



“But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: ‘Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.’”
(Isaiah 43:1)

Because of the cold, winter weather I have been forced to my basement for indoor spinning workouts. Recently, at the end of a particularly grueling class, the instructor sat up on her bike, spread her arms wide and emphatically, even triumphantly cried out, “This is who you are!”

Her statement struck me. I consider cycling as part of my identity, but not who I am. I have three bikes, a boatload of equipment and apparel, and love to ride, but when I wake up in the morning my first thought isn’t about biking. (Usually it’s about checking to see if I have any new aches or pains, but that’s beside the point.) I try to remember that when Martin Luther’s feet hit the floor each morning he made the sign of the cross on his forehead and said to himself, “I am a baptized child of God.”

In the focus verse for today the Old Testament prophet Isaiah reminds us that God created us, formed us, redeemed us, called us by name, and claimed us as God’s own. Certainly there are many facets to our lives. We might be a spouse, a parent, sibling, son or daughter, co-worker, citizen, athlete, student, caregiver, volunteer, business owner, friend, mentor, and the list goes on.

We may identify with a political party, charity organization, favorite sports team, college or university, and so forth. But at our very core none of these is who we truly are.

Our Lutheran baptismal rite begins with these words:

“In baptism our gracious heavenly Father frees us from sin and death by joining us to the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are born children of a fallen humanity; by water and the Holy Spirit we are reborn children of God and made members of the church, the body of Christ. Living with Christ and in the communion of saints, we grow in faith, love, and obedience to the will of God.”

Who we are is rooted in our baptism into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is God’s claim on us that ought to drive how we live into all of the other aspects of our lives. We should always strive to think of ourselves as *Christian* parents, *Christian* citizens, *Christian* spouses, *Christian* business owners and co-workers, etc. Whatever roles we play today should be carefully and intentionally grounded in a faithful response to God’s grace in our lives.

How will you think of yourself today? Where will you find your true identity?

Pastor Chuck

Let us pray. Almighty God, by our baptism into the death and resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ, you turn us from the old life of sin. Grant that we who are reborn to new life in him may live in righteousness and holiness all our days. Amen.