

Daily Devotional, February 25, 2021 My Identity is in You

The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. John 10:3-4 (NIV)

Recently I was cleaning out a drawer and came upon my collection of name tags. I am not sure why, but I have kept them over the years from times of my employment, as well as events I've attended. Some of them have special meaning to me – my student ID from seminary, my trade show ID when I was purchasing items for our business, my chaplain ID from McNeal Hospital in Berwyn, IL, my first staff name tag from my pastoral internship in Batavia, IL.

I have the name tag from when I attended a Roofing Institute conference in Wisconsin, and another name tag from the police department to identify myself as chaplain. All of them state my name (which is what makes them a "name tag" of course), but several of them also make other declarations about my identity – student, official member, and staff member, in full connection.

But at the end of the day, a name tag doesn't declare who I am. Each ID is sort of a snapshot of what I was doing at any certain moment. What we "do" is important. But "doing" is not as important as "being." A name tag might reveal my name and what I do, but it doesn't define who I "am."

So, who am I? When I have tried to answer that question, I have found that I sound like a name tag – "I'm James Andrews and I am a husband, a father, a pastor, a teacher..."

I think that the only One who can really answer the question of "Who am I?" is the One who created me. When I have doubts or questions about who I am I turn to scripture. One favorite response of mine is found in Romans 8:15-16, "For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is the Holy Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God..."

My name tag from God reads, "James Andrews, son (& father) of God." What does yours say?

Prayer: Help us, O God, to be obedient children, but help us also to cast out of our hearts and minds all things that might hinder us in a whole and holy love for You. As You have loved the world, help us to love. As You have given Yourself for us, help us to give ourselves for You .For Christ's sake, Amen.