

Pressing toward the Goal

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 15 September 2024

Preacher: Ken Wiebe

[0 : 00] Good morning. It's good to be in your midst this morning. I've enjoyed the singing. Thank you for choosing those songs.

It goes along with what I'm going to speak about and also the opening as well. Waiting for a blessed hope as we know that we won't stay on this earth forever.

We're passing through and I'm thankful that as Christians or as born-again believers, we know where we're going and that is far better than what we have now.

So thank you for this morning already. Greetings from Countryside Community Church. That is where we make ourselves at home now and we just want to send greetings from there and see some familiar faces.

So it's good to be here. It's good to be in your midst again. It seems like every now and then we can go to visiting churches and I think it's a good thing to kind of see what other churches are like and see how they worship and we can worship together as believers.

[1 : 25] We have that in common. We have the same spirit. So we're grateful for that. It's amazing that fall is already upon us and I think of where has the summer gone?

I thought we had a lot of time and all of a sudden it's September and the hunters are rejoicing I think. I like fall but I don't know if I like what's coming after fall.

But we have, we're grateful. We have four seasons and we enjoy every season that we have and it's God's, God's in control of that so we're thankful for that as well.

So this morning, thank you for reading that scripture. As we, in the last probably two months or so we've been going through a series in our church and that series is called Who Am I?

It talks about our identity. Our identity as believers. Who am I? Am I a believer? And if I am, do we know that?

[2 : 47] Do we live like we know Jesus? And so we've talked about quite a few different topics about who am I and this morning I want to I want to talk about who we are in Christ and that we have not arrived.

In our series we've talked about I am a creature, like we are created. That we are in Christ as believers. We have been justified.

Just as we've never sinned, we have been justified as believers. We have been adopted as sons of God.

And then the Bible talks about we are a new creation. Old things are passed away, behold, all things become new. That's who we are. Then probably six weeks ago or something like that I preached on that that we are saints.

And when Paul opens his letters to the churches and to the Philippians to the Ephesians to the Galatians yes, even to the Corinthians he says he welcomes them as saints.

[4 : 15] And these churches were not perfect. But when we're covered with the blood of Christ he calls them saints.

And then we talked about that we are servants of Christ. So we have all these great and wonderful names that this is who we are. But we are still in the flesh.

So what's the hope? How does this work? We have not arrived. We are still in a battle.

And that's what I want to speak on this morning that we are not perfect. We are pressing toward the goal toward the goal that we will be perfect one day. And as the opening was shared I thought yeah who doesn't want to go there?

As believers who doesn't want to go there? We want to go there. We're on our way there. But sometimes circumstances get in the way and circumstances dictate our actions or reactions toward where we're going.

[5 : 35] So I want to talk about that this morning but let us let us I'd like to pray again before we continue. Father we're grateful and thankful of who you are and as believers you have made us perfect.

You have made us complete. We're called saints. We're called adopted. But Lord we are in the flesh and I pray as we go through the message this morning God that you would you would open our hearts God that we'll be able to hear we'll be able to to understand who we are in you and when trials and disappointments come God that we know that we know for sure we don't doubt who we are and that the enemy would not have a foothold on us even when we have a bad day.

And so Lord we ask that your spirit would lead and guide us this morning in Jesus name Amen. So as we grapple with who we are a true identity in Christ we realize that we are in a fight.

And I think all of us would say that that every day we we sin. We are sinners. we are sinners saved by grace.

And as I look at Philippians chapter 3 and the passage that was read I want to back up a little bit a couple of verses to verse 7.

[7 : 22] Here the apostle Paul we know that the struggles that he was in before he became a believer he was against the Christians he he persecuted the church but when he became a believer he he went full bore serving Christ and that brought him into a lot of trouble.

