

Pencils

Written and typed: 6/25/24

- Brother Steve Canup from the Fort Chiswell congregation gave a sermon comparing Christianity to a pencil on 6/12/24 @ the West Side congregation
- I took notes that evening and prepared a sermon based on the notes I took from Mr. Canup
- I'd like to discuss 5 ways in which Christianity can be compared with a pencil
- **1: Everything you do will leave a mark**
 - Think about it: the good, the bad – it will always leave an impression on people
 - Jesus certainly left His mark – by living and going to the cross
 - We're still talking about Him 2000 years later – and we will continue to talk about Him because He is the only name under heaven by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12)
 - 1 Peter 2:21-22 – *"To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."*
 - Jesus left us an example to follow
 - His compassion, His love, His demeanor, His mission
 - These are the traits that we have as our perfect example
 - And these are traits that we must replicate
 - Matthew 5:13-16 – *"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."*
 - We are the salt of the earth
 - We are to spread the word, flavor the earth with the gospel
 - Just like a city on a hill cannot be hidden, and as a light is intended to light up a room – we need to not hide our faith in Christ
 - We are to spread that
 - Show others the example that Christ is by the way we live and make them want to join us in following Christ's example
 - Galatians 6:17 – *"Finally, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus."*
 - Paul says these marks on my body – the cuts, the scars, the bruises
 - This is all because of Christ
 - Most anyone else, they would have taking this and ran away
 - But Paul continued in serving Christ despite all the marks that were on his body as the result of him teaching the gospel
 - We must not be afraid to teach the gospel even if it means that we may be returned with physical harm
 - Hopefully it never comes to that, but we must be ready if it does
 - We can leave our marks on the world as well
 - Everyone always wants to be remembered

- I played a Batman video game once and I don't know if this was based on a comic book or what, but the Joker in this game – his biggest fear was being forgotten
- Nobody wants to be forgotten – everyone wants to be remembered
- Allow me to give you a piece of advice in how you can do that
- Stand strong in the faith regardless of what this world throws at you
- Hebrews 11:13-16 – *“All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country – a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.”*
- These people were living by faith when they died and here 2000 years later, we are reading about them in the Bible for their faith
- Not for any earthly thing they did while on earth – this person was rich, or this person was skilled at a sport, etc.
- No, they are remembered for their faith
- There exist some very talented people who will be remembered for things they did on earth
- For instance, Willie Mays will always be remembered as one of the best baseball players in history
- But if it is your goal to be remembered for earthly things, your priorities are not correct – the Hebrew writer says that you are looking for a country of your own in that case
- We are to be aliens and strangers on this earth, seeking God's country – the heavenly one, the city that He has prepared for His people

- Ephesians 1:13-14

- Revelation 7:1-3

- Have you allowed God to mark you as His?
- If not, why not?
- And if you have, do not be ashamed of that. Wear the name Christian proudly and strive to bring others to the fold

- **2: Mistakes can be corrected**

- Most pencils come with an eraser, don't they?

- 1 John 1:7-9

- We should be striving for perfection (Matthew 5:48)
- But when we inevitably make mistakes, admit them and learn from them
- Do your best to not repeat your mistakes
- Take responsibility and come back to Christ and He will purify you

- Let's briefly compare Judas with Peter to demonstrate this concept – both made mistakes, but resulted in different outcomes

- Luke 22:1-6

- This is the Luke account of Judas agreeing to betray Jesus
- Parallel accounts: Matthew 26:14, Mark 14:10
- In reading Matthew 27:1-5, I do not think that Judas realized that his actions were going to lead to Jesus' death. Slap on wrist perhaps – beating, told to stop preaching as apostles were told in Acts 5.
- When he realized this, that's when he felt the remorse – that's when he was seized with sorrow
- But what kind of sorrow was this?
- 2 Corinthians 7:9 – sorrow as God intended will lead you to repentance
- Did Judas repent here? Unfortunately he did not
- He had the same chance to repent as you and I do today though – he could have corrected his mistake
- But his sorrow was worldly – and he took his own life (Matthew 27:5)
- 2 Corinthians 7:10 – *“Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.”*
- **Luke 22:31-34**
 - This is the Luke account of Jesus telling Peter that he will deny Him
 - Parallel accounts: Matthew 26:34, Mark 14:30
 - We can read that Peter did deny Christ 3 times in Luke 22:54-62
 - Luckily, unlike Judas, Peter repented of his actions and was restored in **John 21:15-19**
 - Peter went on to continue his life as a faithful servant in the Lord's church
 - Wrote the books of 1 & 2 Peter
 - Preached the famous sermon in Acts 2
 - Was heavily involved in the conversion of Cornelius and his household in Acts 10
 - You can see that he took the appropriate actions to correct his mistake – we can as well
 - Peter felt the same sorrow that Judas felt (he wept bitterly when he realized what he had done – Luke 22:62)
 - But what kind of sorrow was Peter's?
 - Peter's sorrow did not lead to death – in fact, quite the opposite
 - His sorrow was the Godly sorrow talked about in 2 Corinthians 7 and it led him to become a very faithful servant of the Lord's
 - We must follow the example of Peter and not Judas in terms of correcting mistakes
- **3: What is inside is what is important**
 - A pencil would be nothing without the lead – just a pretty weak piece of wood at that point

