

Perfection as a Christian

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Greetings: It's a blessing for me to bring you the Good News of Jesus Christ. Today we are going to be talking about being a perfect Christian. What does it mean to be a perfect Christian? Is there such a thing as a perfect Christian? We find that the Scripture says, "Let's move on to maturity." Or, if we read the King James translation, it says: "Let us move on to perfection."

Today I want to talk a little bit about this perfection, what this is, and how it looks. We need to understand that when Jesus Christ was walking upon the face of the Earth, He was subject to weakness. Yet, He was perfect. Paul even calls himself and people that are like-minded like him, perfect. So, what is a perfect Christian? Can you be a perfect Christian? Is it something that you can never attain? That's what we are going to look at today.

Our reading today is going to be from Hebrews 5 from verse 7. We are going to look at how Jesus walked perfectly before the Father. One thing that we need to understand is that should Jesus have walked perfectly according to the law. That it wouldn't have meant salvation for Him because Jesus couldn't save Himself into eternal life by His own works. There is no such a thing as salvation by your own works. Jesus trusted and relied upon the Father. The Father raised Him from the dead. The Father was the one that brought Him life.

We even find the Old Testament there was a man, a rich young ruler, that came to Jesus and he said to Jesus, "Jesus, what must I do to have eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "Obey the law." The guy said, "Well, I'm doing everything. What do I still lack?" We can see by that is that the law lacks eternal life. It cannot give eternal life. The Bible even says in Hebrews that if there was a law by which life could have been manifested to man, then salvation, or eternal life, or righteousness, would have been by the law. But there is no law that has been designed to do that. The purpose of the law was not to bring forth eternal life in man. It was to point us to Jesus, or to point us to the Father that raised Jesus from the dead so that our faith can be in God and that He can, by His resurrection power, by His life that He shares and makes available for us, bring forth eternal life in us.

So, we are going to look at Jesus here and we can see the prayer that He prayed in **Hebrews chapter 5.**

7 During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.

So, Jesus was going through a very difficult time when He was on the earth. He was made subject to mortality. He was made subject to suffering. He was made subject to being as what we are today. He was at a place where He had to obey the Father, where He had to believe upon the Father to raise Him from the dead.

We can see here that He had prayers towards God the Father who could save Him from death. Then it says, "He was heard." The prayer that He prayed was heard. Why? It says, "Because of His reverent submission." So, He submitted Himself to God. He reverently, had reverence for God and He submitted to God and He believed in the Father. What did He believe? He believed that the Father could raise Him up on the third day. He lived by faith.

Jesus Christ was not justified by works. Or, let's not use the word, justified. Let's say that He was not raised from the dead because of His own good works. It wasn't as if He had enough merit in heaven by His own good works where the law was taken out and was said that He never did anything wrong therefore He can be raised from the dead. That's not why Jesus was raised although I do believe that Jesus lived a perfect, holy, sinless life. He wasn't raised from the dead because of His perfect holy, sinless life. He was raised from the dead because of the faithfulness of the Father that raised Jesus Christ up from the dead.

How Jesus lived a perfect life was to believe the Father and never fall into a place where He would find His life from His own works. Jesus never stood before the Father and said, "Well, I'm a Jew. I'm circumcised on the eighth day. I'm of the stock of this or that or whatever. Joseph is my father. I'm born. I'm from the tribe of Judah." He didn't do any of that. He didn't say to the Father, "I have lived a holy life, therefore righteousness must come my way", or any of those kinds of things. He just said one thing and this was mentioned in Matthew and that was that He will live from every word that comes from the mouth of God. What is the word that came from the mouth of God? If we go and study Matthew 4 and go back to Matthew 3, the word that came from the mouth of God, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." A son would mean in someone that is born from God.

Now, we found that Jesus Christ did not see sonship manifest in him at that point in time. But, later on we find that He was raised from the dead, born from the Father, as it is written in Acts 13 as well as in the psalms, when He was raised from the dead.

So, the point that I want to make here is that Jesus Christ had a reverent submission to God. Then it goes on in:

8 Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered

9 and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him

So, we can see here that Jesus was not perfect. Now, that might make the hair on your head stand up and say, "Bertie, how can you say that Jesus was not perfect!" No, when we look at Jesus we see the perfect Lamb of God. He was absolutely perfect in being the

lamb of God. We can also say that Jesus lived a perfect sinless life. He was without sin. The Bible says He was tempted. You can read right here in chapter 4:

15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are ---yet he was without sin.

