

"Disappointments All Christians Face"

II Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*

Intro: A person comes to Christ, is saved, joins a church, even gets involved in a bible study, and life looks rosy, and things are good. But problems and disappointments soon seem to overwhelm us, we get disillusioned and disappointed when we look at the church and at people and most of all at ourselves.

II Corinthians 5:17 says that a person that is in Christ is a new creation and old things are passed away. **So what has happened? Why the problems and what can we do to help one another so we don't lose heart? Isn't it a fact** that when we lose heart, we lose, and we get disappointed to the point that we want to quit?

Lets take some time today to look at some things we see in ourselves and in others that causes us some distress. Even though we are saved, we have a lot of the

I. Same Weaknesses after we are saved as we had before

In other words we are disappointed with ourselves. As new believers we are excited about the forgiveness of sins and the chance to start over. We look forward to the help God is going to give us to change the things in our lives that plagued us.

But then the reality of life sets in and the temptations are just as strong as before (sometimes even stronger!) Actually, if we are not careful we can easily be discouraged with ourselves and soon be overcome with guilt and despair.

Have you ever gotten discouraged because you still struggle with some of the same temptations you had before you got saved. To help us think about this and find help, remember as Henry Ward Beecher, writing in *Proverbs from Plymouth Pulpit*, 1887 said,

All men are tempted. There is no man that lives that can't be broken down, provided it is the right temptation, put in the right spot.

The thing about temptation is this: For the sinner, temptation is of no real consequence, because giving in is a natural thing to do. For the Christian, however, temptation is in the supernatural realm as Satan tries to divert us and fill us with anger, guilt and defeat. He has no need to bother the unbeliever, but if he can upset the believer he has won a victory.

So if believers struggle with this disappointment about old temptations the next question is how can we help one another?

A. By teaching one another that "transformation" is a twofold issue. It is at once instantaneous, but then it is also an on-going process. First, let's look at the instantaneous. Colossians 2:13 says *You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ. He forgave all our sins.*

So at a point in time we were dead as the verse says, and then instantaneously we were changed to being alive. **The Fact is:** You can't be both dead and alive at the same time. You are either dead or alive. So when we were dead in our sin (Prior to salvation) God made us alive in Christ (At the point of our salvation).

That happens in an instant in time and is where, when we are in Christ at salvation and God now sees us in him because of the work of Christ for us. This is salvation past At a moment in time you are saved and ALL your sin is forgiven. Remember Colossians 2:13 said *he forgave us all our sin. Not some now and some more later*

But what about the temptation and giving in to it. That is what disappoints us? Romans 12:1-2 tells us *So brothers and sisters, since God has shown us great mercy, I beg you to offer your lives as a living sacrifice to him. Your offering must be only for God and pleasing to him, which is the spiritual way for you to worship. Do not be shaped by this world; instead be changed within by a new way of thinking. Then you will be able to decide what God wants for you; you will know what is good and pleasing to him and what is perfect.*

Colossians 3:5-11 *So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual sin, impurity, lust, and shameful desires. Don't be greedy for the good things of this life, for that is idolatry. God's terrible anger will come upon those who do such things. You used to do them when your life was still part of this world. But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old evil nature and all its wicked deeds. In its place you have clothed yourselves with a brand-new nature that is continually being renewed as you learn more and more about Christ, who created this new nature within you.*

*This is the second part of the process, and it is something that should encourage us. We are saved, but we are also **being saved***

Notice the wording of V 10 *In its place you have clothed yourselves with a brand-new nature that is continually being renewed as you learn more and more about Christ, who created this new nature within you.*

So we need to remind ourselves as well as one another that although we are saved, we are also being transformed and it is a continuing process. The thing to remember is, it will take a long time and a lot of hard work, not disappointment and discouragement with your self.

Then secondly we need to encourage one another

B. By reminding each other of God's willingness to forgive and provide strength

1 John 1:9 *But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong.*

This confession here, is not about going to heaven. It is about letting the Father know that we remember and acknowledge that we sin and we ask forgiveness even though we are already forgiven positionally. It is the positional forgiveness that puts us in heaven. It is confession that helps the family aspect.

For example we wreck dad's car. We confess to our father that we wrecked it and ask forgiveness for our lack of responsibility. Our father forgives us and helps us get on with life. But the key is we never left the family nor got kicked out.

Or lets think about it like this, What gets us in even more trouble in the family. It is when we wreck the car and then not tell dad or blame someone else for doing it when he knows and we know that we were the one driving.