- The same goes for us – the inside (our attitude, our motives, our heart), that is what’s important
- God is no respecter of persons (Romans 2:11)
 - He does not care if you’re the CEO or the lowest person in the company
 - He cares about your heart – sometimes we as humans need reminded of this
- Acts 15:8 – *“God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us.”*
 - God knows your heart
 - He knows if it is pure or if it is impure for whatever the reason
- Matthew 5:8 – *“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”*
 - Do you have a pure heart? Or is your heart impure for whatever the reason – have you denied Christ in some way, do you do things for false motives, etc.?
- Philippians 4:8 – *“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.”*
 - Adhering to this scripture would certainly allow us to be pure of heart
 - Not thinking about evil, worldly things – how I can get back at my neighbor, or how I can scheme to get ahead
 - Think about these qualities
- 1 Timothy 5:22 – *“Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.”*
- 2 Timothy 2:22 – *“Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”*
 - There are times when I want to act as if I’m still 16-18 years old
 - That’s a big reason why I can’t participate in softball unless absolutely necessary
 - Because there’s a good chance I’m going to get hurt, because I push my body as if I’m still in high school
 - But we can’t do this in our spiritual life
 - At some point, you must mature and seek righteousness
 - And God knows whether your heart is pure or not
- **1 Samuel 16:7-13**
 - The Lord did not instruct Samuel to anoint the tallest or the strongest son of Jesse’s
 - Jesse passes all of his sons before Samuel and to each one Samuel says “Not this one”
 - Finally, Samuel asks “do you have any more sons?”
 - So Jesse gets David who was out tending the sheep, his youngest son
 - This is the one that the Lord instructs Samuel to anoint
 - God doesn’t care about the things man cares about – we need reminded of this a lot
 - God doesn’t care how popular you are, how attractive you are, how strong you are

- He created you – anything and everything you have is only by the hand of God
 - God cares about your heart – make sure it's pure
- **4: You will undergo painful sharpenings which will ultimately make you better**
 - Paul did
 - 2 Corinthians 11:16-33
 - Imprisoned
 - Flogged
 - Exposed to death numerous times
 - Beaten with rods
 - Stoned
 - Shipwrecked
 - In danger pretty much everywhere he went
 - But he didn't let that stop him
 - Philippians 1:21 – *"For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."*
 - Joseph did as well
 - Sold into slavery by his own brothers (Genesis 37)
 - Tempted by Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39)
 - Thrown into jail because he wouldn't give into the temptation from Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39)
 - Eventually became 2nd in command to probably the most powerful nation in the world at the time (Genesis 41)
 - Acts 14:22 – *"We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God"*
 - Regardless of our earthly circumstances, we must stand up for the gospel and teach it to others
 - James 1:2 – *"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds,"*
 - Consider it joy when you face hardships
 - Because this develops perseverance
 - You will bear the marks of Christ and He will reward you for that
 - 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 – *"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."*
 - Remember this verse the next time you know you should say something to someone but don't because you're scared that you'll become less popular, or you're scared of what they'll say back
 - The end result will be so much better than any amount of popularity this earth has to offer
 - Allow the Bible to be your sharpener
- **5: Allow yourself to be guided by the hand that holds you**
 - Psalm 51:10 – *"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."*

- Colossians 3:10 – *“and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”*
- Psalm 119:105 – *“Your word is a lamp to my feet and light for my path.”*
- Philippians 2:13 – *“for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.”*
- Philippians 4:13 – *“I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”*
- Colossians 3:1-3 – *“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.”*
- Allow Christ to lead your life
- Submit your life to Christ and let Him guide you
- You can do so by following God’s perfect plan of salvation
 - **Step 1: Hearing the gospel** – *Romans 10:13-17*
 - Gospel = Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried, arose, and appeared to many – *1 Corinthians 15:1-8, Romans 1:16*
 - **Step 2: Believing the gospel** – *Mark 16:16, John 3:16*
 - **Step 3: Confession that Jesus is Lord** – *Romans 10:8-10, 1 John 1:9*
 - **Step 4: Repentance of sins** – *Luke 13:3, Acts 2:38*
 - Repentance: a turning away from sin, disobedience, or rebellion and a turning back to God. Change of mind that produces a change in action.
 - **Step 5: Baptism into Christ** – *Galatians 3:27, Acts 2:38, Romans 6:1-10, 1 Peter 3:21-22*
 - Baptism: immerse or submerge
 - **Step 6: Live faithfully** – *Revelation 2:10*