So He was tempted the way we were and He was without sin. So, I'm not saying that Jesus Christ was a sinner. I'm not saying that at all. What I'm saying is that Jesus Christ was not perfect and that He had to be made perfect. And that perfection is defined as being raised from the dead to have a physical body that cannot die, that's not subject to death, that cannot become hungry, thirsty, that doesn't need oxygen or food to live. Wherein the fulness of God manifests in Him bodily.

Now, prior to having a body like that, He had a body that could be tempted. Jesus Christ could be tempted. Some would say, "No! But Jesus was too holy to be tempted!", but that would not line up with the scriptures. Jesus Christ was in the desert and He was tempted of the devil and He was going through a very difficult time and He became hungry. Now I don't want to repeat myself. I've preached this many times but you all know that Jesus Christ became hungry. Why do you become hungry if you have no need of anything? And He was tempted to find His identity in His own ability and not to rely upon the promise of God wherein the devil basically said to Him, "Well, you're starving our here. You are very hungry. It's 40 days without food and water. You're out here in a place where you are very close to death and death is going to set in. So, what You need to do is take these stones and make it bread and so live and not die and so be the son of God." Son of God would mean an eternal, immortal human, living and not dying. Jesus said, "No! I will not live by this. This is not going to give me life but I will live from every word that comes from the mouth of the Father."

I've said this before and I want you to focus on this: Jesus said, "Man will not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Father." We always interpret that that man will live from every word that comes from the mouth of the Father **and** some bread. But that's not how I read that passage and I think, linguistically, it would be correct if we say that Jesus said, "Man will not live by bread alone but He will alone live by every word that comes from the mouth of the Father." There is nothing that we can do to help God to give us eternal life. Eternal life that was promised to Jesus when He was facing death was that God will be faithful and that He will give it.

Now the temptation that we have every day is we are tempted in our weaknesses. We go into difficult times and in those times, we think, "What shall we do so that we can bring life to ourselves?" And then the answer would simply be to believe God.

Okay, back to the point... Jesus Christ was going through a difficult time and He was suffering. It says here that He learned obedience by the things that He suffered. So many times, we have interpreted that passage and we think that God puts us through hard times so that He can get us to be more obedient. I don't see that that would be the meaning of this passage. I think that Jesus Christ, where He was at the right hand of God, prior to the

Incarnation, when He was the eternal word, the logos of God, the angel of God if you want to call it like that or we wouldn't say, "God the Son", but we would say, "The second person in the Godhead", because when we refer to God the Son, we are referring to the resurrected Jesus. But, let's say, "The second person in the Godhead, where He was in God and as God, He was not obeying anyone. He just lived from everlasting to everlasting. He never obeyed. Obeyed means there is an instruction which you obey and wherein you rely and from there you have life. So here is Jesus and I think this is what this passage basically just says: that He was at a point where the word was the message, that God would bring eternal life, then was brought forth in the birth of Jesus. And when Jesus was born, He was born of a woman and He was born of a woman under the law and He Himself was subject to weakness. Jesus was subject to weakness like we've said that He needed food, clothes and all those kinds of things. And as He was walking in that weakness, the way whereby He would have eternal life manifest in His body was by the faithfulness of the Father. Then He learned what it was to be at a place where you had to obey someone else and rely upon Him to bring forth life to you.

Then we find that Jesus, in the midst of His weakness wherein He was living as a man who was subject to mortality, when He became flesh, a human, He had to believe and rely upon the Father for life. He couldn't rely upon His own words. He couldn't rely upon Himself. Death could not hold Jesus. The Bible says that Jesus was raised from the dead for death could not hold Him. The reason why death could not hold Him was not because of Jesus. It was because of the Father's faithfulness to Jesus in that the Father would raise Him from the dead. When the Father raised Him up and restored Him to His former glory, the glory that He had always when He was with God before the creation of the world, there was a difference in where He was now in the condition that He's now. The difference is that where Jesus is now, compared to who He was prior to creation, is now He possesses a physical body that was born from Mary that was reborn from the grave and is seated at the right hand of God as a human being wherein He shows and is bringing forth the promise that God always had for humanity.

Now, when Jesus was going through this time of weakness, was He perfect? Yes. He was perfect. Was He at the place where He had to rely upon the Father? Yes, and He walked in that perfection.

It says here that Jesus was walking in weakness but He was then made perfect. That perfection does not refer to a spiritual condition. It's referring to His body where He was now made perfect. Then it goes on and the scripture says in chapter 6 and this is the point that I want to make. Man, I almost want to say I apologize for giving all that information but there are so many questions that can rise in people's hearts when they listen to this theologically that I don't want them to throw the thing out because stumbling over one little thing and not listening to the rest of the message.

