

No Perfect People Allowed

“Elijah was a man just like us”

James 5:17

God takes our messes and turns them into masterpieces.

We're not perfect - God *is*. We don't have it all together. We get caught up in perfectionism and just want everything to be perfect, but it's really not. If pastors and churches had to be perfect then there would be a lot of empty pulpits and church buildings. Bridge Church welcomes imperfect people - the invisible sign on the wall says as much, and we want them to come with the right expectation.

Many times we're disappointed when things don't live up to the hype or to our expectations. No *thing* is perfect here on this planet, so we live in this environment and atmosphere of imperfection, and yet we still demand it from ourselves. We raise the bar in our lives sometimes, and think, *“Oh, I can't believe I made a mistake!”* But, we do imperfect things because we're imperfect *people*.

Some church teachings even carry a sense of standards and levels told “from the Bible” that we have to live up to - and if we don't, we'd *better watch out*, or God (like the song about the all-seeing Santa Claus) will find out if we've been naughty or nice. How much like religion does that sound? - that he's watching us to make sure we're not being naughty, and he's got a *list*, that looks a lot like our *Bible*, and if we're not doing everything just right, we might *not* get to go to Heaven - in fact, we might even get *punished*.

When life happens to us and we find out we're not perfect after all - that our lives *aren't* perfect and our expectations have fallen short - what we really need in that moment is a revelation of God's *grace*. We need to know that God loves us on our *worst* day, in our darkest hour and the worst moment of our life just as much as he does on our *best* day, on the highest peak, in the greatest achievement and in the moment of our greatest piety.

We are indeed loved and flawless in his sight, because he doesn't see our "stuff" - he sees Jesus - he sees *Christ-in-us the Hope of Glory*. We have died with Christ but we've been *raised* to walk in newness of life. God sees a heart that is not wicked but has been exchanged for a new heart. Whatever we've been through, we're not unique or alone. People all over the planet are suffering in silence with the common problems of mankind. We are *all* a hot mess - we're *all* messy.

We come to Jesus *as we are*, not as we *want* to be. We bring our broken pieces to God. Many people say, "When I get my act together... I'm gonna clean myself up..." but that won't work. We can only come as the *hot mess* - the *train wreck* - that we are, and bring our broken pieces to Jesus - to the foot of his cross. We place them there and walk away - turn away and turn to him - and he will take all those broken pieces and somehow - some way - redeem our lives.

He redeems all things - when we're ready - when we're willing. We come to the Word of God - the Presence of God - we worship and fellowship with other believers, and when we do, God fills our imperfect and leaky buckets with his Presence. Then, as we go out, we take our buckets and leak out everywhere we go - a never-ending supply of Christ-in-me-and-through-me coming out as fast as they fill up. We are all leaky buckets!

We stand whole, healed, rescued, redeemed, filled, and holy - as saints - not as sinners by identity. We're not worms - we're children of the Most High God. That makes us royalty - King's kids. We can come into his Presence, not because we've got it all together, but because He's got it all together. We can come, and we're safe with him, even in our brokenness - even in our pain.

In 2020, 45,979 Americans died by suicide. Our culture is a mess, but there is a Kingdom that supercedes the kingdom of men. Crime has increased in degrees since the Covid pandemic, which has released a spirit of lawlessness on our land. We are hearing of "wars and rumors of wars". The Bible said we would. This is normal. The world is teaching people to live and to be very afraid, but there is no fear here - wherever the King of Kings is.

If our lives were not messy, we wouldn't need a Savior. If we were perfect and had the world by the tail, we wouldn't need Jesus. If we had it all figured out and all together, we wouldn't need Someone to die for our sins - for God to send his Son to rescue us.

2 Peter 1:3-4 ESV

“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness [to live this life of faith], through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.”

There is a design to this, and yet, through knowing him, it gives us the power to resist the *click-bait*. As partakers, we get pulled into who he is in his divine nature. Now, we're stuck in between two worlds - in physical bodies that wear out. We're reminded of our humanity - but now - we're told about our divinity - that we're *both* divine and human *at the same time*. God places within us the *Imago Dei* - the image of God - and we become divinely human.

No perfect people are allowed, but yet, there's an element in us - the *Elohim element* (Elohim is the name for the creative nature of God). We *create* because we're Elohim-in-us. We are *partakers* (*part-takers*) of his divine nature. Right now, we're not wholly there - we're in-process. We are a masterpiece, but it's not quite finished - and yet - it is, at the same time. *“Tetelestai - It is finished”*, Jesus said.

If we don't make room for mystery, we'll have a frustrated Christian life. We are, already and fully, saved - born again - in his eyes, clean - and yet - we are still human - still missing it - still having bad moments, but we are participating - as part-takers of the Divine, which means we are partially there.

Sanctification

A theological word that simply means that we are truthfully *saved* - and practically in reality *being saved* at the same time.

1 Corinthians 13:9-12 NIV

“For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.”

"I know in part..." - part-takers - that's coming, but it's not here yet.

James 5:17-18 NIV

"Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops."

Elijah was like us - he was not superhuman. We are not so messed up that God can't use us. A man just like us was used by God to impact weather patterns, and to shift the very atmosphere of the earth. No perfect people allowed - you're here - and you're *not perfect*. *Welcome home! Welcome to the club!* You're in - but it's not an excuse to be dumb. It *is* motivation to say, *"Thank You,"* and to live a life of gratitude for his mercy and his grace.

Pastor Jimmy's devotional for Sunday, April 23rd

Yes, ugly messes can happen when we show up, however there is Good News for those who are "in Christ." God has given us the gift of being "partakers" of His Divine Nature.

Pro-Tip: break down the word "partaker" into "Part-Taker" to understand its full meaning. Hold your head up Saint. You are a Saint, because you carry His divine nature. He created you in the "Imago Dei," i.e. the image of God. You're not a Sinner striving to be a Saint. You are a Saint who sometimes sins and a "Part-Taker" of God's Divine Nature. Rest in the truth, receive grace for today, and walk like the Saint you are. - Pastor Jimmy

That is who you are. Now, let's go out there and make *beautiful messes*, letting our leaky buckets leak - and let's love people... *"to Life"*

Prayer

Father, in Jesus' name, we ask that You would birth Hope in us - pour it into our spirits like a breaking dam, where we get flooded with Your grace - flooded with Your mercy and hope, and with the Person that You are. That we'll never see You again as an ogre just waiting for us to make a mistake so you can "thump" us - but we'll see You as the Father that You are - the Good Father You are - the loving Father that You are, and that we'll come before You as we are, not as we will be, but as we are - with all of our brokenness and "stuff".

And we know we can trust that You will receive us into Your arms. As we do this, Lord, give us Your Grace to take that same Love we're receiving - that same grace and mercy - and leak it out everywhere we go. We love You and honor You. In Jesus' name. Amen