

Topic	Who Am I O Lord
Reference	Exodus 3:11, 4:14
Date	19 January 2020
Speaker	Arnold Lim

We all go through what we call cycle of life on the cradle to the grave. When you're a kid, you have certain needs. When you're a young man or a woman, you have certain needs. When you go into your twilight years, you have certain needs and emotionally it can be a roller coaster. You can go through bouts of loneliness, bouts of separation, bouts of difficulties, and the team is here to walk with you. This is our motive.

If you look at a seashell, seashell is like us and what the devil does, the devil says, you are ugly inside. The devil says, you come to FBC, if only they really knew who you are, but in God's eyes you cut the seashell it is beautiful inside, and that's a motif and it is making connections inside out and much of the team provides peer support. We care for the mostly hurting, providing you a safe space to be heard. We walk alongside you. We do not judge you. Whatever struggles we have, we will walk with you, and this is our key ministries taken from Colossians. Our goal is everyone.

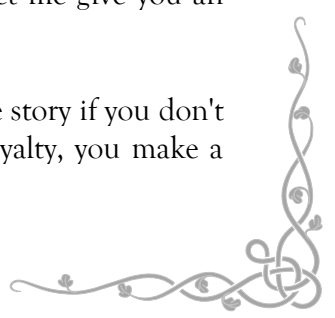
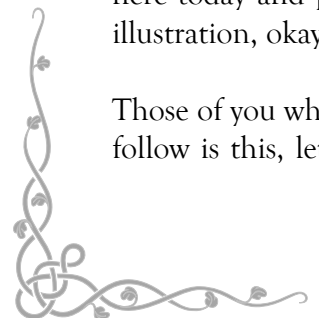
What is our aim?

Our aim is to nurture and bring back on track living gospel center relationships. We are caring connections and spiritual support. Individuals encouraged to connect with the depths of their own emotions. With God's grace they empower to discover the inner strength and beauty from inside out, providing a safe space to be heard.

I had a question on the ask, we haven't done the new year resolution question, but I want to speak from the heart today. You look at the size of FBC, current tracking, we are at just adults 750 this excluding kids, you know. You include our kids, you include our sister services like the Filipinos, the youth, et cetera, et cetera, we are on the line on the border of being classified as a mega church. A mega church is classified as a thousand onwards. So we say so good, I beg to differ. So here's my question in love I asked all of you. 750 people here, how many of you are in life groups? How many of you are serving in the church? We don't ask you to serve very, just serve a bit. How many of you are members?

Here is the thing that I struggle with, it is not an issue with FBC, it is an issue with many churches. That means many people believe it is okay to come to church and just sit at the back, and primarily that group I want to speak to in deep love in a nonjudgmental space, but really want to speak to you as a brother not as an elder. And for those who serve, I want us to rechallenge this. Now I want to ask, why is this phenomena so common. I am struggling with this and I think there's a root reason. So not going to stand here today and pound it to you on a guilt trip. I want it to come from the heart. So let me give you an illustration, okay?

Those of you who follow British tabloids, you know this story. Now here is the story. The story if you don't follow is this, let me give you an analogy of the church. If you decide to marry into royalty, you make a



decision, you become royalty. One day you may become the queen. If you know whatever happens, you are royalty. There is no such thing as part-time royalty. There's no such thing as I can be royalty on certain days and on certain days I go and stay in Canada, then I come back and I still want to stay in a castle, paid by British taxpayers. In England, you cannot do that. So it with being someone coming to church. You either are part of the body or not. Now this is why this issue is critical because the question is, if I ask who is a Christian, you can ask, who are you?

Ellen DeGeneres says, be true to yourself and everything will be fine. Really? If Megan Merkel was true to herself, who is her true self? Is it the Royal part, that's very questionable now? That's very questionable now, isn't it? Megan Merkel, the, you know, she's not British. She's not even white. She's half African. Is it Megan Merkel, the actress? Is it Megan Merkel the mother? So you find there is an issue of identity and you find identity, our identity of what we perceive to who we are many factors come in. Let me ask you a simple question identity. How many of you really feel you are Malaysian?

So today I troll to you the reason why so many churches have this issue of non-service comes from this root question. And so we look at somebody today equally as confused a Megan Merkel, if not more. He was born into royalty. Before that, he was from a slave costs. Then he tried to be a freedom fighter and he ended up being a shepherd. And you don't know. We're talking about Moses. If there was ever a person with a mixed identity, it's him. And so God encounters him and God says, this is who you are and what does he tell God? Who am I? So we want to look into that. And I pay this speaks to all of us.