And verse 7 he says but what things were gain to me these I have counted lost for Christ yet indeed I also count all things lost for the excellence of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish that I may gain Christ all the things that the apostle Paul did he counts them as rubbish or dung just so that he may gain Christ it wasn't about him it was all about Jesus and I love verse 9 and 10 it says and be found in him not having my own righteousness which is from the law but that which is through faith in Christ the righteousness which is from God by faith this faith that we have how deep is that

Paul says the righteousness from which from which is from God by faith and that I may know him this was his goal that he may know Jesus Christ and the power of his resurrection that was his aim that was his goal even though he had to go through life and he suffered and he was just about killed multiple times thrown into prison his goal was that he wanted to know Christ better through this life and the power of his resurrection that and the fellowship of his sufferings being conformed to his death if by any means I may attain to the resurrection from the dead then he goes on he says not that I have already attained or imperfect it but I press on he doesn't give up multiple times he comes into situations that he could have thrown in the towel what's the use everybody's against me but he says

I don't give up I press on that I may lay hold for that Jesus Christ has also laid hold on me he knew who Jesus was he knew that Jesus had laid hold on him and he had saved him out of the depths of hell he knew that and he was confident and because of that he presses on it doesn't matter what the world will say about him how many times they will beat him up and throw him into prison he was confident what Jesus had done for him and then he says in verse 13 brethren I do not count myself as I have apprehended he hasn't he hasn't gotten everything together yet he hasn't arrived he says what one thing I do forgetting those things which are behind reaching forward to the things which are ahead and sometimes we we like to dabble in the things which which are behind and I think if there was somebody that could have lived there the apostle

Paul could have but he didn't he says forgetting those things which are behind we press on we look forward and too many times we want to live in the past as believers we want to hang on to the past we do not believe that really maybe Jesus has forgiven us but how can I forgive myself for what has happened or for what I have done I find it nowhere in scripture that we need to forgive ourselves I find that Jesus Christ if he has forgiven me I'm good with that then we must believe that we don't live in the past the apostle Paul says I look towards I look forward which are things that are ahead he seen he seen what was ahead he knew he trusted in the word of

[12 : 25] God and he knew what was ahead I pressed toward the goal what goal the goal of the upward call of Jesus Christ the question that was asked this morning who's all ready to go to heaven that's the goal that's the goal and as as we grow in the Lord I find that for myself as we grow in the Lord the things that come our way the difficulties that come our way the bad days that we have and we all have them I believe we're all normal here we all have bad days we we have them we don't concentrate on the circumstances but we concentrate on the goal that is what the apostle Paul I believe is telling us here we press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in

Christ Jesus that that is where we're going as believers even though we're going through this world and we have not arrived we're not perfect but one day we will be so what so can we be called saints then when we're not perfect well the blood the blood of Christ makes us saints when we're covered in the blood that is what makes us saints that is what makes us adopted sons and daughters of the king I read a quote a while back it says the Lord did not check who's inside the house who inside the house was worthy when the door post the blood was put on the door post and he passed by that house the

Lord did not check who's inside the house who inside the house was worthy he checked for the blood on the door post and I understand that to say as if we're covered by the blood our sins are forgiven none of us none of us is worthy but it's because of the blood of Jesus that we're worthy the apostle Paul he battled he battled in the flesh as well and I want to turn to Romans chapter 7 I want to read a few passages there Romans chapter 7 and I just want to read a couple verses starting in verse 15 it says for what

I am doing I do not understand for what I will to do that I do not practice but what I hate that I do sounds familiar sounds like you and me sometimes we do things we don't understand why did I do that why did I say that where does this come from that's what the apostle Paul battled with as well verse 16 if then I do what I will not to do I agree with the law that it is good but now it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells in me for I know that in me that is in my flesh nothing good dwells for to will is present with me but how to perform what is good I do not find for what the good that I will to do I do not do but the evil

I will not to do that I practice there's a battle going on we have the same battle we have the same battle but when we go down to chapter 8 verse 1 it says there is therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus for those that walk not according to the flesh but according to the spirit Paul says we won't be condemned if we walk according to the spirit but if we keep walking according to the flesh that is where we fall into trouble that is where we sin wants to dwell in us when we go according to the flesh but our identity is in Christ that's where our identity is in Christ we stand perfectly righteous before God but in our daily lives we see much remaining sin in

[17 : 44] Christ we are adopted as sons but in our daily lives we at times feel like orphans that's what sin does sin separates us from God if sin is not repented of between us and God between married couples husband and wife it separates there's a wall starting to build when repentance doesn't happen and we feel like alone nobody can understand us and sometimes sin is in the way of that in Christ we are a new creation but it doesn't always feel that way I believe the closer we are in relationship with Christ the more we understand that we are his children the more we understand that we are a new creation the more we understand that the old is gone and the new has come but it's a daily it's a daily battle it's a daily battle the battle is real

