

## CONSTRUCTION ZONE: PROCEED WITH CAUTION

### I. 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 Philippians 1:6 Titus 3:3-7 John 1:10-13

**A. Former slave ship captain, John Newton, author of "Amazing Grace" said:** "I am not what I might be, I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I wish to be, I am not what I hope to be. But I thank God I am not what I once was, and I can say with the great apostle, "By the grace of God I am what I am." **(Can anyone say, Amen?)**

**B. The past few years in downtown Columbus at the I-70/71 split, a lot construction has been taking place. There's heavy equipment, warning signs, and lots and lots of orange barrels. While it's been masterfully designed and the finished project will certainly be awesome, it's a loud, dirty, and a crazy hot mess in the meantime!**

**C. We've said here through the years that we are a Church full of orange barrels. We're a people under construction. *We ain't what we once was nor what we're gonna be.* Like downtown Columbus, the best way to navigate this construction zone is to slow down, heed the warning signs, proceed cautiously, watch out for the other guy who may not be watching out for you, and with patience and grace, imagine what this is all gonna look like when God brings it all to fruition...**

**D. Artist renditions that depict what a project will look like when it's all finished can be immensely helpful. I don't have one for downtown Columbus. But my daughter Nicole in Texas, who follows *Millersport Coffee* on Facebook, sent me an artist's rendition of what their new java digs are going to look like. It's even impressive for non-coffee drinkers like me. It'll be like going from a shack to a palace...**

**E. As we prepare for Communion this morning, I want to share a few Scriptures that are liken to an Artist's rendition. Verses that remind us from whence we came but also verses describing the glorious destiny God has for we His children...**

**1) 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 (ESV) is a good place to start: *9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us so that whether we are awake (alive) or asleep (dead) we might live with Him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. (This is either the destiny you have or the destiny our Lord is eager to grant you. On His cross, Jesus purchased an eternal destination: Paradise! Like He said to the dying thief that turned to Him on the cross, "You're with Me!" (The Bread & Cup remind us.)***

**2) Titus 3:3-7 (ESV) describes what we were and what we're destined to be: *3 For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. (Our BC days. Before construction! Before Christ!) 4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by His grace (Just-as-if-I'd never sinned; just-as-if-I'd always obeyed...) we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (From enemies to heirs! The Bread & Cup remind us.)***

**3) Philippians 1:6 (ESV) echoes: 6 And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. (May we be sure too!)**

**F. Let me *parabolize*: Pay attention to the orange barrels. Don't panic if your exit ramp is closed. Pray for the dude who cuts you off. Keep your rage-filled gestures to yourself. Adjust your schedules as necessary. Don't think your job's more important than the guy whose bumper your riding. Don't lose track of you're destination. (I'm not just talking about the I-70/71 split!**

**G. On January 9, 2007, renowned violinist Joshua Bell sold out Boston's Symphony Hall. Seats were nearly \$100 each. Bell's one of the best violinists in the world. His violin is worth \$3-million! But then 3 days after the concert in Boston, he entered a metro station in Washington, D.C. wearing casual clothes and a ball cap. He opened his case and played his violin for 45 minutes. Only six people stopped, 20 gave money (a total of \$32), and not one soul recognized him.**

**H. John 1:10-13 (NIV) is an even more amazing story of Someone who went unrecognized: 10 He (Jesus, God's Son) was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. 11 He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him. 12 Yet to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God-- 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. (So here's the truth--you've been given eyes to see Him, to recognize *Who* He is! Further, once spiritual orphans, you've been issued adoption papers--given the right to become children of God. As Titus put it in our earlier passage: "...so that being justified by His grace you might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.") (The Bread & Cup remind us we're royal heirs with Jesus Christ!)**

**I. John Newton, who's quote we began with, also said this: "Remember, the growth of a believer is not like a mushroom, but like an oak, which increases slowly indeed but surely. Many suns, showers, and frosts, pass upon it before it comes to perfection; and in winter, when it seems dead, it is gathering strength at the root. Be humble, watchful, and diligent in the means, and endeavor to look through all, and fix your eye upon Jesus, and all shall be well." (We ain't what we once was nor what we're gonna be!)**

**J. Last month as we prepared for Communion, we talked about the ordinary *means of grace*, the *means* by which God gives to us--His grace. By *ordinary* acts like studying God's Word, hearing it preached, worshiping and praying together, baptizing new believers, partaking of the Lord's Supper--the Holy Spirit uses these *means* to enrich, fortify, deepen, reinforce, and change us from the inside out. God uses the *ordinary* to achieve the *extraordinary*. But if these practices are aimless and meaningless rituals that fail to steer us thru the construction zones of earth, onward towards the realms of glory above, then pity on us all! But we know better don't we?! Therefore with joy and with reverence, let us we quiet our souls and ask our Lord to be with us now as we receive the Bread & Cup...**

**\* Pray & Officiate Communion...**

**[Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff](#)**

### **1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 (ESV)**

**9** For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, **10** who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with Him. **11** Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

### **Philippians 1:6 (ESV)**

**6** And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

### **Titus 3:3-7 (ESV)**

**3** For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. **4** But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, **5** He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, **6** whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, **7** so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

### **John 1:10-13 (NIV)**

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### **Quote by John Newton**

"I am not what I might be, I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I wish to be, I am not what I hope to be. But I thank God I am not what I once was, and I can say with the great apostle, "By the grace of God I am what I am."

