

REPORTER

HEADLINE: *Ex-Bulldog returns to share message*

After more than a year away from Vacaville, former Bulldog turned NFL linebacker Thomas Williams returned to his old stomping grounds as he shed light on an issue he once battled face-to-face.

On Sunday, at The Sanctuary Church in Vacaville, Williams joined Pastor Alton Findlaytor as the Vacaville minister and his congregation have recently focused on personal identity and asking the age-old question: “Who am I?”

While it may sound like a simple three-word question, many people struggle when faced with finding an answer. Whether it’s the young, old, or somewhere in between, the answer you have is only as valuable as the time you put into procuring that answer.

“Being a person who has worked hard to win national championships and compete in the NFL, he has a good message to share about how he pulled himself out of his own personal identity crisis,” Findlaytor said.

After retiring in 2012 following a slew of neck and head injuries, the former USC linebacker laid the blueprint on how to make a clean transition. Prior to publishing his second book last month, “The Relentless Pursuit of Greatness”, Williams became a motivational speaker and has since focused on helping others make transitions very similar to the one he made. Williams, who graduated from USC with a degree in Sociology, has had national and international speaking engagements the last few years and was happy to have the chance to speak at The Sanctuary Church.

“I talked about identity and the difference between who you are and what you do,” Williams explained. “Some of the loneliest times I had were when I played pro football. But I feel they took a lot from it

because we sometimes feel that what we do or what we have decides our value. And that's just not the case."

Although many people in Findlaytor's congregation aren't planning on going pro or publishing a book, everybody has the choice to decide their identity or update the one they've already created for themselves. But while it may be a bit of a challenge, Williams feels that his words touched his audience in a positive way.

"The overall feedback was, wow," Williams said. "I think there were people who were inspired to make positive changes. Some of the older men and women that were there know that they can choose to live their life however they want. Just because you're old or young doesn't mean you have to live a certain way. Everyone has the ability to live life how they want to."

Alton Findlaytor will continue his series of sermons focusing on the aforementioned question. The Sanctuary Church is located on 2024 Nut Tree Road and those with questions can contact them by phone at (707) 446-4406.

"The ultimate goal (of this series) is for people to know how much God values them and for them to know how they identify themselves," Findlaytor said.

Those interested in listening to previous sermons or Williams' message on Sunday can do so online at www.tsvv.org/go/downloads.