

Christ Community Covenant Church
Spirit Filled Life in a Broken and Fallen World: The Joys of being a Saint!
Pastor Dave Scherrer - August 14, 2016

Mike Plant was a single-handed yachtsman known for his non-stop racing around the world. After five years of single-handed sailing, he logged over 100,000 miles at sea and set the record for the fastest circumnavigation by an American, with a time of 135 days, all solo. In 1992, Plant was preparing to compete in his second Vendée Globe and fourth single-handed circumnavigation aboard *Coyote*, a powerful open 60 foot sloop. But on the way from New York to the start of the race in France, *Coyote* disappeared from radio contact. The first day or so no one worried – this was an accomplished sailor. Then another day, then two, then a week. At three weeks, a million-dollar search turned up the overturned hull about 700 miles southwest of Ireland.

Everyone wondered what could possibly have happened. *Coyote* was found 32 days later, turtled, with the 80 foot mast pointed straight down to the sea floor. Then it was discovered that the *Coyote* had lost the 8,200-pound bulb on its keel, a ballast appendage that keeps the boat upright when underway. At the time of his death, Plant was one of only five people to have completed three solo circumnavigations; Plant disappeared in the mishap, later pronounced lost at sea. What every sailor knows is that when you lose the ballast, the heavy grounding center of the boat that rides well under sight of the casual observer, then any moderately fierce wind or crashing wave can fatally tip it over sending the boat to destruction. It can be said the boat was destroyed as soon as the ballast was lost.

Last week I was sharing with you that this letter to the Corinthians (that we have just launched a study in) is particularly appropriate for us in 2016. It is a story of a church surrounded by pluralism and secular humanism. A city filled with unbridled licentiousness, mixed up religions and materialism on steroids.

We called the study **a spirit filled life in a broken and fallen world.**

This study will give us practical advice and deeply relevant theological truths that will serve as our ballast in a stormy world. I promise you – if you do not have a solid knowledge of the risen Christ and his call upon your life you will be an easy target for the storms of life. You will not eternally survive if Christ is not the center stabilizing person and force in your life.

What does it mean to be “Spirit filled”?

Gal 5:16-17, 25

¹⁶ So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever^[a] you want.

²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

“A Broken and Fallen World”

One of the most compelling arguments to establish that there is indeed a moral compass and moral absolutes is really a very simple statement – **“The world is not as it should be.”**

The world is not as it should be
We live in a world of lies and these lies kill

For most thinking right minded people, this is an easy to accept philosophical axiom. We seem to simply know that there is something broken in humanity. There is something broken and fallen in me. Just read history. Just read the newspapers.

There is a simple answer to this sad reality too. It is also a simple statement – **“We live in a world of lies and these lies kill.”** The evil one lies to you about you – and these lies are killing you.

Here is the difference between the Liar and Jesus Christ the Truth:

The evil one reminds you that you are the product of a broken and fallen world.
God reminds you that you are spirit filled and loved and saved to a new reality in Christ.

The evil one accuses you and tells you that you are merely the product of a broken and fallen world. On the other hand, God sees you and tells you not to listen to that accusers voice and to know instead that we are loved by His Son Jesus Christ and God reminds you that you are spirit filled and have a Kingdom purpose.

Someday I will write a book untitled *Categorical Lies*. Lies I believe about me, about you, about God and about the world. I'm sure it's not a best seller but it would be an important work I think. Let's just take one category, **lies I may believe about myself:**

I don't matter.
I can't do anything right.
I am different and therefore bad.
If you really knew me you wouldn't like me.
I've made so many mistakes and hurt so many people God can never forgive me.
I deserve more, I deserve better.
It's not my fault.
Everyone and everything else is to blame.
I am talented and beautiful and so therefore I am better than you.

This evil is real. It is not bad Karma, it is not bad luck. It is not the dark side. Evil has as its source in the enemy of God – Satan, Lucifer and aka the Devil. This fallen angel is the Prince of demons. He is confined to our world and he is as real and as unholy as our Father in Heaven is real and shrouded with absolute and radiant holiness.

John 8:44

You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out his desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, refusing to uphold the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, because he is a liar and the father of lies.

And also this familiar passage that Peter writes of the Devil;

2 Peter 5:8

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

“Evil and suffering are real . . . They aren't an illusion, nor are they simply an absence of good. We are fallen creatures living in a fallen world that has been twisted and corrupted by sin, and we all share in its brokenness. Most of all, we share in its tragic legacy of disease and death.” ~ *Billy Graham*

With these realities it is amazing that there is any peace in the world or in our lives. I believe that we owe all the peace and hope that we have in this broken world to the truth and love of Jesus Christ – the unseen ballast of truth and love that keeps us upright in our troubled world. We are held fast in this relentless world by the centrality of being defined by who we are in Christ, not by the lies the world tells to us.

