

Nobody's Perfect

By Bill Denton

INTRODUCTION

A. Illustration – Perfectionism

1. Striving for excellence motivates you; striving for perfection is demoralizing. ~Harriet Braiker
2. No one is perfect... that's why pencils have erasers. ~Author Unknown
3. A man would do nothing if he waited until he could do it so well that no one could find fault. ~John Henry Newman
4. To escape criticism - do nothing, say nothing, be nothing. ~Elbert Hubbard
5. Better a diamond with a flaw than a pebble without. ~Confucius
6. When you aim for perfection, you discover it's a moving target. ~George Fisher
7. The closest to perfection a person ever comes is when he fills out a job application form. ~Stanley J. Randall
8. He that will have a perfect brother must resign himself to remain brotherless. ~Italian Proverb
9. When nobody around you seems to measure up, it's time to check your yardstick. ~Bill Lemley
10. Never say, "oops." Always say, "Ah, interesting." ~Author Unknown

B. In our series on simple evangelism, the effort has been to point to things that can help us connect with other people, open doors of conversation, gain trust, and be more effective at helping people to see the problem of sin and God's answer in Jesus

1. You might wonder how the quotes on perfection relate
2. It's because people sometimes have a perception of Christians that creates a distance between us and them, and makes it hard to connect
 - a. the perception is that Christians are perfect, or at least way down the road toward perfection, but others aren't
 - b. therefore, people don't think Christians understand them, and they certainly don't understand Christians
 - c. they think Christians have a holier-than-thou attitude (and sometimes do!)
3. Unless we work purposely to overcome this perception, it's always going to be harder to reach people with the gospel

C. Tonight I want to talk about the fact that nobody's perfect

1. No me, not you, not any of us, and not any of the people we're trying to reach
2. We say we know this, but we still have this barrier between us and others that we need to minimize

I. THE PEOPLE WE'RE TRYING TO REACH AREN'T PERFECT

A. Let me just remind you of some things found in the Bible

1. Romans 3:10 -- 10 as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; NASU
2. Romans 3:23 -- 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, NASU

B. If those were the only two verses in the Bible that tell us this sobering fact, they would be enough to make the point

1. There isn't anybody who is perfect – else they would be righteous like God
2. There isn't anybody who has escaped the problem of sin – else they would be sinless, like God
3. So, unless you are trying to evangelize God, the only choice you have is to work with imperfect people

C. I know you think this is probably such a no-brainer that it's unworthy of a sermon but I can tell you, we need a refresher on this truth so we can help people

1. Our words testify to our need to rethink some things
 - a. some have limited the kind of people they want in their church – they only want people who don't have problems, but that's the only kind of people there are
 - b. some have assumed that if a person is part of a different church, then it automatically means they aren't interested in truth, aren't sold on Jesus, and therefore we shouldn't waste time on them
 - c. some think that if a person is "unchurched" or living an openly sinful life, that we don't want that person – but that's the person Jesus sent us to teach
 - d. some think that if we bring in people who have different worship styles, different beliefs, etc., we'll just mess up the church and cause ourselves problems
 - 1) that can certainly happen, but what's the alternative
 - 2) we can congratulate ourselves for dodging all the trouble while allowing others to die in their sins
 - 3) we need to get over our fear of things that are different so we can reach the people
2. A church that is evangelistic will always be faced with the problem of helping imperfect people make the transition from lost to saved, etc.

II. THE PEOPLE WE'VE ALREADY REACHED ARE NOT PERFECT

A. Illustration

I once heard a guy say that people shopping for a church should be very careful. If they ever find a perfect church they should not join it, for the minute they join the perfect church, they will mess it up.

1. Here's the truth – there isn't a perfect church because the church is people and there aren't any perfect people
2. I would change the advice in the little story. If you ever find a perfect church you need to run quickly and get as far away from it as you can before they convince you that you're perfect too!

B. My best evidence that the church is made up of imperfect people

1. Acts through Revelation in the New Testament
 - a. these are letters written by inspired writers
 - b. they are mainly letters written to do several things
 - 1) to teach or instruct
 - 2) to encourage and edify
 - 3) to correct and set straight
2. Therefore we can learn some things about Christians
 - a. you can be a Christian and still not know all you need to know – thus you may need to be instructed or taught
 - b. you can be a Christian and be discouraged, persecuted, going through some sort of hard time, and need to be encouraged and edified
 - c. you can be a Christian and be wrong about some things, or have some sin in your life, and need to be corrected and set back on course

C. 2 Timothy 4:1-5

4 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, 4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. 5 But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. NASU

1. That's a passage written to Timothy that relates to his ministry among God's people, the church
2. Even preachers have to realize that Christians are not perfect people, so they are charged with the responsibility of teaching, encouraging, and correcting

III. WHAT DOES ALL THIS HAVE TO DO WITH EVANGELISM

A. Initially, it means we need to deal with the fact that the people we're sent to teach are not going to be perfect

1. Everybody has a sin problem with God
2. The gospel is the only thing that can solve the problem

B. Beyond that, saved people aren't perfect either

1. Matthew 28:18-20

18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." NASU

2. Here's a surprise for you – we're not sent to make people perfect, but to make people into disciples of Jesus Christ
 - a. spiritual maturity, which is where the path of following Jesus leads will produce an ever-growing nearness to perfection
 - b. the more we're like Jesus Christ, the more like perfect we become
 - c. the best thing I can do for you, or you can do for anyone else, is that help each other follow Jesus in every way possible

C. What I want you to see is that the work of evangelism doesn't stop at the baptistery

1. Spiritual life just begins when a person is saved
2. The work isn't finished, it's just got going

CONCLUSION

A. We're going to have to stop being afraid of imperfection

1. The imperfection in the people who need the gospel
2. The imperfection that continues among the Lord's disciples

B. Don't wait for a person to become perfect to teach them the gospel

C. Don't wait for yourself to become perfect to teach the gospel to others

D. Jesus is the only perfect person there is – let's all focus on Him!

E. Invitation