I'm going to give you four points.

- ◆ Who am I in the eyes of God.
- ◆ Who am I in the eyes of man.
- ◆ Recognizing worldly identity markers.
- ◆ Who am I, *who are we?*

A lot of things shape you subconsciously. For Megan Merkel, it could be wow I'm going to be royalty, I go in there. Then afterwards, the British press gives you a bad time, bad time, bad time, you decide I'm not into that, your identity takes a shift. And here's the last pertinent question. If you ask who am I? You have to ask the other side, who are we is a plural question. So here's the first thing. Moses say to go,

¹¹ *But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"*

I'm not going to go really much into, the full exegesis, cause it's very, very heavy. It deals with a lot of things like who Yahweh is, Elohim, the signs. I'm going to focus on the five they call these the five excuses Moses gave. He gave five excuses and we're going to start out the first one.

Who am I?

Now understand. He just came out of the burning bush, he had an encounter with a Holy God and his presence, you know, take off your shoes, Holy ground. And he says, who am I? Now you can, you can take it two ways. One is a sign of reverence, which is very possible. He just encountered holiness. The second is a sign of inadequacy and that's classic. When we ask someone, can you serve in church? Cannot man, not

good enough, I don't have the gifts, I don't have the talents, I don't know my Bible and the best one, the best one, I don't have time. I don't have time. And let's not judge people. They all come. I suggest on the same space. So here's a classic. Moses is essentially encapsulating all of that and telling God the same question, who am I? Not me? I'm not the right guy.

And then he breaks it down, so God tells him basically this. Yeah, you're right. You can't, you see, he shifts the perspective. You can't, you know, I don't have time. God will say, yeah, you're right. You don't, I don't have the talents, God will say, yeah you don't. I don't have the skills, yeah you're doing then God says but I do. I will save the Israelites, not you, and here is the classic line. If you take the text, he sees this further down. He says, I am who I am. That's found in verse 14 after the second question, you see there is a play, there is a pun, because Moses says, who am I? God says. I am who I am. You see where we're going?

Basically, Moses is approaching the issue from his point. God is turning it around to say, who am I? Let me answer you. I am who I am. Meaning it's not about you. It's not about you. Lesson: It's about God

Doubts and struggles about who you really are should always be in relation to who God is, some day people say, I don't know who I am. I hate my job, 9-5. I hate my boss. Go to church, sit at a back. Friday, Gwen, go to the pub, have a drink. Saturday, play badminton. That's my life. Then one day I die. Who am, I don't know. A lot of us are like that. What is that was a problem with that approach, is independent of your relationship with God. And so he turns it around. He said, he's not about you, it is about me and I called you, you get that.

So if you are sitting here in the church and you think you're a Christian, the first point is God called you and that's the first thing you have got to realize and hear the question. When have you been confronted with the holiness of God? Because God prepares the way and shows him who he is. A lot of us are so flippant about coming to church. The church has become a consumer place. We listen to music, we hear the sermon, but we have not had that experience that breaks you and that's your starting point. You see it, the word, who am I is found in few other places of scripture.

God tells King David similarly, I'm going to make your dynasty rule. Your house will rule, not Saul's. Three occasions, twice in Kings and one in second Samuel.

2 Samuel 7:18-20 (NIV)

¹⁸Then King David went in and sat before the Lord, and he said:

*"**Who am I, Sovereign Lord,** and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? ¹⁹And as if this were not enough in your sight, Sovereign Lord, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant—and this decree, Sovereign Lord, is for a mere human!*

²⁰*"What more can David say to you? For you know your servant, Sovereign Lord.*

David is making a point, let me give you in terms of philosophy. It is an ontological answer. Is meaning, what is a human? That's the starting point. What is the human, you are either a gathering of atoms brought here by accident and your life is completely random, or you were created in his image. That's David's answer and here's the kicker, what more can David say to you? You know your servant sovereign Lord. I want you to absorb that. He's saying, I know you Arnold Lim.

You know, we like to read a lot of books. We say knowing God, experiencing God, desiring God, you're all very good. What was the fundamental flaw with all of that? It puts it from a man's perspective and when man tries to see God, our perspective is very small. The perspective, yes all that is true, but the starting point is God knows you and here's the kicker, He knows you better than you think yourself. So when you say, I can't do it, I don't have time, I don't have the gifts, I can't work with Arnold Lim, that happens very often. God says, I know you.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer basically talks about how people, this was written days before he went to the gallows, and by the time he become a legend, people in the prison, the guards all respected him. He is Dietrich Bonhoeffer who stood up against Hitler. At the end of it, he says it

Am I one person today and tomorrow another,

Am I both at once a hypocrite before others.

