

Christian Perfectionism

How many perfectionists do you know? Many of us carry our perfectionistic streak over into the spiritual dimension. Some Christians actually believe that sinless perfection is possible in this life, though whether they would ever admit to achieving it is hard to say. Most of us are content with just seeking “perfection” in our Christian work and all the other activities we do. We are conscious to project the best possible image of ourselves, and not let any nagging feelings of weakness or inadequacy stand in the way of perfect performance. In short, we often want our gifts to be a reflection of *our* strength.

The apostle Paul was also a perfectionist, but of an altogether different kind. It was not his perfection, but God's, that he was inclined to promote. And the only way he discovered that he could show God's power perfectly was in his weaknesses. “My grace is sufficient for you,” said Jesus to Paul, “for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9). *That* is Christian perfectionism. It is not that we become indifferent or careless in our tasks. But competence alone is not what makes us effective in ministering to others. It is the difficulties, hardships, obstacles, and humiliations out of which we labor that God uses to make us effective. God uses these to perfect his strength in us, not our strength. It is the paradox of grace that when we are weak, then we are strong.

Paul wasn't wino and dined wherever he went; he was flogged, beaten, stoned, imprisoned, shipwrecked, hungry, thirsty, ragged, and cold. But what did he say? “Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Corinthians 12: 9, 10).

Are you a Christian perfectionist?

*For when I am
weak, then I am
strong.*

2 Corinthians 12:10

Covenant Presbyterian Church
1623 University Avenue, Berkeley, California 94703
www.berkeleyopc.org

MORNING WORSHIP – 11:00 A.M.

THE LORD CALLS US TO HIMSELF

Salutation and Call to Worship

*Hymn of Praise # 100

“Holy, Holy, Holy!”

*Invocation

*Hymn of Praise # 176

“Hail, Thou Once Despised Jesus!”

CONFESSION OF SIN AND THE LORD'S ASSURANCE

The Law of God

Matthew 22:37-40

Confession of Sin (Congregation in Unison)

Lord God, Eternal and Almighty Father: We acknowledge before your holy majesty that we are poor sinners, conceived and born in guilt and in corruption, prone to do evil, unable of our own power to do good. Because of our sin, we endlessly violate your holy commandments. But, O Lord, we repent and turn away from all our offenses. We condemn ourselves and our evil ways, asking you, through your grace, to relieve our distress. Remind us of your compassion, O Father of mercies. Remind us of all the benefits that are ours in Your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. We also ask that you grant us daily increase of the grace of your Holy Spirit, and produce in us the fruits of holiness and of righteousness, which are pleasing in your sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Matthew 11:28-29 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

OFFERING OURSELVES IN THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER

Worship in Giving

Hymn of Thanksgiving # 689

“Be Still, My Soul”

Worship in Prayer

Interlude

*Congregation Standing

We extend a cordial welcome to each visitor!

Wayne K. Forkner, Minister

510-928-8024

THE LORD FEEDS US FROM HIS WORD

*Hymn of Preparation # 351 *“Built on the Rock the Church Doth Stand”*

Sermon Text

Isaiah 28:14-22

Sermon

COVENANT WITH DEATH

*Hymn of Response # 98

“Now Thank We All Our God”

THE LORD DISMISSES US WITH HIS BLESSING

*Gloria Patri (Praising our Gracious Lord)

734

*The Lord's Benediction

Announcements

Today, 10:00am. Adult Sunday School class. We are studying the book of Colossians.

Today, 12:30pm. A potluck luncheon will be held in the church. All are welcome.

Tuesday, 7:30pm. Weekly Bible Study at the church or via Zoom. We are beginning a study of the book of Deuteronomy. Our Bible study at the church begins with dinner at 7:00pm, followed by a time of study at 7:30pm. For information on attending the study via Zoom, please send an email to Pastor Wayne at wforkner86@mac.com.

Sunday, March 16, 12:30pm. The annual meeting of the congregation and of the corporation will take place.