Now I get to what I want to say. The scripture says, **Hebrews 6:**

1 Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity (perfection), So what he says is, "Let us not be at a place where we are in the basic teachings of Christ but let us now move on to perfection. What is he

talking about? When we look at this, we can clearly see that the maturity there, contextually, is referring to the maturity that Jesus has received when He was raised from the dead. So, Jesus was made perfect in the day when He was raised from the dead and then He became the Savior of all who obey Him.

So, when we obey Jesus, then He is the perfect Savior, saving us from what... saving us in the context here, of the very thing that He was saved from which is death. Jesus prayed. He did die but He was saved from death and that He was raised from the dead. Now it says when He was made perfect after His resurrection, He became the Savior of all who believe Him offering eternal salvation. What is that? That is resurrection again. So now He says, "Let us move on to this perfection." Now, that does not mean, "Let us now become immortal." What that simply means is let us not be at a place where we don't know what the message of the resurrection is all about. The way we don't know what the basic principles of Christianity is about of which one is the resurrection message. We need to understand what it means that when Jesus died then when He was raised. His death and His resurrection bring a certain hope for us.

What he is basically saying is, "Let us then live according to this reality. Let us live according to the reality that Jesus was truly raised from the dead and we now move on to perfection." What does that mean? We've moved on from being Jews where our identity is in Judaism and in circumcision and in obedience to certain washings and laws and all those kinds of things. Or, let us move on from we are Gentiles and we don't have access to the God of the Jews and so forth. Let's move away from this ethnicity thing. Let us move on to perfection. What is the perfection? It is the fact that the human being, Jesus, was raised from the dead and is seated at the right hand of God in the fulness of God and He was even called by Thomas, "My Lord and my God." There are different arguments about what Thomas meant when he said that but let's leave it at that.

So, here we see Jesus which would be called the Almighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, the Savior... whatever. Here He is in bodily form. He has now been made perfect. So, we move on now to perfection. What perfection? The perfection that Jesus Christ has received and we can then, today, walk as perfect Christians in the midst of not seeing the perfection that Jesus has in His body, we can walk in perfection today And I'm going to show that to you from the scripture.

Philippians 3:

4 If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more...(Paul is talking about having confidence in the flesh and what they would understand under confidence in the flesh would be confidence that he is part of the people of God that the promises that God made to Israel would be his.)

4 If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more:

5 (I was) circumcised on the eighth day (They were circumcised in his flesh.), (He was) ***of the people of Israel*** (So his flesh was of the right people group), (He was) ***of the*** (beloved) ***tribe of Benjamin,*** (He was) ***a Hebrew of Hebrews*** (In other words, he was

not just a Hebrew. He was now as pure as what you could get); **in regard to the law**, (I was) **a Pharisee** (A lot of Pharisees were even Zealots, or very zealous for their work. They would go as far as to get people out of the way if they could be a hindrance to the work of God. I mean they were really serious about the law);

6 as for zeal, persecuting the church (exactly what I just said).; **as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.** (That's what Paul says. As pertaining to righteousness according to the law, Paul says he was absolutely faultless.)

7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

8 What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ

9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith the in Christ (Wow! So, the righteousness that Paul has would be "I believe Jesus and now I stand as I ought to stand before God!")—**the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.**

10 I want to know Christ--yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

11 and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

So, Paul is saying, "Listen. I was a Jew. I lived like a Jew and all those kinds of things. That was where my identity was but I count all those things as a loss... meaning that it cannot give me what God had wanted me to have. What God has brought to man is through promise. It's not through the law. It is through God fulfilling His promise. Now, the only righteous action towards a promise is belief. That's it! So, God made it to Abraham by promise, not by anything that Abram would do because if it had to be by his works, then the promise would never be fulfilled because Abraham would do some things wrong. So, it was only by promise, only by God being faithful or we can say, "By the faithfulness of God and not my faithfulness."

Paul says that he's now counted all these things done. He's now believed on Jesus. Then he says the next verse which is astounding:

12 Not that I have already obtained all this (He says, "I have not obtained the resurrection from the dead. I have not obtained that which God really wants for me." So, what does Paul say? "I've perfectly repented and I now believe on Jesus but I'm still not attained to what God has installed for me." So, that means that he is at a place where he is not perfect. There are still things lacking. There are still things outstanding.) He says, **"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal** (That means he has not arrived at the goal of which the last point here is the resurrection from the dead. He has not reached that perfection. He says. **but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.**

13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,

14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Now it can take another 15 minutes to explain all of this but I'm going to just summarize it by this: What Paul is basically saying is, he is continuing in the faith and he's not going to allow himself to fall for the temptations of going back to the old way of doing. That's what he's basically saying. Like Jesus, when He was in the desert, what did He do? He was doing exactly the same thing. He was pressing towards the goal. How was He pressing towards the goal? When the devil said to Him, "Take these stones and make it bread." What was He doing? He was striving towards, straining towards what was ahead, It sounds like a hard work but what it is, actually is, it is working to remain in the rest. We did speak about that last Sunday.

