

Chipped Saints!

I. Announce:

A. Slide#1 TFC - Traffick Free Community

1. I would like to invite you to this months *Children at Risk* meeting, next Sun. May 20th from 3-5pm. We have a guest speaker **Kevin Potter** who is the Project Director for Oasis USA. [spoke at our Justice Conf in Feb.]
2. Slide#2 We'll be hearing about the steps it takes to be able to collaborate & partner together w/other leaders in our community, to start a *Traffic Free Community*
3. We would love your ideas and input on this as we strategize together to see if this is something we can do in *Murrieta* [in Pasadena, Pomona, San Gabriel, Downtown LA, West Palm Beach]

B. Slide#3 Mothers Day:

1. **The mother** of 3 notoriously *unruly youngsters* was asked whether or not she'd have children if she had it to do over again. "Yes, just not the same ones."¹
2. Let me touch on motherhood on both ends of the spectrum. How many times have your kids said..."You don't love me!" - You can tell them one day:
 - a) I loved you enough to bug you about where you were going & what time you'd get home.
 - b) I loved you enough to let you discover your friend was a creep.
 - c) I loved you enough to stand over you for 2 hours while you cleaned your bedroom, a job that would have taken me 15 minutes.
 - d) I loved you enough to ignore what every other mother did or said.
 - e) I loved you enough to let you *stumble, fall, hurt* and *fail*.
 - f) I loved you enough to **accept you** for what you are, not what I wanted you to be.
 - g) Most of all, I loved you enough to say **no**, even when you hated me for it.
3. Slide#4 Some mothers think the longer the kids hang around the better parents they are
 - a) *Erma Bombeck* said, I see children as **kites**. You spend a lifetime trying to get them off the ground. You run with them until you're both breathless...they crash...you add a longer tail. You patch and comfort, adjust and teach - & assure them that **someday they will fly**.
 - b) **Finally** they are **airborne**, but they need more string, and you keep letting it out. With each twist of the ball of twine, the kite becomes more distant. You know it won't be long before that beautiful creature will snap the lifeline that bound you together and soar - free and alone. **Only then do you know you did your job.**²

¹ Reader's Digest, contributed by David Finkelstein

² Erma Bombeck, from "Forever, Erma," quoted in Reader's Digest, March 1997, p. 148

4. One minister's wife told of filling out a form in her pediatrician's office. Beside the blank marked "**occupation**" were these words: "If you devote the greater part of your time to loving, caring and making a home for your family, **put a big star in this space.**" - Bonnie Miller
 - a) Mom's, today we give you **a big star!**
 - b) Lastly, if you've *messed up* as a mom, I like what *Harmony Dust* said, "My past is being washed away with the beauty of the present." (Pray for Mom's!)

II. Intro:

A. Slide#5 Title: *Chipped Saints!*

1. Slide#6 What do I mean? Show pic from Belize.
 - a) St Peter Claver, Catholic Church(Garifuna). **St Peter Claver** was a **Jesuit** from Spain who became the patron saint of slaves, race-relations, & African-Americans.
 - b) Claver would head for the wharf as soon as a slave ship entered the port. Boarding the ship, he entered the filthy and diseased holds to treat and minister the badly-treated, terrified human cargo who had survived a voyage of several months under horrible conditions. He assured the slaves of their human dignity and God's saving love.
 2. Slide#7 Paul gives us a peek into his mind/heart/soul with his personal testimony of what it is to be a "*chipped saint*".
 - a) Paul was **not** your standard high gloss painted saint. Expressing some **prissy piety!**
 - b) **No**, he revealed & lived a *real, raw, authentic, genuine, honest* Christianity.
 - c) Are you a painted/polished saint or a *chipped saint*?...I think you'll be able to relate to Paul this morning.
- B. So, our **Title** is *Chipped Saints*. Our **Outline**: **The Confusion; The Corruption; The Conclusion;** And ending with **The Real Question & The Only Answer.**
1. This is a **passionate** piece of writing. Please feel the emotion he experiences in trying to *live up to God's standards*.
 2. **Feel** the *disheartening, aching frustration* that happens to good christians...even super Christians!

III. Slide#8 THE CONFUSION! (13-16) *Paul's frustration is twofold.*

- A. He doesn't do what he wants to do; & He does the things he doesn't want to do.
1. It's, "*The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hide*" Christianity. [or, Dr. Paul & Mr. Saul]
- B. Here's the key: When a believer tries to *live a life that is pleasing to God in his own strength*, he will **fail** every time; **but**, that *very failure* makes him ready for **God's grace**.
- C. Note, he moves now to the *1st person singular*. (me, 13)
1. This is Paul's real day-to-day struggles & his own experiences [YES, he was saved at this time]

2. How pompous for any Christian who says they don't struggle with the old sin nature anymore! - **Don't you struggle with this problem daily?** Desiring to be that good Christian, yet totally frustrated from falling on your face?

D. (13) So in vs.12 we saw the **law** was good. **Here sin is bad.** And from vs.7-25 is the relationship between the redeemed person's **sin nature & the law.**

E. **Sin...exceedingly sinful!**

1. **Why didn't he call sin "exceedingly dark", or "exceedingly horrible", or "exceedingly deadly"?** (or, horrid, hideous, heinous, vile)

a) **A:** Because, there is nothing *as bad as sin...so*, he had to call it by its own name.

