

**Christ Community Covenant Church**  
**Spirit Filled Living in a Broken and Fallen World**  
**“That your faith might rest in the power of God”**  
**Pastor Dave Scherrer - September 4, 2016**

**Who are “Those Guys?”**

Who are those professional Christians that we hear preach on the radio and read their books and go to their seminars and listen to their music and run all those cool non-profits? Who are those guys? Are they real people? Or did publishers or producers make them up? Are they the ones that make the Kingdom of God spin? Are they especially anointed? They certainly get more press than some of us plain vanilla type!

I find it intimidating when I think of how many sermons Tim Keller and John Piper and John MacArthur and David Jeremiah have preached and how long they have served. Or go back a few years to George Whitefield or Johnathon Edwards or Henry Ward Beecher, Dwight Moody. Now these were people who made a difference.

I feel weak and insignificant and not only that, I *know* that I am weak and insignificant. I don't have the credentials these guys do. History will not write a long chapter about me. I will never record a song or have a best seller. I don't have a huge following on Facebook. I'm just not that special.

Not only that, my body is breaking down. I can't remember names and important facts. I find that my social energy needs replenishing more often and I no longer have my baby good looks (though there is some argument as to whether I ever had baby good looks even when I was a baby!).

Perhaps I am in good company. You look in the mirror and see someone with good intentions but their follow through is poor. Maybe you say to yourself – “My Spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.” Or “Lord I believe, help me with my unbelief.” It is easy I think in this high powered time of public Christian personalities to feel underqualified or disqualified.

That is not such an unfamiliar lament. The feeling that “I am so small and broken that I cannot possibly be a help to Jesus” has been around since the church was first formed. But I have good news for us plain vanilla types this morning. It is found in our passage in 1 Corinthians 1:22ff;

**1 Corinthians 1:25-31 – 2:1-5**

For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. <sup>27</sup> But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; <sup>28</sup> God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, <sup>29</sup> so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. <sup>30</sup> And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, <sup>31</sup> so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

*And if we turn the page and look at chapter 2, we see that even Saint Paul had feelings of weakness and found himself trembling and stuttering his way through a sermon . . .*

And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. <sup>2</sup> For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. <sup>3</sup> And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, <sup>4</sup> and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, <sup>5</sup> so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

What Paul is saying to the church in Corinth and what I want to say to the church in Arvada is you may indeed be weak. You may not be the brightest bulb in the package or have your baby good looks - that

does not make you worth less to God. In fact that moves you to the head of the line. We are told the last shall be first and the weak are strong in God.

Ethel Waters, the wonderful jazz and blues singer of the 1920-1970's was born as a result of the rape of her teenaged mother; Louise Anderson believed to have been 13 years old at the time. She was raised in poverty and never lived in the same place for more than 15 months. She said of her difficult childhood, "I never was a child. I never was cuddled, or liked, or understood by my family."

Waters married at the age of 13, but her husband was abusive, and she soon left the marriage and became a maid working for \$4.75 per week. On her 17th birthday, she attended a costume party at a nightclub on Juniper Street. She was persuaded to sing two songs and impressed the audience so much that she was offered professional work at the Lincoln Theatre in Baltimore. She later recalled that she earned the rich sum of ten dollars a week, but her managers cheated her out of the tips her admirers threw on the stage.

As time went by Ethel became more famous and awarded, but she was still missing something. In 1957 she attended a Billy Graham Crusade and walked the aisle to the front and gave her life to Christ and her life completely changed. Eventually she became a regular at Graham crusades. She chose an interesting song to sing. She prefaced the song with, "Listen, children....", and then sang:

Why should I feel discouraged, Why should the shadows come,  
Why should my heart be lonely, And long for heaven, heaven and home,  
**When, when Jesus is my portion,**  
**My constant Friend is He;**  
**Oh, oh-oh, His eye is on the sparrow,**  
**And I know He watches me.**

*"I sing because I'm happy; I sing because I'm free; His eye is on the sparrow; And I know He watches me!"* It was Ethel Waters who was quoted as saying . . .

"I am somebody cause God don't make no junk" ~ **Ethel Waters**

**Are you feeling like a nobody? Well, God don't make no junk!**

**I may be poor and homeless, but . . . I am . . . Somebody**  
**I may be lonely and wish I were married, but . . . I am . . . Somebody**  
**I may be old and helpless, but . . . I am . . . Somebody**  
**I may be single and the mother of three children in diapers, but . . . I am . . . Somebody**  
**I may be middle class and white and not sure where I fit in any more, but . . . I am . . . Somebody.**

#### **Ephesians 2:8-9**

<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

#### **Ephesians 2:4-7**

<sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— <sup>6</sup> and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

#### **1 Peter 1:18-19**

<sup>18</sup> Knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

#### **Hebrews 2:6-7**

<sup>6</sup> It has been testified somewhere, "What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him?"