So, he says, **14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize...**

15 (and this is the crux of everything I want to say) **all of us, then, who are mature** (or, all of us who are perfect) **should take such a view of things.**

Let us read it in the King James:

14 I pray towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ.

15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if anything you be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this to you.

So, Paul says, "If you want to be perfect, be this-minded: I cannot find my identity in Judaism. Even if I am perfectly righteous by the law, it cannot give me life. Even if I would live the law perfectly, I will still end up on the cross. It's like this young ruler, "I have done everything. Why do I lack?" So, he obeyed the whole law but he still knew that he was lacking something. The same with Jesus. If eternal life is a gift that comes from God which is given to Jesus and the promise the Father says, "I will raise you up on the last day and I will vindicate your belief in raising you up." So, I mean, then it is only by faith, It is by the Father raising the Son giving the Son then the power to raise us from the dead.

So here we find that he says, "Let anybody that is perfect, be this minded." This he says just after the verse where he says, "I am not perfect" or "I have not attained to perfection." So, the perfection that Paul was talking about was the resurrection, conquering death, experiencing the fullness of God bodily. He says, "I don't have that. I don't see that the purpose of God fully attained in my life. But that doesn't mean I'm not perfect."

So, there are two perfections: The one perfection is what you will rise up into the resurrection and the other perfection is on how we live according to that truth. So, when we have moved onto perfection, we've moved on to the place where we see that Jesus was raised from the dead. He is perfect. He cannot die. He lives forever. He is eternal. That means something. That means that I don't find any of, according to Paul, any of my identity in the old creation. But I am now a new creation. This new creation had received the Holy Spirit but we don't see the full manifestation yet, but we still see Jesus. We see Jesus. I don't see all these things but I see Christ. I see Him raised from the dead.

I will read **verse 16** again. **Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.**

He says, "We have not attained to that perfection but what we have attained to is we are now in the mindset of the inauguration of new creation. We don't live by our own abilities and by our own power trying to reach eternal life by our works as we've preached many times and which we can elaborate on greatly which I am not going to do now. We live unto what we have attained. We've attained unto grace. We've attained unto the power of God that has entered into this world. We now know it's neither Jew nor Gentile. It cannot attain anything. All that can really bring forth something in our lives is new creation and we find the first manifestation of new creation is in us and we simply rest. And that is how you live as a perfect Christian.

How do we live in obedience to God? Jesus obeyed the Father. How did He obey the Father? He believed the Father.

1John 3:

22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

23 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment

So, what is obedience to God? What is the command? The command is to believe upon Jesus. Then if we go and look at John, we find that the bible also says in **John 13, "A new commandment I give unto you, That you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another.**

He's given a new commandment. This new commandment that what that there is in order that, so, it's a new commandment I give you in order that you will be able to love one another. I believe the context there is He gave us a new command but in order that Jew and Gentile can see one another as the same. That commandment was to believe upon Jesus. We find that in John chapter 6. He says, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God? He says, "This is what God is working at: That you believe on Him whom He has sent and He will raise you up in the last day." That is what this whole thing is about.

As we walk as Christians in this world, in perfect obedience, it means we've moved on from hoping for the Messiah to come to the earth. We now see that Jesus has come to the earth. He was raised from the dead and He has now a perfect, immortal, mature, physical body and He is Lord over us. We now stand under the rulership of that resurrection and the hope we have is to see that from His power, He brings forth life in us for He loves us and therefore, in this world, we have overcome the world. That means that we don't live and have our emotions and feelings and things born from this world but our life is born from God. Then, as the Bible has promised, the scriptures promised, that Jesus Christ will return and we will find the full manifestation of who we really are into this world. That is what the scripture teaches. That is what He has for us.

I want to end off by simply just putting the focus on what the true Gospel is and I want to go to Mark 1:14.

