

I. Introduction

- A. Welcome to Neighborhood. Today is part two in a three part mini-series. In this series, we are saying that God says something about you. God says that some things are true about you.
- B. If you have received Jesus as your Savior, then certain things are true about you. If you have not received Jesus as your Savior, then different things are true about you. But that's not our focus for today, except to say that there is an awesome, incredible, powerful open door for you today — you can be saved.
- C. But in this mini-series, we are focusing on what God says about believers, about people who have been saved.
- D. Specifically, if you put together all the things that God says about you, the title for all of that is your Standing. You have a certain standing before God. When God looks at you, he sees you a certain way. When he talks about you, he talks about you a certain way.
- E. This is your standing. I talked about it last time. And the important thing to know about your standing is this:
 - 1. When God looks at you, to him, you look just like Jesus. Being a Christian means that you share the standing of Jesus Christ. His status is your status. His rights and privileges are your rights and privileges. His perfections are your perfections.
 - a) God looks at every one of his children through Jesus-colored lenses.
 - b) That is how God sees you. That is what God says about you. You have, as a present possession, this incredible, powerful, exalted, magnificent status in the halls of power in Heaven.
 - c) Did you earn it? No. Do you deserve it? No. Your new standing is grace all the way.
 - d) Being saved is a really big deal.
- F. For example:
 - 1. God says Jesus is holy. In Christ, you share his holiness. How much do you share Christ's holiness? You share his holiness so much that God actually calls you a saint.
 - a) That's pretty wild if you let yourself think about it. Do you know who I am? Saint Bill. Please don't ask my wife and kids.
 - 2. God says Jesus is eternal. In Christ, you are eternal too. Get how this works?
- G. This is your standing, your status. And this is the real you, the true you, the truest truth about you. You are in so joined to Christ that everything that is true about him is now true about you (except that you're not God, but no surprises there).
- H. So, you have this exalted status as your present possession as a child of God.

II. Now what?

- A. Now, live like it. Act like it. Think like it. Believe like it. Choose like it. Love like it. Be the person God says you are.
- B. Which is easier said than done, right?
 - 1. *I beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, (Ephesians 4:1)*
- C. Your STANDING is what God says about you.
- D. Your STATE is how you act in the real world. This is what everybody who really knows you says about you.
- E. The touchdown, the championship, the PhD of your post-salvation Christian life is to make your state match your standing. Walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.
- F. Is this easy or is this hard? Well, tricky question. Think with me today on the topic:

III. Christ in ME

- A. *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)*
 - 1. Most people have a really primitive way of understanding what it means to live as a Christian. By primitive, I mean immature. But, but that sounds not very nice, so let's go with primitive... you'll see why.
 - 2. So it's looks like this. You have a really nice car. Like an awesome, nicest car ever. A Ferrari is its mother and a Tesla is its father. So a really nice car.
 - 3. You're going on a cross-country trip with your family. You put your luggage in. You put your snacks in. You put your family in. It's time to go.
 - 4. They're all inside the car. But not you. You go around behind the car. You put your hands on the car, and start pushing. You're going to push this amazing car all the way across the country.
 - 5. That is how most Christians view what it means to live as a Christian. How we make our standing match our state. How we walk worthy of our high calling in Christ.
 - 6. Push. Stress. Strain.
 - 7. If you saw a friend pushing a perfectly fine Ferrari/Tesla car down the street, what would you say?
 - 8. I know what I would say. I would say, "Do you know there's an engine in that thing? A very fine engine? Actually the best engine ever made in the universe of all engines? Quit pushing. Get in and drive."
- B. Do you see these words in Galatians 2:20? "It is no longer I who live." You could say, "It is no longer I who pushes. Now that I'm a Christian, I'm not the one making this thing go. I've tried, and I've failed. I've tried and it's wearing me out."
- C. The Christian life is summed up in four words: *Not I... But Christ*
- D. See it there. *"It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me."*
- E. There's an engine under that hood. Christ lives in me.
- F. He's the engine. And you've got to believe he's got more horsepower than the mind can conceive or the heart can believe.
 - 1. This is what makes Christianity more than a moral code.
 - 2. More than a doctrinal creed. More than a religion.
 - a) He died on the Cross to cleanse your past.
 - b) He rose from the Dead to empower your present and your future.
 - (1) God is not calling you to reach up to something you don't yet have.
 - (2) He is calling you to experience something he's already given you.

