

LAMPLIGHTER
OCTOBER 2009

THEME: “Under God’s Watchful Eye-Living with Our Imperfections” LUKE 12:6-9

“Finally, brothers, good-by. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.” (2 Cor 13:11 NIV)

Dear Flawed Fellow Believers,

One of my favorite shows was “Home Improvement.” For the most part, I am the embodiment of Tim, The Tool Man, Taylor. While for most people a hammer is an amazing tool. In the hands of a skilled craftsman, a hammer can be used to build something wonderful and beautiful. In my hands, however, a hammer wields destruction and ugliness. Like Jill Taylor, my wife wonders how much something is going to cost her in order to properly fix the original home repair. It is a difficult thing to be confronted by our imperfections.

Since misery loves company I find some comfort in this truth revealed in Holy Scripture from Romans 3:22-23 “This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” In other words we all, are confronted by our flaws and imperfections. All people of all time have become horribly flawed because of our own rebelliousness and sin. Moses was imperfect and was not confident to speak to Pharaoh without Aaron. David was overcome by his own covetous desires and plotted to have Uriah killed. Judas was overcome by greed and schemed to have Jesus arrested for a mere thirty pieces of silver. Peter often spoke without thinking and was later chided for his actions. Paul daily dealt with his own “thorn in the flesh.” With the exception of Jesus who knew no sin – though he did become sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God – all other participants in this game of life are confronted by their own shortcomings.

Perfection is one of the many things in this life that becomes an exercise in futility. Perfection is elusive and unattainable. It is an unrealistic expectation. Yet Scripture says that if we want to earn our way to heaven, then perfection is the standard that must be met. (Mat 5:48 NIV) “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Gen 17:1 NIV) “When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, ‘I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless.’” (Mat 19:21 NIV) Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” There is only frustration and aggravation in pursuing such an unreachable goal. (Gal 3:3 NIV) “Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?”

The Good News for us is that there is one who has achieved this perfection for us. Jesus – the sinless Son of God – lived the perfect life. The author of the book of Hebrews writes in 4:14-16, “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. {15} For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--**yet was without sin.** {16} Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

In Christ we are made perfect through His righteousness with which we have been clothed in the waters of our baptisms. (Heb 10:12-14 NIV) “But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. {13} Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool, {14} because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.” In Christ God accepts us as we are with all our flaws and imperfections.

So when we reach these times of feeling worthless, unwanted, unloved, or confronted by our own shortcomings because of our flaws and imperfections, rest assured God loves us with an everlasting love. Remember God’s watchful eyes are always upon you!

Close with prayer, the Lord’s Prayer, Benediction, and Song – #50 “Just As I Am Without One Plea”