You will see that later today I will also upload a message where I preached more in depth, about a 50-minute message, on what the Gospel is. I would encourage you, if you have time later on this week or if you want to just watch this back-to-back, you can do that. There's another message uploaded then or I think I can do it just a little bit after the Sunday message. So, it doesn't mess up the YouTube algorithm for my posts. But there's a message that I've preached on what the Gospel is putting a great emphasis on what I am just going to mention in short now.

Mark 1:14 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

Jesus Christ was preaching the Gospel. What was the words He used? He said, "The kingdom of God is at hand." So, what was the good news to the Jews? It is that the rulership of God's kingdom would come to earth. What would that mean? What does that even mean to us as Gentiles when we talk about the kingdom of God coming to earth?

Now, they are basically two kingdoms, if you want to call it like that. They basically said this well, basically it's just one kingdom. It's the kingdom of God and then whatever is not in His kingdom is then dying. But let's put it like this: There's a kingdom of darkness and there's a kingdom of light or the kingdom of death and the kingdom of life. This world was made subject to death in Adam, in man. But, God made a promise and He said, "My kingdom, My rule, which is the rule of life... where life rules." The place where a life is ruling and giving life will come to the earth where we can have the life of God manifest in us.

We then find that this kingdom did come to the earth and what did this kingdom do? This kingdom and rulership of God raised one man from the dead... Jesus. And He then appointed Him to rule over whosoever is given to Him by the Father. Then the Father goes and speaks to people's hearts all over the world. Those who hear and obey the Father is then given to Jesus so that Jesus can raise them up in the last days. So, this kingdom of life has now come to mortal earth and we found the proof of that in the resurrected Jesus. And there's more than just the proof of the resurrected Jesus. The proof has now expanded even into our lives. We are now experiencing ourselves, the power of the resurrection wherein the fruit of the Spirit is coming forth in our lives.

This is the Gospel. This is the Good News: When we have moved to maturity, it doesn't mean that we have moved away from the message of the resurrection. When we've moved unto maturity, we've moved to the place where it is about the maturity of Jesus where He was raised from the dead, where we are not in need of hearing the message of the resurrection again saying, "Well, we don't know about the resurrection." We've now heard it and we say, "Okay, we are not at a place where we are considering it. We are moving on to it." We are now saying, "We're moving on to this perfection. We are now expecting a life to be born from the resurrected Christ as we simply rest and rely upon Him." We then make our bodies available for this. Hallelujah!

This morning Helena and I read a scripture in Romans chapter 12. It says there that God has given, you know, as what one body has different members, so the body of Christ has different members. That each one must just live according to the grace that God has given him. To those who must teach, let them teach. To those who must prophesy, let them prophesy according to their faith. So, just live who you are! Helena and I are at the place where it is not where we are not considering, "Will there be a resurrection? What does the resurrection mean and all those kinds of things." We now understand what the resurrection is and we have moved on. This is what the Hebrew people would have understood from the old system and we are now seeing ourselves in Christ where there's neither Jew nor Gentile. Where it's not about Jewish customs and feasts and circumcision or any of that. It's about new creation. That is what it is all about, where it is about a literal, new, creation.

Some might say, "But Bertie, I don't know if the creation would be literally a literal new creation." Well, I thank God that Jesus is the Word on everything. There was a man born from Mary. He was born of a woman. The Bible says natural creation, normal creation. Then He died and then He was raised from the dead and the Bible says that the day He was raised, God said, "You are My Son. This day have I begotten You!" He was born from the dead. His physical body was created again into an eternal, immortal, physical body that can bear and shine forth the glory of God. That is a new creation. That new creation does not exclude the old creation. That gives us hope because if Jesus was raised in another body, and it was not the same body that was raised, then we would have said, "Well, we cannot be saved, basically, because another us will be formed. It would not really be us. That's why Jesus, when He was raised from the dead, says, "Touch Me. It is I. Let Me give you a hug. You can feel Me. It is truly Me!"

So, Church, the true Gospel is the message of the resurrection and let us now move on to the perfection that there is in Christ. Let us live as perfect Christians in the midst of our shortcomings so you might still have this or that or whatever problem in your life. But as you are relying and resting upon Jesus and you've moved on to this form of doctrine, you are now living as a perfect Christian in this world, in the midst of your imperfection. Or we can put it this way: You are living as a perfect Christian waiting for full perfection to manifest in you because you have now moved over into the place of the perfect body of Jesus and what that means for us.

Well, we've come to the end of our Service and I want to thank you that I could have just served you with this Good News message. I trust that it has enriched you and was an honor for me to teach you today. The scripture says, "Those who have been graced to teach, let them teach. Do it fully with passion in your heart." And that's how I feel about this.

Know that you are deeply loved and blessed by God.