And before myself, a contemporary work began weakling.

Or is this something within me still like a broken army.

Fleeing in this other from victory already achieved.

Who am I? They mock me, this lonely questions of mine and here he echoes King David, whatever. I am, thou knowest oh God, I am dying.

You are his; he knows you and Dietrich Bonhoeffer one of the greatest Christians who walked on the earth surrenders to God. I am yours. One of the very famous songs out there, same thing, casting crown

Who am I that the eyes that see my sin, would look on me with love and watch me rise again?

The beginning point about any Christian journey is to pause, you know, and say, the God of the creator of this universe will send his son to die for me. He called me and you into salvation for a purpose, not to sit at the back of the church for 10 years. And he's telling you today, he knows you. You are his, and he is calling every one of you. And if you sit there and you say, Lord, I'm scared. I don't want to do it. I feel guilty. I don't have time and I don't have gifts and this is his reply to Moses.

¹²And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain."

Huh? Got to wait until they get out of Egypt. You walk along the way and finally when you get out there you will worship me. It's a journey of faith. Here's the second one, and this one is great, I'm going to approach it from two levels.

Who am I in the eyes of man?

¹³Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

Basically Moses disassociates himself from the Israelites, you know. Now notice this in chapter two, if you know history, he had tried to save the Israelites, didn't go very well. And so now, second round he says,

you know, he's not putting a distance. So God tries to communicate with him convincing. The second round, chapter four is two questions there. Moses say,

4 Moses answered, "What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The Lord did not appear to you?'"

In simple English, you asked me to do, you asked me to serve, what if I fail? That is this question. What if I fail? You know what God is going to say. So what? So what, it is not about you? But here the question is interesting, because it takes identity to another level. Ellen DeGeneres says, it is all about myself, don't care what anyone says, it's not true. His identity now is shaped by what, is shaped in relationship to others. So let me give you three areas which shapes our identity. Subconsciously or not, they all affect us. The first is what is the human being? If you're not a Christian, anything you want, the moment you say a Christian, you are created in the image of God. You're an image bearer of God, an image bearers of God don't just become pew warmers. That's one. The first question revealed another part of Moses, his inadequacy and very likely was because he's traumatized by his past.

So what happens to our friend is that, you know, this guy was born as a Jew, brought up very rich, it is like a Bangla, no offense to any Bangladeshis, it is like Bangla brought up in a son of a Chinese tycoon, you know? Wow. Then suddenly made a lot of money, live in a Dato house, got BMW, got all the money in the world. Then one day he realize his Bangladeshi people being oppressed by factory workers in Shah Alam, so we go there and whack somebody and then a Bangladeshi say very classic mission answer. Who are you? Who are you? Who are you? That's true, because that's what they tell Moses. Who may you lead over us?

Moses ran and became a civil servant, 9-5 job, watch Netflix, play ping pong, go mamak store, thank you very much. And then one day God appears to him and he says, who am I?

Second point, Who am I define personally and is defined by his hurts. He is defined by his tragedies. He is defined by an acceptance of the safety of a mediocre life. And a lot of Christians have that. You are not called to a mediocre life, 9-5 which you hate. Let me tell you that. And here's the last one, which is what the text is saying.

Who am I relationally? You see what Moses is saying. My identity is affected by what people say about me. I'm scared of rejection. Now, if you're honest about selves, how you are as a husband, a wife, a parent, a colleague at work with friends all shape you. If you're in a chat group and everybody ignores you, you feel lousy, you post something on Instagram and don't get followers you feel lousy. If you're in a group discussion, they ignore you, you feel lousy. You come home, your spouse always on you, you feel lousy. Your kids don't appreciate you, you feel lousy. Your father, mother always criticize you, you feel lousy. Relationally they shape you. These are the three things that make up your identity and what God is doing is going right inside all of that and saying, the defining root is who are you to me, that is the root, and he says that to Moses. He says, "I am who I am".

The Israelites, I am, has sent you to me, and they expands it. I am the God of your forefathers, Moses. This is the name I give you. That's not today's sermon. But he's basically saying, he's turning around and he says, who am I to you, Moses? And here's my question to all of us. Who is God to you? And do you

treat God with reverence? Do you treat God with fear and love? And then it's taken one step deeper because the text appears again in acts. When Stephen is stoned, Stephen brings up the text and he sees this in a narration about the history of Israel. He says,

²⁰“At that time Moses was born, and he was no ordinary child. For three months he was cared for by his family. ²¹When he was placed outside, Pharaoh’s daughter took him and brought him up as her own son. ²²Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action.