<sup>7</sup> You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor.

**Psalm 139:13-14**

<sup>13</sup> For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

<sup>14</sup> I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.

**Romans 5:8**

But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

So what we know is that we have value in Christ, we are loved by Christ, but we also know that we are weak. We are only strong when we are strong in Christ.

**I may be loved but I am only strong in Christ**

This is the point of this passage. In our own worldly wisdom we fail. In our own strength we fail. But when we give up and rely on His wisdom and His strength we cannot fail, though we are small and weak and unnoticed. Paul knew about this reality. He had an ailment or weakness – perhaps epilepsy – and he asked God to heal three different times and God said no.

**2 Corinthians 12:9**

<sup>9</sup> But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

From this passage we know four things about you and Christ's love for you:

1. God loved you by choosing you
2. God loved you by calling you
3. God loved you by placing you "in Christ"
4. God loved you by giving you wisdom

**God loved you by choosing you.**

**1 Corinthians 1:27-29**

<sup>27</sup> But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; <sup>28</sup> God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, <sup>29</sup> so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

ILL: Volley ball game or dodge ball. What a meaningful thing to be chosen.

**God loved you by calling you.**

**2 Timothy 1:9**

<sup>9</sup> . . . who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began . . .

He has purposed you with gifts for the edification of the saints, with hopes and dreams that only He can satisfy. He has called you to come to his presence. He has created you to reflect the life of His Son in ways no one else can show. We need you in this church to show yourself off in Christ!

ILL: The King has called you! I will take my broken but good hearted 250 rank amateurs on 4Cs Cares Day over any collection of paid Christians anytime!

**God loved you by putting you in Christ.**

**Colossians 3:3**

<sup>3</sup> For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

In Galatians 3 we read "In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Paul is reminding us of our new identity since we placed our faith in Jesus Christ. To be "baptized into Christ" means that they/we are identified with Christ, having left our old sinful pursuits and now fully embracing this new life in Christ.

To be "in Christ" means we have accepted His sacrifice as payment for our own sin. When we accept His sacrifice on our behalf, He switches accounts with us. He exchanges our list of sins for His perfect account that is totally pleasing to God. A Divine Exchange takes place at the foot of the cross: our old sin nature for His perfect one.

To enter the presence of a holy God, we must be hidden in the righteousness of Christ. To be "in Christ" means that God no longer sees our imperfections; He sees the righteousness of His own Son. Only "in Christ" is our sin debt canceled - our relationship with God restored, and our eternity secured.

**God loved you by making Christ your wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.**

**Hebrews 4:16**

<sup>16</sup> Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

God wants to take us down to the very depths of ourselves to teach us that if there is any power, it is the power that is in God, and not in us. God doesn't need to make us into performers or superstars in order to use us. Instead, He's looking for men and women who have hearts that say, "Lord, I'm a nobody. I'm nothing without You. Will You use me?" When God finds such a heart, something extraordinary happens - that nobody is promoted to the ranks of God's nobility.

Why does God use nobodies as His nobility? So that no man can boast of him or herself before God. In other words, God chooses whom He chooses so He might receive the glory. He chooses weak instruments so no one will attribute the power to the instruments but rather to the God who wields the instruments. Those who pursue their own glory will sadly find God's strategy unacceptable—and they'll miss out on true glory and true joy. And I have experienced and seen that God is willing to break the strong and the smart and the beautiful so that they too know that they will finally realize that their so called 'credentials' are meaningless when it comes to the purposes of the Kingdom of God:

He chooses nobodies so that we will not challenge God for the credit so that:

**1 Corinthians 1:31**

So that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

**It is time to boast!**

**"That your faith might rest in the power of God"**

**Krista Francis: This is a crazy God story (as told by Krista).**

"I think I need to tell it. I'm not even sure where to begin, and I'm still quite overwhelmed, but here goes. This rope was given to me a couple of hours ago by a man in the East Nashville Kroger parking lot. He told me he was going to use it to hang himself before Labor Day on Monday. Right? Right.

Maybe more than anything, this is a story of God's powerful love that intercepts the darkness in very unconventional ways. I'm reminded that He is always speaking.

I've been asking to hear him more clearly and praying for courage to obey. Tonight, he pulled me kicking and screaming into the answer of that prayer.