- c) The world says, "Be all you can be."
 - d) Christ says, "Become all that you already are."
 - G. God says, walk worthy of your high calling.
 - H. And then he says, everything he calls you to do, he will empower you to do.
 - 1. *He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it. (1 Thessalonians 5:24)*
 - 2. *For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. (Philippians 2:13)*
 - I. Not I, but Christ.
 - J. Okay. So you say, I've got the car, I've got the engine. I'm saved. But I just can't seem to get thing started. What should I do?
- IV. So let's put this in order:
- A. *THE CALL: God calls every believer to a certain way of life.*
 - 1. This way of life is better than any other way of life in the history of ways of life. The reason why it is a better way of life than any other ever before or after is simple. It is the way of life practiced by Jesus Christ himself. His love. His mercy. His courage. His character. His holiness. That is our calling.
 - 2. It is a way of life. It is a way of love. It is a way of wholeness. It is a way of joy.
 - 3. It is the only way of life that corresponds to your Manufacturer's specifications. And therefore, it is the only way of life that makes you who you really are.
 - B. *THE GOAL: You are living that way of life when your state begins to match your standing with more and more frequency.*
 - 1. The trend line is up.
 - 2. Let me ask you a question here. In the history of the world, has there ever been a person whose state matched his standing, every day, every hour, perfectly, all the time?
 - 3. Answer — Yes. Jesus Christ. Jesus showed what a person could be. Whatever God said he was, that's how he lived. Whatever God said he had, that's what he used.
 - 4. In all the history of the human race, there is one and only one person who has lived a perfect life. That is our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 5. Tuck that away for a minute. Because it is highly unlikely that you have lived a perfect life. Am I right?
 - C. *THE WEAKNESS: In yourself, you do not have the power to live up to your high calling.*
 - 1. Have you ever heard the question, What Would Jesus Do? WWJD?
 - 2. The WWJD movement comes in waves. It started in 1896 with a classic book called In His Steps (Charles Sheldon).
 - 3. Basically, the book asked people to make every choice and speak every word after first answering the question, "What would Jesus do?" What would Jesus say? Then do it.
 - 4. It's a great idea. It's a beautiful goal. It's wonderful. But it doesn't work.
 - 5. And I can tell you that for this kid growing up in church, it made me feel super-guilty. Because no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't live up to the WWJD standards.
 - 6. I know I'm supposed to be like Christ, and I can actually imitate him for about a minute... but then I fizzle out.
 - 7. Over and over again. I try, I succeed, I fizzle. What's the deal?
 - 8. The deal is that in ourselves, we do not have the power to live up to our high calling.
 - D. *THE POWER: But you have Christ in you, and he brings all his mighty power.*
 - 1. Jesus has all the power and all the ability to live a WWJD lifestyle.
 - 2. And he wants to do it again, through you. The whole goal of your life, now that you are a Christian, is for God to manifest the life of Christ through you.
 - 3. And this is HIS job. His power. His effort. His work.
 - a) It is God who works in you both to will and to do for His Good pleasure.
 - b) *Not by [human] might, not by [human] power, but by my Spirit says the Lord. (Zechariah 4:6).*
 - c) *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. (2 Corinthians 4:7)*
 - (1) Translation: you might look like a Ford Pinto on the outside, but there's a Ferrari engine under the hood.
 - 4. I feel very weak as a pastor. I don't like being in the limelight. I get my strength in solitude and with handful of friends. I'm a bit socially awkward, sorry for that. I don't feel adequate to ever preach or write or speak God's word.
 - 5. I'm not cool. I'm not hip. I'm not young and vibrant. I don't see myself as a visionary leader. I see myself as a preacher of the Word of God which is the oracles of God.
 - 6. But I am not sufficient, not adequate, not powerful in myself. Not at all.
 - 7. But the minute I step into this pulpit, I'm a roaring lion, and you can't shut me up. That's because Not I... but Christ.
 - 8. Do you know who's standing up here today? Bill plus Christ. And that's a winning combination every single time.
 - 9. It is a mistake to see in the Cross of Christ your all-sufficient payments for sin, and then not to see the secret source of daily power for everything.
 - 10. He doesn't just call you holy, he makes you holy too. He makes you what he calls you to be.
 - 11. I know, I know... this is great in theory. But how does it work in practice? If there's a Ferrari engine under the hood, how come I keep puttering along like a go kart? You have to turn the engine on.
 - E. *THE IGNITION: Christ fires his power through you every time you act in faith.*
 - 1. Faith is the ignition switch.
 - a) *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)*
 - 2. God loves faith more than you can imagine.
 - a) God rewards faith more than you can measure. Faith is a really big deal. Faith is the key to everything.

b) So let's talk about it, shall we?

3. Questions About Faith

a) *What is faith?*

(1) *Faith is believing that what God has said is true, enough to act like it.*

b) *When can you use your faith?*

(1) *Because faith is a choice, you can use your faith at any moment in every conceivable circumstance of life.*

(2) Here comes temptation. Meet it with faith.

(3) Here comes an opportunity. Meet it with faith.

(4) Here comes adversity, and heartbreak, and loss. Meet it with faith.

(5) Here comes a mission and call on your life. Meet it with faith.

(6) Here come the everyday duties of family and parenting and school and work. Meet each and every situation with faith in the Son of God who loved you and gave himself up for you.

(7) You might face a temptation today — something sucking you into a bad habit and a sin. Throw some faith at it. Declare "Greater is he that is in me, than he that is in the world." And say no. And leave the room. And call a friend. And a walk away. And run away if you have to.