IV. **Slide#9 THE CORRUPTION! (17-20)** *He realizes the total corruption of his old sinful nature*

A. (17) Wait a minute Paul, **are you avoiding personal responsibility for your actions?**

1. No, he is speaking to the **base** desire, **not** the **action** itself.

a) He's not saying **he does not do it**, **but** that its not what his *deep inner self*, renewed in Christ, wants to do.

B. (21) **Evil is present with me** – The more we grow in Christ, the more **aware** we become of our sin **and** the more we **hate** it & want to be **rid** of it.

1. **Like Isaiah** Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; **For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts.** (6:5)

2. **Like Job** I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now **my eye sees You.** Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes. (42:5,6)

3. **Like John** **When I saw Him**, I fell at His feet as dead. (Rev.1:17)

C. *"Lord, teach us to love what You love & hate what You hate."*

V. **Slide#10 THE CONCLUSION! (21-23)** *He understands the daily struggle within him.*

A. The **old nature**, always attempting to do **wrong**;
The **new nature**, always attempting to do **right**.

1. The principle Paul recognizes is that he is a man with **2 natures**:

a) **One delights** in the Law of God. **The other wages war** against God's Law.

b) This refers to everything w/in us that is more loyal to the **world & self** than to **God**.

c) Remember, **Inward conflicts** show us we are **spiritually alive!**

(1) It shows there is some *life in the soul* that hates sin!

VI. **Slide#11 THE REAL QUESTION! (24)**

- A. (24) **Who** will deliver me from this body of death?
1. He isn't asking, "what must I **do**?" but, "**who** will deliver me?"
 2. **Deliver me** – Paul was not attacking his sin; **this sin** was clearly attacking him!
 - a) He **wasn't** like a soldier who was **leading an attack**;
He **was** a soldier **asking to be rescued** from the hands of the enemy.
 - (1) He's pinned down calling in air support!
 3. **Slide#12** Sometimes **Sin** flies at us like a **lion** springing forward [or a cocker spaniel pup]
 4. Sometimes **Satan** & his minions are jealous of the celestial Spirit **within** us!
- B. **Slide#13a** What **3 things** don't in themselves...help us *stamp out sin*?
1. **Knowledge** of what the law demanded! (9)
 2. **Slide#13b Self-Determination** from sin! (15)
 3. **Slide#13c A Profound Christian Experience!** (22-25)
- C. **O wretched man that I am** – [or, **O wretched christian man that I am**]
1. **Wretched** = a miserable distressed condition. Paul at the end of himself.
 2. Just like **John's** picture of the *Laodicea church*...Rev.3:17 **Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'; and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.**
- D. Paul has come to *the end of himself*, which is a great place to be.
1. Jesus said, **Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**
 - a) **Or, Blessed are the bankrupt. Blessed are the wretched.**
- VII. **Slide#14 THE ONLY ANSWER! (25)** *Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord.*
- A. **Slide#15a** What **2 things** *then* are needed in this battle?
1. **A Deliverance** from the condemnation, which the law of God pronounces.
 2. **Slide#15b A Power within**, greater than that of sin, to enable us to do God's will.
 - a) **Both** are provided in Christ (as Paul will show in ch.8).
 - b) Rom.7 doesn't provide a complete picture of Paul's spiritual experience.
 - (1) In fact it **prepares** its readers for ch.8 - It sets the stage for the **triumph** of ch.8.
 3. As we recognize our **inability** to live up to our deepest spiritual longings...this leads us to **cast ourselves** upon God's Spirit for **power & victory!**
- B. **Slide#16** The Holy Spirit **within us** helps us to **do** what God wants us to **do** and to **be** what He wants us to **be**.

1. We can keep our love relationship w/the Lord **alive & exciting**, & thus producing **righteousness** instead of *wretchedness*!
2. Becoming like Christ is a **lifelong process**. **Thus**, that is why Paul likens Christian growth to a **strenuous race** or a **tiring fight**.
3. **“Sanctification** is a gradual process that repeatedly takes the believer through this **reoccurring sequence** of failure through *dependency upon self* to **triumph** through the indwelling Spirit.”
 - a) The Christian life is a **battle**, **but the war** is already **won**.
 - b) The **struggle** is just *part of the journey*!
 - c) D. L. Moody, “When I was converted, I made this mistake: **I thought** the **battle** was already mine, the **victory** already won, the crown already in my grasp. **I thought** the old things had passed away, that all things had become new, and that my old corrupt nature, the old life, was gone. **But I found out**, after serving Christ for a few months, that **conversion** was only like **enlisting** in the army - that there was a **battle** on hand.”

- C. **Slide#17,18** In **Victor Hugo’s** last novel, “*Ninety-Three*” is about a ship is caught in a storm. The frightened crew hears a terrible crashing sound below. Immediately the men know what it is: a cannon has broken loose and is crashing into the ship’s side with every smashing blow of the sea! Two men, at the risk of their lives, manage to fasten it down again, for they know that the unfastened cannon is more dangerous than the raging storm.
1. Many people are like that ship, their *greatest danger areas* lie within their own lives.

Prayer: Chipped saints? Yes we are. But Lord, we have only one desire, **that** in the end we will be simply *a chip off the ol’ block*!