²³“When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his own people, the Israelites. ²⁴He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his defense and avenged him by killing the Egyptian. ²⁵Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not. ²⁶The next day Moses came upon two Israelites who were fighting. He tried to reconcile them by saying, ‘Men, you are brothers; why do you want to hurt each other?’ ²⁷“But the man who was mistreating the other pushed Moses aside and said, ‘Who made you ruler and judge over us?’ ²⁸Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?’ ²⁹When Moses heard this, he fled to Midian, where he settled as a foreigner and had two sons.

The earlier text of Joseph has a same structure, and Stephen's picking a point, Steven is talking about Christ, you know, because they are charging Stephen for insulting Moses. So Stephen says, hold on, let me tell you a story. This was happened to Joseph. This happened to Moses, and the kicker is verse 35

³⁵“This is the same Moses they had rejected with the words, ‘Who made you ruler and judge?’
Acts 7:20-29, 35

What Steven is saying, he's pointing to Christ that Christ who got rejected. You say the same thing, who made you ruler and judge? So the story in Exodus points to Christ.

- ◆ Moses: “I don’t have all the answers. I am afraid of being a failure.”
- ◆ God: “I will walk with you and provide you with signs and the tools to overcome your fears.”
- ◆ Lesson: *Being vulnerable and facing rejection by others is part of my identity IN CHRIST.*

Because Christ was rejected. So you come to serve in FBC and people say bad thing about you, you say hallelujah. You come and try to serve and you cannot get on, you say hallelujah because Christ was rejected. That's part of it, and because God will walk with you and he's training you. Let me go to the third one.

Recognizing worldly identity markers.

This is the fourth excuse from Moses

¹⁰Moses said to the Lord, “Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue.” ¹¹The Lord said to him, “Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf or mute? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Is it not I, the Lord? ¹²Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.”

Again God turns it on himself, but here's a deeper issue. The issue isn't the, he doesn't have the gift. The issue is he doesn't have the passion. He doesn't want to do it. He has the gift. He doesn't have the passion to serve in FBC. That's the context. Now this is giving you another identity marker. The identity marker is I am what I am passionate about and let me tell you this is completely secular. And this has so entered the church. People say they are serving God in church. Actually they're doing self-actualization. So I want to spend a bit of time on this. There are few ways to identify your idols:

- ◆ Defined by a need to be significant in the eyes of others.
- ◆ Defined by a need to protect myself from past hurts.
He taught that God was using him. We find it from Steven's speech in eggs. And they tell him, who are you? And so he doesn't want to repeat that. He has such bad experiences. He's protected himself by a fence. And a lot of us have that. A lot of us are past traumas or issues as so defined us. We dare not go out and take risks.
- ◆ Defined by my job, my marriage, my family, my talents, my possessions, my church ministry, etc.
All of this shapes you. So if a man loses his job, very likely he loses his identity. For a woman, if she loses a marriage, she loses identity. Statistics show that. If you lose your marriage and your job and your kids hate you, very likely you go into depression.

So here is this, oh people of God, he knows you. You get it, he knows you. And if that isn't your pillar, the moment we take away any one of this, your life will fall like a house of cards. And so our starting point is that, a God who loved me so much, he sent his son to die for me, my I respond to that is who am I that you would save a wretched sinner like me. I am on Holy ground. You start that way. What does God do? He changes your heart. And the tragedy is many people come to church and sit in church, but their hearts are not changed, and they say who am I. But they do not attach the last words Oh Lord.

This is not exactly a guy you want to promote, but give the man some face. Kanye West. If there is anybody who is defined by his music skills, is this man. So if you're very talented, it becomes, you. So how do you know when a man sees his gifting, sees his talent and says, you know what? I'm beyond that, so let's give credit to this man. He had a shift in his faith and his album now Jesus top selling rap singer, all about Jesus.

They say you can rap about anything except for Jesus
That means guns, sex, lies, video tapes
But if I talk about God my record won't get played Huh?
Well if this take away from my spins
Which will probably take away from my ends
Then I hope this take away from my sins
And bring the day that I'm dreaming about
Next time I'm in the club everybody screaming out

(Jesus walks)
God show me the way because the devil trying to break me down
(Jesus walks)

The only thing that that I pray is that my feet don't fail me now
(Jesus walks)

He is telling the world, I don't care. I will proclaim Jesus. If you don't want to buy my record, hallelujah. What is that? Rejection God shows the way, because the devil trying to break me down. That's for me and you. The only thing I pray is that my feet don't fail me now. I mean, you got to give credit to the man because he did not sell Jesus out. Why? Because he's going away which is the way of rejection. You should hear the critic state by latest album, and it's all about Jesus. He doesn't care. So who am I? I am yours Oh Lord. And I will proclaim your name in the face of rejection.