(8) You might face hardship and lost and sadness today — something pulling you into a whirlpool of despair. Meet that hardship with faith. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." And put one foot in front of the other, declaring God is faithful, and all things work together for good, even if I don't know how. Because, as high as the heavens are above the earth, so are his thoughts higher than my thoughts, and his ways higher than my ways.

c) *What happens when you use your faith?*

(1) *When you face a situation with faith, God fills that situation with power.*

(2) But... and this is the crazy thing, the mature thing, the advanced lesson, for us to understand.

(a) When you face a situation with faith, God fills that situation with power... but God's power doesn't always feel like power.

(b) You simply can't judge by feelings.

i) You might feel weak. You might feel tired. You might feel confused, or hurt, or upset.

(1) Talk the talk of faith anyway. Walk the walk of faith anyway.

ii) Or... you might feel brave and strong and invincible. That's awesome.

(c) Either way, we've got to understand there is no official feeling of the power of God.

(3) So many people tell me, faith is useless. I tried it, and it didn't work. I still felt afraid. I still felt weak. I still lost the match, or the relationship, or the loved one. I give up. God doesn't show up. God doesn't answer. Faith doesn't work. Why bother?

(4) Why bother?

(a) *We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed-- always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. (2 Corinthians 4:8-10)*

d) *Why should we keep faith with God?*

(1) *We should keep faith with God because every single time you do that, the life of Jesus is put on display through you... and this is what the world needs most.*

(2) Even if you are weak, even if you are tired, even if you don't feel a thing at all, even if the results are not what you prayed for or worked for. Even if anything.

(3) In the spiritual realm, victory isn't the victory. Faith is the victory. Faith scares the devil.

(4) When you pray 300 times for a child to come back to the Lord, and nothing happens, it is prayer number 301 that makes the demons flee. They don't get that. They can't understand why you would worship an invisible God and just take his word on faith.

(5) When you face a situation with faith, God fills that situation with power. No matter the results. No matter the outcomes. No matter the feelings. No matter anything.

(6) *And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (2 Corinthians 12:9)*

(7) Faith is the ignition, and every single time you turn it on, the engine of grace roars to life, and Christ says, get in the car and drive, because we are going places so incredible and so world-changing you don't have a clue.

(a) The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me.

4. How can you add muscle to your faith?

a) *You add muscle to your faith by growing on the Grace Pathway through the Word of God.*

b) Christ in you is your power.

c) Faith in every circumstance is the ignition.

d) The Word of God in your soul is rocket fuel for your faith.

(1) *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:17)*

e) Since the very beginning of my ministry as a pastor, I have had two huge passions.

f) One is a passion to see lost people saved.

g) The second is a passion to see saved people grow mature. Grow in grace. Grow in knowledge. Don't stay stuck at the kiddie table. Push away, and join the grown ups at the feast of grace.

h) And the central, primary, non-negotiable means of spiritual growth is a deep dive into the Bible.

F. Grace Pathway

1. We have a golden opportunity for you called the Grace Pathway.
2. The Grace Pathway is for everybody in our church. You never outgrow the knowledge of God. It is for people who don't know Jesus. It is for people who do know Jesus.
 - a) It is for rookie believers — maybe you just received Jesus a few days ago.
 - b) It is for veteran believers — you received Jesus decades ago.
 - (1) You never stop growing.
3. What is it?
4. The Grace Pathway is the pattern of spiritual growth that God gives us in the Bible. It consists of four milestones:
 - a) *God saves you.*
 - b) *God blesses you.*
 - c) *God grows you.*
 - d) *God uses you.*
5. The Grace Pathway is how you make your state begin to match your standing.
 - a) This is how you grow mature. When you grow mature, you have stronger faith.
 - b) When you have stronger faith, you are more likely to meet every situation in your life while keeping faith with God.
 - c) And every time you keep faith with God, you let Christ live through you more and more.
 - d) This is how you become more and more like Christ.
 - (1) And this is how the world gets saved.
6. I am super excited about our Grace Pathway Spring Semester. Check out what we have for you online at www.neighborhood.cc/grace-pathway
 - a) God Saves You
 - (1) Essentials (3 sessions)
 - b) God Blesses You
 - (1) Secure Forever (3 sessions)
 - (2) Your Identity in Christ (3 sessions)
 - c) God Grows you
 - (1) Who is God? (3 Sessions)
 - d) God Uses You
 - (1) How to Share Your Faith (3 sessions)
 - (2) Understanding Your Spiritual Gifts (2 sessions)
7. It's not too late. These classes start this week on Thursday and then on Saturday and Sunday. They will fill up...but you can get in on the ground floor.
 - a) My prayer, and my hope is that you will walk worthy of your high calling. That you will make your state match your standing. And that you will find the joy and strength and peace and effectiveness of every day having the life and power of Christ shine through you.