Paul states that he doesn't rejoice in his imperfections but he rejoices in the fact that Christ has made him perfect in 1 Corinthians 13 verses 1 Corinthians 15 sorry verses 9 and 10 1 Corinthians 15 verse 9 it says for I am the least of the apostles who am not worthy to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God this is who he was he says I'm not worthy for who I was but but I think but but but the grace of God

I am what I am by the grace of God I am what I am by the grace of God you are who you are we all have a past but Jesus Christ came and he gave his life for us and he says but by the grace of God I am who I am and his grace toward me was not in vain but I labored more abundantly than they all yet not I but the grace of God which was with me I don't know how we can explain God's grace we don't deserve it but he gives it to us grace is not earned is not deserved but God gives it the apostle Paul says I'm not worthy but by the grace of

God I am what I am so rather than focusing on who we were we need to focus on who we are you know once we leave our baggage at the cross I say leave our baggage at the cross sometimes we bring it there and before we leave the cross we grab it back we can't carry our past we can't carry our baggage that's why Jesus came we need to leave it there and then our seal and our sights can be set forward as Paul says in Philippians 3 forgetting the things which are behind and reaching forward to the things which are ahead when we look at the genealogy or the family tree of

Jesus there's some names that show up there that that you wonder really Jesus came through this lineage I'll read some of those names Matthew chapter 1 Tamar Tamar was a daughter of Judah disguised herself as a prostitute she committed incest with Judah then we have Rahab clearly identified as a prostitute as well we have Ruth Ruth was a virtuous woman she was a virtuous woman but she came through the Moabites the Moabites was a tribe because of incest that's how that tribe came to be with Lot and his daughters when we look at the characters in scripture we can identify with without their sinners we're sinners but God is through sinners

[23 : 50] God is building his kingdom there's there's some some men also that made that list Jacob a deceiver Judah the immoral man then we have David we all know the story of David committing adultery with Bathsheba having her husband killed yet God at the end calls him a man after God's own heart not because of what he did but because he was sorry because he repented bitterly but it took him a year or more before he realized before Nathan reminded him of who he was and I think sometimes we need more Nathans around somebody to tap us on the shoulder and say what you've done there

I think wasn't wasn't good so we have this lineage where Jesus comes from he identified himself with tax collectors and sinners he understands us he understands sinners he understood the thief on the cross when the thief called out and said remember me he knew his heart wanted to change and he said today you will be with me in paradise Jesus understands us and it doesn't matter what we're going through he understands he wants to be with us and this is all very good news for you and me because we as well are sinners he identifies with us he knew we couldn't do it on our own he knew we needed a savior no sin will ever enter heaven's gates that's why the blood had to be poured out so I'm so thankful for God's grace

I don't deserve God's grace there's something that we don't deserve but he gives it to us of course we can't continue in sin that grace will continue to abound Romans 6 verse 1 says certainly not that doesn't work that way we come to the cross daily that's why Paul most of his letters he starts by grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ he wants us to embrace that grace I don't know if we can experience that peace unless we experience the grace grace comes always before peace to know our identity to know who we are in Christ there are days that we don't feel it some days yet actually didn't have to shine

I think we all experience that but it's not a feeling there's not many words feeling words in scripture there's facts feelings come and go circumstances dictate our feelings things but I believe when we if we know who we are in Christ and when circumstances come our minds made up we can go through this it'll be hard but we don't do it on our own we have Jesus with us but sometimes our circumstances dictate who we are or what we say or what we do and I believe it's always crucial to start each day off with

Jesus and sometimes when you don't do that it doesn't turn out very good and you wonder why then you remember well I didn't have my devotions or I didn't have my prayer time a quote that I read as well by Jerry Bridges he says your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the reach of God's grace so your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the reach of God's grace you can always reach God's grace even on your worst day but then he also says your best days are never so good that you are beyond the need of God's grace so when we have a bad day we can always

[29 : 36] God's grace will always be there we can reach for that as believers we have access to his grace but when we have a good day our best days we still need God's grace grace so God's grace is always there but as long as we live in our flesh here on earth on this side of heaven there will be struggles there will be struggles there will be sickness death our bodies will get sick we will sin because we live in a sin coerced world there will be death this young man that was taken here a couple days ago instantly there's instant death but then there's slow death but God's grace we're never beyond the reach of God's grace and when times are bad and they will be and they are for some here even this morning we're never beyond the reach of the grace of God this is the fall of man that's why we need

