



Christian Faith Fellowship

- We are not a perfect church**
- We are not a perfect people**
- We are here because we know we need God's help and He has provided this help through Jesus Christ our Lord!**



CFF is called to:

Radiate the love of Christ

Reach the Lost and the Saved in order to

Restore them into fully mature followers of Christ

Accountability Questions

- **Did you spend at least 5 minutes a day – at least 5 days last week reading/hearing the Bible?**
- **Did you share a God story with someone this week?**
- **Did you spend time alone with God this week?**
- **What is the Holy Spirit is saying to you?**
- **Are you giving as God has asked you give?**

- Love & Forgiveness!
- Week 1 We looked at the foundation of our Relationship with God being His incredible love for us which is the foundation of our forgiveness
- Week 2 We looked at the complete forgiveness God has given us and His model of this is how we are to treat others with Love & Forgiveness
- Today we will look at a challenging aspect of dealing with Love & Forgiveness - the idea of “forgiving yourself”

- We touched on this last week – Stephen martyred **Acts 8** 1 Saul was one of the witnesses, and he agreed completely with the killing of Stephen. A great wave of persecution began that day, sweeping over the church in Jerusalem; and all the believers except the apostles were scattered through the regions of Judea and Samaria. 2 (Some devout men came and buried Stephen with great mourning.) 3 But Saul was going everywhere to destroy the church. He went from house to house, dragging out both men and women to throw them into prison.

Acts 9 1 Meanwhile, Saul was uttering threats with every breath and was eager to kill the Lord's followers. So he went to the high priest. 2 He requested letters addressed to the synagogues in Damascus, asking for their cooperation in the arrest of any followers of the Way he found there. He wanted to bring them—both men and women—back to Jerusalem in chains.

- We see that Saul took it on himself - as his mission - to destroy Christianity! To wipe out any and all followers of Jesus with no mercy.

- He wanted to completely destroy Christianity – and he was doing all this with the idea he was following God and doing a good thing!

Philippians 3 5 I was circumcised when I was eight days old. I am a pure-blooded citizen of Israel and a member of the tribe of Benjamin—a real Hebrew if there ever was one! I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law. 6 I was so zealous that I harshly persecuted the church. And as for righteousness, I obeyed the law without fault.

- His righteousness was found in what he was doing - his following of the Jewish Law.
- *Now let's see what he says about that strict religious practice....* 7 I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. 8 Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ 9 and become one with

Him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith.

- Paul regularly refers to what he used to be like and how he has changed
- Did he have regrets – of course! Who doesn't have regrets and wish we could go back and redo some of the stuff we did?!
- It's what you do with it now that makes all the difference!

1 Timothy 1 12 I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength to do his work. He considered me trustworthy and appointed me to serve him, 13 even though I used to blaspheme the name of Christ. In my insolence, I persecuted his people. But God had mercy on me because I did it in ignorance and unbelief. 14 Oh, how generous and gracious our Lord was! He filled me with the faith and love that come from Christ Jesus. 15 This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”—and I am the worst of them all. 16 But

God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great patience with even the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in him and receive eternal life.

- We see Paul again confesses his past failures but immediately sees how God can use his poor choices
- God didn't make him live wrong in order to have a testimony - God simply took what Paul had done and turned him around to use it for His glory - to speak to you and I about the amazing Love and Forgiveness available to us!

- Many of us have not let go of the past – not allowing the love and forgiveness of God to cleanse us of the wrong things we have done and in so doing, we are still holding ourselves responsible for those actions!
- We will never forget the wrong things we have done BUT we can most certainly accept the loving forgiveness of God and apply His mercy to those things! We understand they can't be changed but now we're looking at HOW they can now be used to reach others for Christ!

- There are people around you right now in church that are carrying guilt, shame, and regret for things in the past!
- There are people around you at work, school, stores etc. living the same way!
- We need to share the Good News – God has forgiven us! We no longer need to hold ourselves accountable for this stuff! If God has forgiven us – then let the guilt, shame and regret go!!!
- It is your past – and it did happen BUT it's NOT WHO YOU ARE TODAY IN CHRIST!

*Going back to Paul's testimony in **Philippians 3** 7 I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. 8 Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ 9 and become one with Him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with*

himself depends on faith. 12 I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. 13 No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us. 15 Let all who are spiritually mature agree on these things. If you disagree on some point,

I believe God will make it plain to you. 16 But we must hold on to the progress we have already made.

- When he says ‘forgetting the past...’ he obviously isn’t saying ‘forget’ in the context of no longer remembering – as he just shared some of his past - what he is clearly saying to us is - we live today for Christ and we look forward to what Christ is doing and is going to do thru us now!!
- The opportunities are before us NOT behind us!

- ‘16 *we must hold on to the progress we have already made*’ (You are not the jacked up person you used to be!)
- When we allow our past to discourage us as to what “could have been” - we are failing to see our future in ‘what can be - thru Christ!’
- We know we can’t change the past but we can change today and the future!
- I am 100% in on living in surrender and obedience to what the Holy Spirit lays on my heart from here on out! It’s going to be an amazing ride!!

Action Steps

- Everyone has a screwed up past and we must be forgiven - When did you receive forgiveness thru Jesus Christ?
- What are you hanging on to from your past (after being forgiven)?
- Do we think our past is too much for God to overcome? (Who would be the one reminding you of your failures?)
- Let's commit to “forget those things that are behind and press on to what Christ is doing for our future”