That is the way God is, Confess it and take the blame and get it forgiven so we can go forward with growth. Philippians 2:12-13 *Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey him and the power to do what pleases him.*

So he will forgive us and help us if we will use the power and desires he has for us and be sure to let him know that you know about your shortcomings. Don't dwell on the shortcomings but at least acknowledge them The next time you are disappointed with yourself for giving in to the temptation, remember these things about God and salvation.

Another stumbling block and disappointment to many Christians is

II. Imperfect Christians

In other words before, we are often disappointed in our selves. Here we are disappointed by our fellow Christians. Have you ever been disappointed **by inconsistency** in the lives of other believers. To see those who do not practice what they preach. I can't however be too disappointed by the inconsistencies of others because I don't always practice what I preach but then, neither do you!! Right??

It really seems to hurt even more when seen in those they had looked up to but this problem is not a new one. There has always been a little hypocrite even in the best of us. Georg Groddeck, in his writing, *The Book of the It*, 1950 Says, Whatever you condemn, you have done yourself. I believe that!!

And we are not only disappointed by the inconsistencies of others but also by the **ill treatment of others** by Christians. This may occur in Bible classes, business meetings, at work, at play, and in church. Those places where harsh words can be devastating to other believers

Sadly it seems like once we are saved we feel like we are charged with being miserable to other believers. I would personally much sooner deal with an unbeliever because when he kicks me I know he doesn't know any better. He is just acting naturally.

But when another believer is mean to me it hurts worse because I know deep in my heart that he had to be saved too, So what right does that give him to act better than me?? NONE!!

Charles Caleb Colton has hit the nail right on the head when he says *As no roads are so rough as those that have just been mended, so no sinners are so intolerant as those that have just turned saints.* So it is a given that we can easily be disappointed, not only with ourselves but also by other believers and since that is the case,

The question again becomes, what can we do to help one another?

First, try and set better examples! 1 Timothy 4:12b says *Be an example to all believers in what you teach, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity.* **As Mark Twain said it**, "Few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example."

Secondly we need to confess wrong when it occurs. Instead of just being ashamed when we do wrong we need to think about this, Confess you were wrong yesterday; it

will show you are wise today. Confess we are wrong, but also acknowledge that we want to try and learn from our mistakes

Thirdly, we need to make it a point to remember from where we ourselves have come. Many saints act like devils under the guise of straight laced Christian living. If I choose to be harsh on others, but conveniently forget where I myself came from, I am a fool so, no wonder I act foolishly and am a disappointment to so many other believers as well as to the Lord.

Finally we need to encourage and help one another to realize that all Christians are ALSO going through the process of "transformation"

Philippians 3:12-14 I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection! But I keep working toward that day when I will finally be all that Christ Jesus saved me for and wants me to be. No, dear friends, I am still not all I should be, but I am focusing all my energies on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to heaven.

I would maybe say it like this: Brethren, I have not reached perfection but I am pressing on to see if I can capture it because I have already been captured by Christ Jesus which is what gives me the desire to carry on. In other words, I am not all I should be, but I do concentrate on this aspect and make it the greater goal of my life, forgetting what is behind me, my failures and shortcomings in the past, that could easily defeat me if I let them, instead of dwelling on them I press on toward what lies before me and really desire to finish the race which is, God calling us up to heaven because of what Christ did for us. When that happens I will know once and for all what perfection is all about

I think all of our disappointments in one another and in ourselves would melt away if we could grasp the idea that we are all (IN PROCESS) Christians. We are not the finished products yet. Lets say it like this Thank you Lord that I am not all I used to be, even though right now, I am not all I should be, but greatest of all, I am not yet, all I am going to be

A closing thought for today. Maybe you are reading this and you realize you have never had the experience, where in a moment in time you asked for forgiveness and in that moment God forgave you and placed you in Christ, the vehicle for finishing the process. If you would like to do that read just a bit further, do what it says and become that new creature.

Realize you are a sinner Romans 3:23

Understand that the payday for sin is death or eternal conscious separation from God.
Romans 6:23a

Know that there is a way of escape for you. Romans 6:23b and John 1:12

Desire to escape and pray this or a similar prayer.

"Dear God, I know I am a sinner. I am truly sorry for my sins, and I confess them all to You [name them]. Lord Jesus, forgive all my sins and come into my heart as my Saviour and Lord. I receive You right now. Help me from this time forward to live for You. Thank You for hearing and answering my prayer. In Jesus' name. Amen."

On the _____ day of _____ I became a Christian by inviting Jesus Christ into my life to forgive my sin.

Signed: _____

If you have further questions or have chosen to do this, be sure to let us know so we can help you, pray for you and encourage you in your new life.

You can reach us at lapeerchurch@gmail.com Subject line: (Salvation)