I had a discouraging day. I flew back from Colorado yesterday. Truthfully, this time I didn't want to come back to Nashville...I miss my friends and family out West more than ever. I am stressed out about finances and really uncertain about what the future holds. There are a lot of moving pieces in life right now. So, that's what is really going on and I felt the weight of it today in an overwhelming way...I kept hearing, "give up, give up, give up."

Well, tonight, in the middle of all that mess of me, I realized I had no groceries, so I went to Kroger. While in the checkout line, the cashier accidentally charged me for a bottle of cooking oil that belonged to the man in line behind me. She deleted it from my bill, but right away I felt a nudge and I heard "buy it for him". I second guessed if it was really God, but then figured what the heck and told the man, "You know what? I'm going to buy that oil for you after all". He (and the cashier) looked at me like I was crazy, and both said "No, you don't have to!" and I said, "I know, but I want to-that's what makes it fun". I gave him a hug and walked out to my car.

I started to drive off and then I caught a glimpse of the man as he walked out of the store and I saw he had a limp. I felt the same nudge again-only even stronger: "Go ask him about that limp" "Ugh!!! WHAT??? Um...NO, Lord! I want to follow your lead, but this is getting weird and uncomfortable!! I want to go home, my ice cream is melting and I'm still kind of sad!" But the nudge would not go away.

Holy Spirit and I went back and forth, so I circled the parking lot, trying to figure out what to do and how to get out of this. I was about to drive off, but no matter what, I could always see the man! It was kind of like weird slow motion-every time I looked, I could see him, even in a busy parking lot. Super Weird.

When I looked back the last time, I saw him getting into his car. He then started to drive away in a different row towards the exit and so I sighed in relief and literally thought "Oops, too late. I guess I can't talk to him now." I am such a brat. Phew! I dodged that Holy Spirit crazy bullet.

(I am adding this part, lest you think I'm some saintly angel who constantly drives around parking lots looking for people to talk to or pray for...I totally want to do this, I've seen God do some crazy stuff and I've told the Lord I want to be brave and I want to hear him clearly, and be on the front lines, but when things like this happen, there's ALWAYS a battle with my pride and fear, which wins about 50% of the time)...

So the man was driving away....and then he stopped his car...(I don't know why) and with that, our cars met in the parking lot and I waved. He rolled down his window and said something like "oh hey thank you", and then it got really real: Last chance to accept the nudge. I said, "Okay, Lord, here we go, You lead". I said to the man, "I have a question for you!" I got out of my car went up to his car and asked him about his limp.

Long story short: He got shot in the head 20 years ago and had to re-learn everything. He said he knows God spared his life back then, but he's really hit rock bottom lately. He's about to lose his house, his kids are in trouble, money and job troubles, etc etc...He said, "I don't know why you did that for me tonight...I really don't know, but I ended up buying something for the man behind me to pay it forward and it changed how I was feeling..." I told him that was really awesome and that I sure didn't know either, except that I felt like God clearly told me to buy the oil for him, and maybe it was so he would remember that God knows him and loves him...

That's when he started crying. He paused for a bit and then said, "What you did in the store was nice, but what I can't get over is that you stopped again to talk to me here tonight...I know you don't know me and there's no way you could know what I'm going through in life right now...I can't believe I'm doing this, but

I'm going to tell you something...I think you saved my life tonight..." (At this point, I'm like, "WHATTTT?" on the inside)...He reached into the back seat and pulled out a long rope. He said, "I've really been wanting to end my life. I've tried different ways several times before, but it never worked, but I told myself I'd do it this way before Labor Day. I've kept going back and forth about it in my mind because of my kids"...

Long story short, I listened. I asked if I could take the rope and he said no and threw it back into the back seat. So I listened some more. He let me pray for him and then I asked for the rope again. He said "No, I can't give it to you, I still might need it". Then I took a stand and said "You know, the enemy is messing with you and you are playing right into his hand if you don't decide for real. You've got to CHOOSE to live, but no one can make you choose. God is giving you a choice right now." He started crying again and kept saying "How did you know? How did you know?" And I told him I had no clue, but God knows him inside and out and he wants him to choose once and for all to live. He then grabbed the rope and handed it to me, bawling. I led him in a prayer renouncing death and choosing life and giving all of his life to God, asking for peace and healing. He told me he felt God's presence.

I don't really even know what to say except just to tell the story. I'm still really processing this. That freaking rope is now out on my porch and I know how close I came to ignoring the Holy Spirit. God, thank you for inviting me (and sometimes dragging me kicking and screaming) into your story."

### **The Table Benediction**