We are not called to live with self-actualization. Moses, I don't have the gift of public speaking, that a lie. God says, I will teach you how to speak because you are just my vessel. I am the one doing the real talking, not you. In Kanye West there there is God speaking.

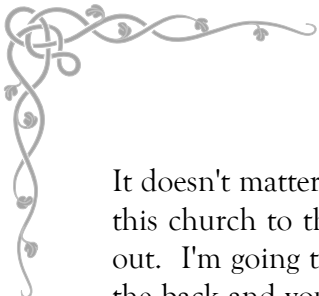
Following your passion is overrated and can lead to suffer idolatry. God initiates any calling on us and something the calling is to task we do not want to do. Moses problem wasn't because he couldn't speak, was because he had no passion. And this morning I want to rechallenge you because the church needs people.

Let me end with this. Who am I, the question asked is who are we? So in the end he says,

¹³But Moses said, "Pardon your servant, Lord. Please send someone else." ¹⁴Then the Lord's anger burned against Moses and he said, "What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and he will be glad to see you. ¹⁵You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do. ¹⁶He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him. ¹⁷But take this staff in your hand so you can perform the signs with it."

There's God, there's Moses and below Moses there is Aaron. There's a hierarchy here. You see you're not called to serve alone, Moses said, please send someone else. God said, I'm getting angry now. No more excuses. You go in obedience, but I'll get someone to support you. God calls us into his family then God calls us into Christian service. Then God calls others to support us. So you cannot talk to Arnold Lim, get someone else to talk to Arnold Lim but don't say you can't work with Arnold Lim, that's the question. And here's the thing I really want to end this with, I'm going to end in a short while. There's no such thing as a Christian who doesn't serve you know, and those are really serving they are in to take some risks. Others who support us, God knows us better than we know ourselves.

So let me take the first one. If God had called you, he didn't call you to sit in the church, to do nothing. He called you to service in the kingdom of God. So I'm going to say something in love, which is horribly offensive, and if you think I offended you I want to say it comes from a deep place of love, because if since I'm called to be an elder, not in any sense arrogant about it, I'm a servant. We are called to shepherd, so I want to say this in deep love. I won't repeat this again the rest of the year. If you been in FBC for many-many, many years and you just sat at the back and it doesn't bother you, can I lovingly tell you, very likely you are not a Christian. What is very offensive, right? Time to throw stones at Arnold Lim, but it is said in love.



It doesn't matter whether the 750 people here better we had 10 people who love the Lord, and then to fill this church to the rafters where at the end of the service when we do the closing song, everybody rushes out. I'm going to say this again because I am like that, but I love everybody. Christ loved me. If you sit at the back and you really don't care, you like the service, you give money, and you think you're a Christian. You could ask yourself whether you are, you know, because I don't think you are. You might not be. Because if you have had an encounter with God, he would break you and you say, who am I God that you will call me? And it will so change your heart, you will come to FBC and say Arnold Lim I cannot tolerate you but I will serve with you.

I want to give you an example of this. My natural gift is preaching, I say that not in arrogance. Some people, they come up here, they see a crowd, they shutter, you put me up here, I get verbal diarrhea, I cannot stop talking. Standing here, I'm feeling completely empowered. I am in my space due, I'm Kanye West, get it on bro. I absolutely have no fear. You asked me to run family life ministry, when I told Peter, Peter say you talk so much, you always tell people what to do, you don't give people a chance to talk, you do counselling, Arnold let me talk to you, that's the truth. You ask people who tried to talk to me before, I made people cry in this congregation. They are here, but I think the Lord spoke to me and I say, this is an area the church needs to grow in, and I told Peter we need to do it. He said, you want to do it, you go and do and so along the way Brandon came, Caroline came, John Goh came. Patrick came, Annette came, Mun See came, Pastor Joshua came, Linda came, and the people you see behind there is, is because God said, I will walk with you Arnold Lim, I will show you signs, I will bring people with you and I bring you many-many Aarons.

I want to close today with a challenge. The challenge is this. We set our dreams very-very big. 750 people in FBC. So lets just take away 75 people, 675 left. I have a dream. Martin Luther Lim, 675 people serving in FBC. Do you have that dream? It is not my dream. It is the call of the Lord. Happy New Year.