created in Christ to do good works that He has prepared for me to do (Ephesians 2:10).

I am born of God, and the evil one does not touch me (1 John 5:18). I am far from oppression, and will not live in fear (Isaiah 54:14).

I am holy and without blame before Him in love (Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:16).

I have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16; Philippians 2:5).

I have the peace of God that surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4:7).

My body is a temple of the Holy Spirit; I belong to Him (1 Corinthians 6:19). The Spirit of God, who is greater than the enemy in the world, lives in me (1 John 4:4).

I have received the power of the Holy Spirit and He can do miraculous things through me. I have authority and power over the enemy in this world (Mark 16:17-18; Luke 10:17-19).

I am merciful, I do not judge others, and I forgive quickly. As I do this by God's grace, He blesses my life (Luke 6:36-38).

God supplies all of my needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19). I can do whatever I need to do in life through Christ Jesus who gives me strength (Philippians 4:13).

In all circumstances I live by faith in God and extinguish all the flaming darts (attacks) of the enemy (Ephesians 6:16). I overcome the enemy of my soul by the blood of the Lamb and the word of my testimony (Revelation 12:11).

I am not ruled by fear because the Holy Spirit lives in me and gives me His power, love and self-control (2 Timothy 1:7).

I am a joint-heir with Christ (Romans 8:17).

I am more than a conqueror through Him who loves me (Romans 8:37).

I have everything I need to live a godly life and am equipped to live in His divine nature (2 Peter 1:3-4).

I am the righteousness of God—I have right standing with Him—in Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21).

I am an ambassador for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20). I am part of a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people (1 Peter 2:9).

I am the light of the world (Matthew 5:14).

I am chosen by God, forgiven and justified through Christ. I have a compassionate heart, kindness, humility, meekness and patience (Romans 8:33; Colossians 3:12).

I am redeemed from the curse of sin, sickness, and poverty (Deuteronomy 28:15-68; Galatians 3:13). I am healed and whole in Jesus (Isaiah 53:5; 1 Peter 2:24).

My life is rooted in my faith in Christ and I overflow with thanksgiving for all He has done for me (Colossians 2:7).

I am greatly loved by God (John 3:16; Ephesians 2:4; Colossians 3:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:4).

I am strengthened with all power according to His glorious might (Colossians 1:11).

I am called to live a holy life by the grace of God and to declare His praise in the world (Psalm 66:8; 2 Timothy 1:9).

I press on each day to fulfill God's plan for my life because I live to please Him (Philippians 3:14).

Lets take our God given identity and promises into 2022.

*credit for selection of verses to Joyce Meyers