Jesus that's why Jesus came the cross makes all the difference in our lives but we need to experience the cross we need to experience Jesus have we truly met Jesus this morning we listened to a message and it was by David Jeremiah sometimes we listen to his messages and and he talked about the Spanish revolution and how that war had gone on and years later they found a den or somebody like a jail where somebody they had chained into the wall and this was a number of years later they found this and there was just bones left of this person that had been chained to the wall the chains were there and the bones were there that's all that was in that den where they kept the prisoners and on the wall of that prison wall there was a cross etched into that wall and it says the height of God the depth of God the width of God and the breadth of God these prisoners were left for dead and they were chained to the wall but they had enough they knew who their

Jesus was that was the mark that they left many years later they found that this world is full of trouble but take heart Jesus says I have overcome the world and as we go through this world in our flesh we will encounter some of these things we need to we need to lay down our selfish pride surrender our walk to the Lord we cannot we cannot say well I just made a mistake we need to call sin for what it is it's not a mistake we need to own it in order to own it we must die to self we cannot think well this is the way

I am this is just the way this is the we can we excuse ourselves this is no if it's sin we call it out we repent and we cut it off that's who we are in Christ that's who God wants us to be our seal should always be to be more like him to be more like Christ even though we're not perfect our desire should always be to be more like Christ we put off the old man and put on the new Ephesians 4 we should always pursue to be more holy we put to death the deeds of the body Romans 8 we are to put on character traits compassion humility meekness patience and love

Colossians chapter 3 we are to we are to abstain from the passions of the flesh that war against our soul 1st Peter 2 we are to make every effort to grow in all the traits of a Christian character that God wants us to be 2nd Peter 1 I believe once we understand who we are in Christ that we have been redeemed that I know that I know that I know that I know who I am that I have been born again I am confident see if we're not confident we will we won't know who we are Philippians 2 talks about to work out our salvation with fear and trembling he wants us our salvation should be seen when somebody looks at at me or as us as a couple or you as a couple they can see this is who

[36 : 55] Jesus is they have traits of holiness the world has nowhere else to look than to the church we are the picture of Jesus or we aren't so when we know who we are we are in Christ we will better understand how to live we will better understand when things get hard of what to do or what not to do we will better understand where we turn to and our lifeline is Jesus Christ Christ has done everything he could for us just before he died on the cross he said it is finished it is finished

I have laid my life I have given my life and each one of us that has given accepted him as our personal savior will reign with him one day forever even though we are not perfect but I trust that we are being sanctified we are being cleaned up as we grow in the Lord and as we understand oh this is something that I need to put off we grow and we put off the old stuff we need to grow in the Lord so we press toward the goal if our identity is in Christ it changes everything it changes the way we think it gets us out of our comfort zone I heard last week that to be in a comfort zone can be an addiction

I thought that was a new concept but I believe that's true it's an addiction I just want to be here I'm not going to go there I don't know what to do there so we can get addicted to being comfortable just doing the same all not moving ahead changes everything the way we think the way we respond to people who are not walking with the Lord when we know who we are the way we encourage believers who are struggling there's believers that are struggling in our midst do do we know that do we reach out to them the way we treat our spouse the way we worship the way we treat our children our co-workers how about those that don't even like us it changes that as well if we know who we are in

Christ so I want to encourage us this morning let us continue to press toward the goal press toward the goal of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus our identity is in him not in ourselves but first we need to know who are we who are you is my identity in Christ or not I want to leave us with that question let's pray Lord God we we're grateful for your word and how it instructs us and how the apostle Paul through your spirit has written instructions for us as a church and God how we need to live and how we need to know who we are even though we struggle in the flesh yes we do things that we don't like the things that we do sometimes aren't good then there's things that we should do we don't do and that is our battle but we know that the victory has been won the battle continues and

God we're grateful for your blood that covers us and through that our identity is in you as born again believers our identity is in you Jesus help us to realize that and I pray for each one here this morning to those that are struggling those that have maybe lost loved ones those that are battling with health concerns God you know each heart here this morning and I pray God for families for parents to raise their children in a godly way I pray for this congregation I pray for the leadership here God help us to see together who you are and who you want us to become we thank you in Jesus name amen