

What is Perfection? 1 Peter 1-2

Introduction

- Quick Survey- I need to do a quick survey before preaching this morning
 - How many of you would consider yourselves to be perfect?
 - How many of you know someone who is perfect?
 - Good, looks like I didn't waste time preparing this sermon after all!
- Yet, we were created in perfection.
 - Created in the perfect image of God (Genesis 1:27)
 - Created in the perfect place; the Garden of Eden- all of creation was "very good" (Genesis 1:31)
- All it took was one act of disobedience to shatter perfection!
 - There's not one person who has not been effected in a negative way by sin.
 - Without Christ sin has dominion over us
- God's standard has not changed despite our sin
 - "For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy." (Leviticus 11:44, ESV)
 - "You therefore must be perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew 5:48 ESV)
 - "But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'" (1 Peter 1:15-16 ESV)
- How do we reconcile God's commandment to be holy/perfect with our faith?
 - Saved by grace
 - However, the Apostle Paul follows us with, "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?" (Romans 6:1-2 ESV)
- Anyone who has tried to achieve perfection knows just how difficult it can be
 - The perfect body-
 - The perfect season- 1972 Miami Dolphins vs. 2007 New England Patriots
 - The perfect life- forever home, vacation, second home
 - The perfect family-education, college, sports
- Striving for perfection can even become dangerous and turn to idol worship
 - Anorexia
 - Anxiety
 - Pride
 - Judgmental
- What is perfection?
 - Colleen Carol Campbell, *The Heart of Perfection*
 - Perfectionism- "an addiction to control and a refusal to accept imperfection in some human endeavor."¹

¹ Colleen Carol Campbell, *The Heart of Perfection How the Saints Taught Me To Trade My Dream of Perfect For God's*. New York: Howard Books, 2019. Kindle Loc. 119

- Christian Perfection- “Comes from giving God the reins, turning our lives over to Jesus, and allowing the Holy Spirit to upend our plans and explode our expectations.”²
- Purpose of sermon series
 - Move toward a better and healthier understanding of perfection.
 - Relief the guilt of not being perfect, without reducing the significance of sin
 - Become Christians who strive to grow in our relationship with God in an imperfect world.
- Sermon points—How will we define perfection through the sermon?
 - Rooted in God’s Great Mercy
 - A Hopeful Expectation
 - A Calling You Have Been Chosen For

Acknowledge God’s mercy and see the potential within ourselves

- 1 Peter 1:3
 - Story of Jackson making All-Stars
 - Being an All-Star is a privilege that comes with it a responsibility
 - You are not an All-Star because you are perfect
 - You are an All-Star because you have a lot of potential
 - Don’t brag about it
 - Mindset that I’m already great, and then begin to make mistakes or not practice
 - So, when you drop a fly ball or a ball goes through your legs you are going to get called on it.
 - Recognize the opportunity you have been given and make the most out of it
 - Salvation is a gift of mercy, that we must take full advantage of the opportunity that God gives to us.
 - According to *his great mercy*
 - This isn’t special privilege as in a birth-right
 - It is not something that we have earned
 - It is something that we receive by God’s great mercy
 - Perfection begins with acknowledging God’s mercy and seeing the potential within ourselves
 - The focus is not on what we have done or will do
 - Instead the focus is on what God has already done on the cross and what he will do for us through his will
 - If perfection focuses on anyone other than God, it will become idol worship
 - God calls us because he sees the potential in us- *the image of God*
 - He knows it is there

² Ibid. Kindle Loc. 316.

- Covered up by sin
- The only way to uncover it is through God's mercy
- Peter writes his letter as a word of encouragement
 - a reminder of who they are as Children of God
 - Born to a living hope
 - Our hope comes from the great mercy that God has shown through his Son
 - And the fact that Jesus has been resurrected should give us hope that we can overcome the world.
 - Perfection is rooted in the mercy of God-Acknowledge God's mercy and see the potential within ourselves, the living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

A Hopeful Expectation

- **1 Peter 1:13**
 - Preparing your minds for action
 - First All-Star Tournament
 - The other teams had a certain manner about them
 - They played with a higher level of expectation and discipline
 - Our kids played timid and without discipline
 - It was clear that their heads were not in the game, certainly not at the level for All-Stars
 - Coaches first focused on errors, but then they challenged the kids to watch how the other teams conducted themselves, they started working on their mind-set—and not just the players but how they are coached!
 - We need to get our heads into the game
 - Set your hope fully on the grace of God
 - God's mercy should give us a hopeful expectation
 - If we acknowledge God's mercy, then it should change how we think
 - Motivation
 - Focus
 - Discipline
 - **1 Peter 1:14**
 - **Romans 12:1-2 (ESV), "I appeal to you therefore, brothers by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind."**
 - Warren Wiersbe, "The Word reveals God's mind, so we should learn it; God's heart, so we should love it; and

God's will, so we should live it. Our whole being-mind, will, and heart- should be controlled by the Word of God."³

- Change Jackson's approach to the plate
 - Lunging instead of allowing the ball to come to him; getting into a hurry
 - Broke down his swing
 - Hit off the Tee, which he didn't want to do because that is what you do when you play T-ball—but going back to the basics is necessary
 - Toss- to build up confidence
 - Pitch-to prepare
 - Routine at the plate
 - Perfection begins with God's mercy, and then it should begin to shape how we think and approach life (mind, heart, action).
 - Give someone a little hope and things change
 - Hopeful Expectation

A Calling You Have Been Chosen For

- **1 Peter 1:15-16; 2:9-10**
 - Background of letter (Jews but also Gentile believers)
 - Expectation is the same- You are God's chosen people
 - **Exodus 19:5-6**
 - **Leviticus 18:3 (ESV), "You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you. You shall not walk in their statutes."**
 - **1 Peter 4:1-2**
- Perfection begins with God's mercy, it then shapes our thinking on the hope of Christ, which then begins to set our life apart for God's purpose.
- Accepting the invitation for the All-Star Team
 - Would you like and be available?
 - Are there tournaments on Sunday?
 - Yes
 - Grateful for the invitation, but we go to church on Sunday mornings. We won't be at a game before noon, depending on the location of the tournament.
 - I'm not asking for any favors, and don't want to hurt the team.
 - This is what we do as a family
 - Coach- we will work with you, we don't want that to keep him from playing
 - Conversation with Jackson- Why church Before we play?
 - God is more important than baseball
 - God has given you a gift

³ Warren Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Study Bible, New King James Version*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2018. pg. 1821.

- Go to church to thank God
 - Play hard to honor God for the gift he has given you
- In no way am I suggesting that we are perfect, or that everyone else who plays on Sunday mornings are bad people, however if by God's mercy he has died on the cross for my sins, and my hope is in the death and resurrection of Christ, and my life is set for a purpose greater than myself-it calls me to live differently.
 - The doors that God has opened for us
 - Deeper relationships
 - Community
 - Communication
- Perfection begins with God's mercy, it then shapes our thinking on the hope of Christ, which then begins to set our life apart for God's purpose.
 - Not one of us can say that we are perfect or ever will be this side of heaven
 - However, we can say that we have a perfect calling in the grace of God, revealed to us through Jesus' death and resurrection. It is our hope, it shapes how we think, and it shapes how we live.

Conclusion

- Perfection is not what we do or don't do.
 - It is what God has already done for us.
 - We have a perfect calling in the mercy of God
 - Part of that calling is to live a holy life
 - Perfection is rooted in the mercy of God
 - His mercy shapes the way we think with hopeful expectation
 - Life set apart for God's purpose- a Calling You Have Been Chosen For