

Heads or Tails: Flip coin (twice, 10x) The more you flip it the more you see both sides of the coin equally often

I keep using the analogy that the In Christ life is the other side of Christ in us life.

One of the hopeful outcomes of this sermon series is that you will not only think about how you should live more In Christ, but it should hopefully also give you some tools to minister to others. So that when you hear people say a version that goes something like, "I don't have to go to Church to be a Christian" you can point them to Ephesians and other passages to challenge that kind of thinking.

The Christ in us side of the coin represents what God has done in order to make us adoptable into God's family.

The us in Christ side of the coin represents what God has planned for us to do as family members together as a family.

Another way of thinking about the two sides is that God has saved us from sin and death, and saved us for a new kind of life.

The struggle is that in order to take hold of the new life now it's going to require an apocalypse. You need to have an Ah Ha Moment in order to be motivated to make some changes. Change in habits, change in thoughts, change in priorities, change in relationships, change in character, change in appetites and desires. And the longer we try to walk in this new life the list never seems to get any shorter because as soon as we make one change we become aware of the necessity of another.

It can be frustrating especially when life throws in a tragedy or two along the way, and so we pause the pursuit of the new life now.

This is one reason why Paul writes this to the Philippians,
[12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.](#)

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Php 2:12-13). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

Paul knew it was going to get harder to keep doing what they were doing after he was gone. Why? Because we make change when we give others the opportunity to hold us accountable. It's actually scientifically proven. You want to start an exercise routine...find a workout or a walking buddy. You want to stop smoking or vaping find someone to commit to do it with you. Social science has proven that when someone else knows our goals we are more likely to achieve them.

Paul knew he wasn't with the Philippians anymore, but he also knew that the Philippians were not alone. They had each other.

As we begin walking through chapter 2 of Ephesians I want you to ask God to help you have the courage to work out your salvation and to recognize the gift of the Church who will help you live the new life now.

[2 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh,](#)

carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Ya'll Gentiles were dead. There is something very final about death. It's been a while since an eye witness was resurrected. Trespasses implies waywardness due to inattention. It wasn't intentional, but death was an outcome of not keeping your focus on what is important. So you miss God due to negligence. Sins imply intentionally missing the mark. You miss God on purpose.

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

We Jews were no better off and in the same boat.

But God made us alive together with Christ.

There is a mysterious entanglement of people with Jesus and with one another which becomes this living and breathing organism that is often referred to as the Body of Christ and which we call The Church. We hurt when others hurt. We experience joy when others experience joy. When you succeed the Church is impacted and when you sin the Church is impacted.

It can look like a mess to some and a work of art to others.

I came across a couple of artists named Tim Noble and Sue Webster whose art will help me illustrate this.

Pic



Sometimes all we can see is the trash, the refuse of our life and of others. Our focus and perspective needs to change so that we can see what we can become in Jesus. You will need people to call your attention to this truth often. People who will say, good you recognize the garbage in your life, but because of Jesus it's going to become something beautiful.

When others want to treat you like you are still who you used to be you are going to need the Church to remind you that you aren't.

When others want to complain, "Aren't you a piece of work"

God wants to remind you that you are His piece of work.

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

You are saved by God because God wanted to save you. End of story. It doesn't matter how ugly, pretty, fat, skinny, poor, rich, or how pale or dark is your skin tone. It doesn't matter how much or how little evil you have done. You have done nothing to deserve it. You are saved because God wanted to save you! Amen

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Eph 2:1–10). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

The saved...the saints...the believers, followers, Christians are made so that we do good works together.

The Greek word interpreted workmanship here is the word poiēma

It's the word from which we derive the English word poem.

It is this beautiful analogy that Paul is trying to paint in the minds of his readers that

God is an artisan creating a work of art out of you, me, and Jesus.

Paul must have had Isaiah in mind when he wrote verse 10.

8 But now, O Lord, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Is 64:8). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

When Isaiah wrote these words Israel had been destroyed and the best of its people either killed or taken into exile, but Isaiah knew that God would make something new and beautiful out of the mess that they had made.

God is an artist and with Jesus you and I become His masterpiece.

God is a poet and with Jesus you and I become his poem.

God is a songwriter and Jesus is the melody and you and I are the harmonies and together we are his song.

God is an architect and with Jesus you and I become His temple.

God wants you to realize the abundance and the fullness and the glory of the art He has made you to be. The only place that happens is in the company of others who love and follow Jesus. You are God's piece of work.

Everyone is a critic and some people will only see the trash, and that's on them. Others will see the art and be impacted by it as they discover the heart of the artist. In order for you to face the critics and be reminded of what God has made you to be you need us because together we become this multidimensional, colorful, dynamic, and powerful illustration of God's character and nature. You are the window through which others observe the beautiful sunrise of God's love, grace, mercy, kindness, patience, and peace.

Together we are God's poem or song or temple.

You have something to contribute.

Pray
Communion
Song

Benediction

As soon as you leave this place the demands of this life will begin to try to crowd out what you are feeling right now. But God and His Church are here to help you stay true to the path he has laid out before you.