Chosen Series – Week 3 … **Complete**

Deut. 10:12-15; 1 Peter 2:22-25; Matt. 5:43-48; Ps. 33:12-22 September 30, 2018

Good morning! I just want to welcome everyone here today.

 Here’s a question for you all: Have you ever had a perfect moment? A moment or a time that was so complete that you can hardly find anything wrong with it? Don’t get a headache thinking too hard! For some it might be your wedding day, or when your first child was born, or maybe the day you sold the boat!

 I think we humans love to chase the ideal of perfection or completeness. I’ve heard many brides talk about their wedding day being perfect. I’ve heard teenagers who are trying to complete a perfect 4.0 GPA. Maybe you’re an artist and you are trying to paint the perfect picture, or write the perfect words to complete a song. We even get caught up in the lives of celebrities because they have so much money and fame that their lives look complete, happy, and perfect. For some reason, we take great joy in running to or experiencing completeness or perfection. But the truth is—and we all know this in our gut—nothing is perfect

 The lives of celebrities are often a complete mess. When you finish the picture or writing the song, there is always something that you wish you could have done better. Even if you get a 4.0, the stress of attaining it almost kills you. And the perfect wedding doesn’t necessarily lead to the perfect marriage.

 Perfection and completeness are virtually unattainable.

 This rings true in our spiritual life. In the Bible, God has shown us pretty clearly how we should live and how to have a relationship with Him. But we often feel like we are constantly failing, constantly falling short. Why can’t we just get our spiritual life in order? Why do we keep sinning? Why can’t I just be a better Christian? Why can’t I be completely sold out for Jesus?

 It’s like we live in this tension . . . we desire to be complete and perfect for God, but we know in our gut we can never get there. Have you ever felt that way?

 Well, we’ve been in this series called Chosen. And the last two weeks we’ve talked about how we’ve been **chosen by God** and how we’ve been **changed by God**. Today, I want to talk about how we’ve been made **complete by God.**

 We’ve been studying through the book of 1 Peter, so today we open up our Bibles to 1 Peter 2:24. It says, *“He [Jesus] personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed”* (nlt).

 As we dive into this passage, I want to discuss **two truths** that I believe can give us hope for our imperfect, incomplete lives. The first point is that **Jesus carried away our sin.**

 Now get this . . . If you are in Jesus, He has removed the sin from your life and carried it in His body onto the cross. You are clean. You are perfect. You are complete. Because Jesus has removed your imperfections. Because Jesus has taken away sin from your life.

 We long for perfection. We long to be made complete. We long to live our lives for Jesus. The problem is, we try to do it ourselves. We can never be complete on our own. We need Jesus to take away our sin.

 If you have lied to someone this week, know that Jesus can carry that sin away from you. If you’ve struggled with greed, pride, or fear, know that Jesus can carry that sin away from you. And it can die with Him on the cross!

 You and I are perfect and complete *because* of Jesus. This is why we worship. This is why we sing. This is why we pray. All our wrongs have been removed from us. We are complete in Christ.

 Just two words of caution with this: (1) Because our sin is removed from us, that doesn’t mean we should just keep sinning. If we love Jesus, we will not want to sin. (2) Because our sin is removed from us, it doesn’t mean there aren’t consequences for our sin. There are still real-world consequences for the wrongs that we’ve done.

 So that is the first point: We are complete, we are perfect because Jesus has removed our sin.

 The second point, the second reason why we are complete is because **His wounds healed us.**

 When we hear the word *healing*, oftentimes we think about being healed physically. But the word used in this passage has a much deeper meaning than physical healing. It can actually be translated “*to be made whole*” or *“to be made complete*.”

 So when the Bible tells us that “*by his wounds you are healed*,” what it is really saying is, “*His wounds have made us whole, they have made us complete*.” Not only has Jesus taken away our sin, He has healed our brokenness.

 And listen to this verse one more time in a different translation: “*By his wounds you have been healed”* (niv).

 That is the past tense. His wounds have healed us! They aren’t merely healing us. If we are in Christ, we are healed. It is done. We are not patients in a hospital waiting for an IV, medicine, or a doctor to heal us. If we are in Christ, if we have accepted Him into our lives, we are healed! It is final. It is done.

 Now I understand that most of us here today do not feel like we are spiritually healed. We do not feel like we are spiritually complete. That is because we still feel the effects of a broken world. We still struggle with sin.

 But hear this: Sin cannot kill you anymore. Before Christ, sin had power over you. And it could kill you, physically and spiritually. But now, you have been healed. You have been made complete. You might still feel the effects of sin, but it cannot kill you! Because His wounds healed us!