The centrality of being defined by who we are in Christ

Paul begins to look at these deep theologies right at the get go of his letter to Corinth. Let's look at our first passage from 1 Corinthians. Chapter 1 beginning in verse 4:

1 Corinthians 1:4-9

⁴ I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵ that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— ⁶ even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— ⁷ so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸ who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now if you're like me you are saying to yourself, these seem like great Christians. Paul really pours on the thanksgiving and the praise. He seems to be reminding them of the great blessings of the Christian faith – we are enriched, confirmed, we are gifted, we are sustained, guiltless. Wow what a list. Then you think to yourself, "Is Paul writing to the same Church of Corinth that we read about in the rest of the book?" Cheater, liars, blamers, prideful, immoral. It doesn't seem to jive.

To help us with this seeming contradiction, let's look at the very first words of 1 Corinthians. You might be inclined to skip them - they seem basic enough on the surface – but I think they hold the key to this letter and to our experiencing victory in our spirit filled lives in Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:1-3

¹ Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes, ² ***To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,*** both their Lord and ours: ³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is on verse two that I want to spend a moment:

1 Corinthians 1:2

² *To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:*

He calls the church in Corinth a fellowship of saints! That word for saint - **Hagios** - means to be set aside for God – consecrated and holy.

Hagios - "consecrated to God, holy, sacred, pious."

The word saint seems to have morphed quite a bit from its original New Testament meaning. Today when you think of the word 'saint' you think of some angular figure crystallized in stained glass or you think of some person long dead who has been officially declared as an ecclesiastical hero of times past. I'm not making fun of these important people of church history. I am only contrasting how many of us think of Saints as figures that hold an elevated status because of something they did. That is not a Biblical idea.

The New Testament uses the word *saint* or *saints* 67 times. In every instance, the reference is to all believers (e.g., Acts 26:10; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2). Never is the word used of a special group of believers who serve God better than others. Scripture is clear that all Christians are saints.

The Bible views every Christian as a saint, as someone set apart for God's work. Ephesians 4:12 teaches that the spiritual gifts are given "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ." Clearly, the "saints" are ordinary Christians involved in service in the church.

Paul is calling the church in Corinth saints. And if we read on just a few verses we can see clearly that they did not earn that title by their upright lives and Christian behavior. Christian, you are called saints because Jesus' death on the cross paid your debt of sin and has transformed you from 'lost to found' – from the kingdom and rule of death to Kingdom and rule of life. You are no longer defined by the lies you have learned since childhood. You are loved. You are significant and secure in Christ. God has given you

a special eternal name and you have been bestowed with the title of saint. Just like in Corinth, not because you earned it with your special faith or deeds, but by the blood of Christ. Jesus has set you apart – your allegiance is no longer to this earthly world – you are, by the resurrection power and love of Christ, right now – not someday when you die – but right now, you are a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven.

“To be loved but not known is comforting but superficial. To be known and not loved is our greatest fear. But to be fully known and truly loved is, well, a lot like being loved by God. It is what we need more than anything. It liberates us from pretense, humbles us out of our self-righteousness, and fortifies us for any difficulty life can throw at us.” ~ Tim Keller

You can help yourself here today by looking back on your life in Christ with Godly understanding.

Looking back with understanding

From verse two we know that sometime in the past we were a people whom God called into fellowship with his Son, and then we began to call on Jesus for the satisfaction of our longings and deliverance from our sins. You can call this by many biblical phrases: being born again, being saved, being converted, becoming a new creature, becoming a disciple, receiving Jesus, etc. Saints! Look how the apostle Peter describes you:

1 Peter 2:9-10

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Romans 8:9-11

You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹ If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Finally we read in verse 9 of chapter 1 that God has placed his call upon you.

God has placed His call upon us

1 Cor. 1:9

God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

You matter. Regardless of what the liar says to you, you matter. No matter how old or young, how simple or smart, how rich or poor, you matter. You have a purpose. You have been called into the fellowship of the King!

"God's call is for you to be **His loyal friend**, for whatever purpose He has for your life."
~ Oswald Chambers "My Utmost For His Highest"

Are you still unsure? Do you still doubt about the possibilities and hopes found in the spirit filled life? Perhaps you are. Many of us are because we don't know what the future holds. We say all of this is good for today but what about tomorrow?

What will happen in the future?

What will happen when we experience the brokenness and fallen, evil nature of the adversary? I'm not sure I will have enough faith. What will happen to you? Here is my answer - I don't know, but I do know what Paul told the church in Corinth. It is not up to us to be faithful – God is faithful.

God is Faithful!

Don't say to yourself this morning: there is no hope for me for I'm not like other good Christians. The freedom of God in the calling of sinners is intended to give hope, not take hope. It means that none is too bad. None is too hard. None is too far gone. God is free. God is rich unto all who call upon him. Look how expansive verse 2 is: he writes "to all those in every place who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved (Romans 10:13). If you can call, you are called.

Saint! Know who you are!!

You have been made a saint and have been called into the marvelous fellowship of God's Son. We deserve no other blessing but God in His mercy and glory and love has showered us with blessings. Even the momentary light afflictions we suffer bring Him glory – and that is what we long for: To bring glory to the Father, through the work of the Son in the spirit filling power of the Holy Spirit!

"Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that a man would stake his life on it a thousand times. It makes men glad and bold and happy in dealing with God and all His creatures."
~ Martin Luther in his Preface to the book of Romans