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- John Newton, *The Works of John Newton*, Vol. 2. p. 141.

### **Bonus Goodies**

**The Meaning of the Cross - R.C. Sproul**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MxtPKuGiMul>

**The Glory of God in the Cross - John Piper**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2A5ljUnAzk>

**The Difference Between Our Sanctification and Our Glorification - RC Sproul**  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mSN2r\\_BpxdY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mSN2r_BpxdY)

**"The Coloring Song" - Petra (Words & Music by Dave Eden)**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPDoFhAMkBw>

### [More Verses, Quotes, Excerpts, & Extras](#)

#### [Ephesians 2:1-10 \(ESV\)](#)

**1** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins **2** in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience-- **3** among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. **4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, **5** even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— **6** and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, **7** so that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **8** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, **9** not a result of works, so that no one may boast. **10** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

#### [Titus 2:11-15 \(ESV\)](#)

**11** For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, **12** training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, **13** waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, **14** who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession who are zealous for good works. **15** Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

#### [Quote by John Owen](#)

"The growth of trees and plants takes place so slowly that it is not easily seen. Daily we notice little change. But, in the course of time, we see that a great change has taken place. So it is with grace. Sanctification is a progressive, lifelong work (Prov. 4:18). It is an amazing work of God's grace and it is a work to be prayed for (Rom. 8:27).

- John Owen, *The Holy Spirit: Works of John Owen*, p.p. 108-109.

#### [Quote by Charles H. Spurgeon](#)

"If He gives you the grace to make you believe, He will give you the grace to live a holy life afterward."

### **Quote by S. Lewis Johnson**

"Justification, someone has said, is restoration to life. Sanctification is restoration to health. When a person has Jesus Christ he has not only justification but he also has sanctification. He has justification as his position. He is righteous and satisfies the righteous claims of a holy God in Christ. But also he possesses ideally sanctification. But that sanctification is something that is worked out in a process in his daily life. Justification brings us from the tomb, to use another figure. Sanctification delivers us from the old clothes that characterize the life of the tomb. We think of John chapter 11 and Lazarus' resurrection, and when Lazarus came forth from the tomb at the word of Christ, it reminds us of the fact that we have life and justification through the word of the Lord Jesus Christ. But then it was commanded that others should loose Lazarus from his garments. And so it is necessary for a believer in Jesus Christ to put off the old threads and put on new, set forth in the word of God as that characteristic of the new life in Christ."

- Dr. S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., sermon titled, "*Shall We Continue to Sin?*" <http://sljinstitute.net/pauls-epistles/romans/shall-we-continue-in-sin/>

### **Quote by D.L. Moody**

"The thief had nails through both hands, so that he could not work; and a nail through each foot, so that he could not run errands for the Lord; he could not lift a hand or a foot toward his salvation, and yet Christ offered him the gift of God; and he took it. Christ threw him a passport, and took him into Paradise."

- D. L. Moody, "*Day by Day with D.L Moody*," Moody Press.

### **Quote by Charles H. Spurgeon**

"I do not come into this pulpit hoping that perhaps somebody will of his own free will return to Christ. My hope lies in another quarter. I hope that my Master will lay hold of some of them and say, 'You are mine, and you shall be mine. I claim you for myself.' My hope arises from the freeness of [sovereign] grace, and not from the freedom of the will."

### **Quote by Thomas Goodwin**

"It is not enough to hear a sermon, but you must eat it down, take in what it commands, and then it will purge your heart...Take the word and digest it, squeeze the juice of it into thy heart, and it will purge thee from all contrary corruption."

- Thomas Goodwin, *Man's Guiltiness Before God*, p. 73.

### **Prose by John Wesley**

"Purge me from every sinful blot;  
My idols all be cast aside:  
Cleanse me from every evil thought,  
From all the filth of self and pride.  
The hatred of the carnal mind  
Out of my flesh at once remove:  
Give me a tender heart, resigned,  
And pure, and full of faith and love."

- John Wesley, *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, Volume XI, Third Edition, p. 386.

## **Glory on Display**

Sermon Illustration by Greg Breazeale

On January 9th, 2007, Joshua Bell sold out Boston's Symphony Hall. Seats were nearly \$100 each. Bell plays a violin worth more than \$3 million and is one of the best musicians in the world. Three days later he entered a metro station in Washington, D.C. wearing casual clothing and a ball cap. He opened his case and played his violin for 45 minutes. Only six people stopped, 20 gave money (a total of \$32), but no one recognized him.

Today, when it comes to the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ, many are blind. They do not see His beauty and majesty, and therefore do not ascribe to Him the honor and worth He deserves. As Christians, we want to do all we can to spread Christ's glory in the world. In 2 Corinthians 4:1–6 the Apostle Paul addressed how difficult this can be. We may become discouraged and desire to quit (v.1), but we have good reasons to press on.

- Greg Breazeale, illustration from sermon titled, "*Glory on Display*." To read the full sermon, go to:  
[http://www.lifeway.com/Article/sermon-glory-on-display-2-jesus-light-corinthians-4#author\\_bio\\_0](http://www.lifeway.com/Article/sermon-glory-on-display-2-jesus-light-corinthians-4#author_bio_0)