

Soul Spark: Session 3



Who am I?

Talk outline

This talk explores how identity can be seen in different aspects of life (e.g. job, status, feelings) which can undermine our appreciation of our true identity as children of God.³ Encouragement to explore one's deeper or truer self is given with some suggestions of how to start doing this.

How do I introduce myself to others?

- Ponder: When asked to introduce yourself, what sorts of things do I say about myself?
- The ways we describe ourselves can be divided into three groups
 - - **Where am I?:** Our job, family, address, The given aspects of life.
 - - **How am I?:** Our feelings, e.g. glad to be here, sad about..., excited about...
 - - **Who am I?:** Our identity in relation to God.

This model is described in Chapter 1 of Margaret Silf, Landmarks (Darton, Longman and Todd, 1998)

What is our true identity?

- It is not in where we are? i.e. our role, our possessions our status etc. Though they are an important aspect of ourselves they are not the essence of who we are.
- It is not in how we are? i.e. our thoughts and feelings about ourselves. They are important, but they are not the essence of who we are.
- It is in "Who we are?" – We are children of God. We could describe ourselves, as Donald Nicholl did as 'A unique manifestation of the love of God' (Donald Nicholl, Rector of Tantur, the ecumenical institute near Jerusalem, once introduced himself to a group in this way! And why not?!)
- If the faith journey is about becoming the person God created me to be, it is about becoming more truly oneself. It is in seeking this and allowing it to happen that we find ourselves living by grace.

- An illustration of the invitation of this is revealed in the story of Rabbi Zusya.

“When Rabbi Zusya arrived in heaven, as the legend goes, he was anxious about the degree of his holiness. He wondered whether God was going to reprimand him. He imagined God angrily cross-questioning him about his way of life, ‘Tell me, why did you not become like Moses or Solomon or David?’

When God approached the rabbi, however, the question was altogether different. ‘Tell me,’ asked God quietly, ‘why did you not become Rabbi Zusya?’ (This story from the Rabbinic tradition is quoted in Trevor Hudson, *Christ Following – Ten Signposts to Spirituality* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1996).

How do we know who we really are?

- Give time to the search!
- Look at one’s deep longings: What do you long for in your becoming? What are your daydreams for yourself? What would you like to be remembered for?
- Session 5 takes this further as we explore choices and discernment.