 Now think about that saying . . . we don’t often think about wounds healing us, right? Wounds are what hurt us. But it is also true that wounds can heal us.

 If you have a heart attack, the doctors might need to cut a wound in the middle of your chest for open-heart surgery to save your life. Wounds can heal us. I’ve got a wound on my leg, and in a sense it is healing me of a future cancer. Jesus even heals our future sins!

 And in the case of Jesus, His wounds were as necessary as open-heart surgery or pre-emptive cancer surgery. Jesus had to be wounded so that we could be healed.

 So why did Jesus need to be wounded? Couldn’t there have been a better way to heal us?

 Now I need to dig a little deeper here for us to understand this. This is also where things tend to get a little uncomfortable.

 Our sin was so horrible that it had to be punished.

 We live in a society that doesn’t take sin very seriously. It doesn’t see sin as that big of a deal. But the truth is, God does. God is perfect, holy, set apart. And our sin against Him is horrible and needs to be punished. But instead of punishing us, God punished His Son. God knew that we could never bear the weight of that punishment. So instead He sent His Son to the earth to carry it for us.

 **Jesus absorbed every punishment for every sin that every person has ever committed.** Let me say that one more time: Jesus absorbed every punishment for every sin that every person has ever committed.

 Now this might sound terrible, but while it was terrible what happened to Jesus . . . it is so good for us. By His wounds we are healed.

 Jesus absorbed all the punishment for our sins. So that means if we are in Christ, we no longer are punished for our sins! Like seriously, this is completely scandalous. Everything you have ever done: lied, cheated, stolen, cursed. You no longer are punished for those things because of Jesus.

 You are no longer punished! It is final. You have been healed. It is done. You have been made complete. It is finished. We have been healed by His wounds. We have been made complete by His wounds.

 So those are the two reasons Peter told us that we are complete: **Jesus carried away our sin and His wounds healed us.**

 But why does it matter? What does that mean for me? How do I live this out in my daily life?

 We talked on the front end of this message about how we all to some degree desire to be perfect and complete. But when we look at our lives, we realize it is impossible. Let me tell you, our desire to be perfect, our desire to be complete is a good desire because it shows that we understand sin is wrong and bad. We realize there is something more.

 The problem, though, is we try to be perfect. We try to be complete by simply trying to be better, trying harder. If we struggle with lying, we just try harder. If we struggle with lust, we just try harder. If we struggle with pride, we just try harder. If we struggle with addiction, we just try harder.

 Trying harder never works. All of our trying harder will never give us the desire for completeness that we want. That desire can be found only in Jesus. Jesus came to earth, clothed Himself in humanity, and what He did on the cross was enough for God.

 So please hear what I am about to say: **Instead of focusing on what you are doing, focus on what Jesus has done.**

 In Jesus, we find the completeness we are looking for. In Jesus, we find our sins being taken away. In Jesus, we find our brokenness being healed. We will never find that in self-help. We can never help ourselves enough. We don’t need self-help; we need Jesus help.

 Instead of focusing on what you are doing, focus on what Jesus has done. When we do this, we will find our completeness.

* When you struggle with materialism, look to Jesus, who had nothing but always had enough.
* When you struggle with lust, look to Jesus, who was single and remained pure.
* When you struggle with lying, look to Jesus, who never said an untruthful word.
* When you struggle with anger, look to Jesus, who was patient with broken people.
* When you struggle with pride, look to Jesus, who was God yet was born in a barn.
* But most of all, when you are struggling with sin, look to the cross where Jesus took all of your sin away.
* Look to the cross where His pain brought your healing.
* Look to the cross where His wounds took your punishment away.
* Look to the cross, the only place in the entire world where a sinless, perfect Man made sinful broken men and women complete.

 Instead of focusing on what you are doing, focus on what Jesus has done.

**Let us pray:**

Lord God, help us always to look to the cross of Christ and find there the perfect solution to all the troubles of this life on planet earth. We look forward to our eternity of life in perfection with You. In the meantime fill us with the Holy Spirit to be Your faithful witnesses to others of the Good News that Jesus carried our sins to the cross. In the wonderful name of Jesus. Amen.

**Application Questions**

Was there ever a day or a moment when you felt complete? Describe that memory and the feelings that went along with it.

Why do we try so hard to remove the sin from our own lives when Jesus has already carried it away for us? What is it like to live in this tension? (1 Peter 2:24)

What are some wounds in your life that have ended up healing you? How do these wounds compare to Christ’s wounds healing us? (Isaiah 53:5)

What are some practical steps you can take to focus on what Jesus has done instead of on what you’re doing to become complete?

Are there times in your life when you have felt Jesus’s completeness? What did those times looks like? How did that experience help you realize the truth that we’re only complete in Jesus?