

SERMON NOTES

SUNDAY 09.11.25

PREACHER: PS NATHAN BEAN

Christ-Centered Community and Rejecting Works-Based Righteousness

BECOMING CHRISTLIKE

BEING [HEART], **THINKING [MIND]** & DOING [BODY]

[A PERSONAL REFLECTION]

Conviction of a Disciple:

Conviction of a Disciple: A disciple learns to rest in Christ's finished work—turning from both sin and self-righteousness—and lives from joy, grace, and dependence on Jesus rather than performance.

OVERVIEW

The Church is called to be a Christ-centred community, not a religious machine. Paul's words to Philippi expose our subtle temptation to earn what has already been given. True maturity means abandoning confidence in our own goodness and finding joy in belonging to Christ alone. We repent not only of sin but of self-reliance, allowing His love to form a people who live by faith, rejoice in grace, and reach the world with authenticity.

ACTION

- Q1.** Where has your faith slipped from grace into self-effort or comparison?
- Q2.** How can you guard new believers—and yourself—from religious performance?
- Q3.** What spiritual practice this week can you reclaim as communion, not currency?

THOUGHT

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 3:1–14, 1 Corinthians 13, Acts 16

Religion writes resumes; grace tears them up.

Every generation of the Church faces the same quiet temptation—to move from relationship to religion, from love to record-keeping. Paul warns the Philippians to “beware of the dogs,” those who add requirements to grace, turning the act of worship into a kind of corporate performance review. But Paul names what we are so quick to forget: our flesh loves to keep score.

The gospel, however, brings an end to all score keeping. Paul takes his perfect record—heritage, zeal, rule-following—and throws it all into the loss column. “Whatever were gains to me, I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.” The only thing left in his profit column is Jesus. Everything else is rubbish compared to knowing Christ.

And that is the slow conversion we all undergo—the shift from proving to belonging. We don’t pray to impress God, but to be near Him. We don’t read Scripture to earn a blessing, but to encounter His voice. We don’t fast to get results, but to quiet our hearts to receive His love. Each practice becomes holy again when its goal is presence rather than performance.

To be the Church—the Body of Christ, is to live with open hands: no resume writing, no qualifications, no hierarchy of worth. Just as sons and daughters never need a special access card to enter their Father’s office, we can burst through the door with freedom, confident we will be welcomed. That is the atmosphere of grace God is building—a people who know they are already held, already loved, and already clean.

But this grace does not make us passive in our living the Christian life. Instead, it compels us to live it more fully. Because Christ has hold of us, we press in to behold Him. Joy becomes our litmus test. When joy leaks, it’s a sign we’ve wandered back into religion. This doesn’t mean we won’t experience pain or suffering, but in the difficulty of life, we maintain a deep joy knowing we are still being held.

So despite our failures, we continue to return again—back to the centre, back to the simple wonder that all I have is Jesus. And that, Paul says, is the most amazing thing. Christ is the treasure worth everything else. And we experience his presence and fullness in and through the active and healing Body of Christ—His Church.

DISCUSSION

[A GROUP REFLECTION]

- 1) How can we help one another resist the subtle pull toward performance-based faith?
- 2) What does “pressing on to lay hold of Christ” look like in ordinary life?
- 3) How can joy become a measure of grace in your walk with God?

PRAYER

Jesus,

We again lay down our resume writing and striving to earn your love. Free us from the weight of proving ourselves and fill us again with joy. Teach us to worship from the heart, to live from grace, and to reach others with the same mercy that found us. May we as Your church be known not for religion, but for the living reality of Your love.

Amen.