



VOLUNTARY OR MANDATORY?

You weren't redeemed to stay the same!

IDENTIFY YOURSELF

1. Victor, Victim, Powerful, Pitiful, Capable, Culpable

A. Available...Dream

(1) **"I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.** That life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me." Galatians 2:20

(a) Let's begin by getting on the same page...

1. **"The heart is deceitful** above all things and it is **exceedingly corrupt.** Who can know it?" Jer. 17:9

a) Can I get an Amen?

b) A steady diet!

1) Xxx

(b) NO! For you, there's a choice...

1. **"There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who don't walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."** Romans 8:1

B. Let's go back to the Foundation...

(1) **“by grace you have been saved through faith**, it’s not of yourselves; **it is the gift of God**, not of works, that no one would boast. **[SAVED FOR WHAT?]** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for **good works**, which God prepared before **that we would walk in them.**”
Ephesians 2:8-10

(a) What are those good works prepared for you?

1. “Being therefore **justified by faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; **through whom we also have our access by faith into this grace in which we stand...**” Romans 5:1-2

(b) What is God’s Grace? His Power (supernatural empowerment)...

1. **“I was made a servant according to the gift of that grace** of God which was given me **according to the working of his power.**” Ephesians 3:7
2. “He has said to me, **“My grace** is sufficient for you, for **my power is made perfect in weakness....”** 2 Corinthians 12:9

(c) What does God grace produce (allow/empower?)

1. “Be **imitators of me**, even as **I** also am of **Christ.**” 1 Corinthians 11:1

a) The Call to Christlikeness...

C. The Purpose of the Church...

(1) “He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, shepherds and teachers; **for the perfecting of the saints**, to the work of serving, to the **building up of the body** of Christ, **until we all attain** to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, **to a full grown man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**, that we may **no longer** be children, **tossed back and forth and carried about with every wind of doctrine**, by the trickery of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; but speaking truth in love, **we may grow up in all things into him who is the head, Christ,**” Ephesians 4:11-15

(a) The Purpose of the Church...is to edify itself until it matures into the stature and fullness of Christ!

1. In other words, you carry within you what Christ carried in Him...

a) John said... “Repent, for **the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!**” Matthew 3:2

b) Jesus said... “Repent! For **the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.**” Matthew 4:17

1) Xxx

(b) What is the Kingdom of Heaven?

1. "Being asked by the Pharisees when God's Kingdom would come, he answered them, "God's Kingdom doesn't come with observation; neither will they say, 'Look, here!' or, 'Look, there!' for **behold, God's Kingdom is within you.**" Luke 17:20-21
 - a) Whatever it is, as a Christian, you are carrying it WITHIN YOU!
 - b) If that is true, what should you look like?
 - c) What should you identify with?
- (c) Pause: remember where we began. Only you know what you felt and how you responded in that moment when I declared...
 1. "***The heart is deceitful*** above all things and it is ***exceedingly wicked.***" Jeremiah 17:9
 - a) Prayerfully, your opinion of yourself is shifting already!

D. Critical question for honest introspection:

(1) **Do you identify as a saint or sinner?**

- (a) I know the scriptures that are vying for your attention right now, the ones burning a hole in your brain, screaming, "I'm a sinner, sinner, sinner!"
 1. "for **all have sinned**, and fall short of the glory of God;" Romans 3:23

2. **"If we say that we have no sin,** we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." 1 John 1:8
 3. **"For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am fleshly, sold under sin."** Romans 7:14
 4. **"For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing..."** Romans 7:18a
 5. Again maybe even... ***"My heart is deceitful and exceedingly wicked."*** Jeremiah 17:9
- (b) And I know that nearly all of you are screaming
"Romans 7, Romans 7, Romans 7!"
1. **"For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am fleshly, sold under sin. For I don't understand what I am doing. For I don't practice what I desire to do; but what I hate, that I do. But if what I don't desire, that I do, I consent to the law that it is good. So now it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwells in me.** For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing. For desire is present with me, but I don't find it doing that which is good. **For the good which I desire, I don't do; but the evil which I don't desire, that I practice.** But if what I don't desire, that I do, **it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwells in me.** I find then the law that, while I desire to do good, evil

is present. For I delight in God's law after the inward person, but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and **bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members**. What a wretched man I am! **Who will deliver me out of the body of this death?** I thank God through **Jesus Christ, our Lord!** So then with the mind [not Christ's mind], I myself serve God's law, **but with the flesh, sin's law."** Romans 7:14-25

2. The Romans 7 dilemma solved...

a) **#1 (You are a new creation!)**

1) "If anyone is in Christ, **he is a new creation**; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17

b) **#2 (Two spirits are at work simultaneously!)**

1) "For what man knows the things of a man except **the spirit of the man** which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except **the Spirit of God**. Now **we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God**, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God." 2 Corinthians 2:11-12

c) # 3 (When sin is present in you, It's NOT you!)

- 1) "But now, **it is no longer I** who do it, but sin that dwells in me." Romans 7:17
- 2) "Now if I do what I will not to do, **it is no longer I** who do it, but sin that dwells in me." Romans 7:20
- 3) "So then, **with the mind [new nature]** I myself serve the law of God, but **with the flesh [old nature]** the law of sin." Romans 7:25

E. So which do YOU identify as being YOU: the saint or the sinner?

(1) **I can tell you what Paul called you...**

(a) Corinthians, Romans, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians

1. {Sample} "to the assembly of God which is at Corinth—those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, **called saints**, with all who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, both theirs and ours:" 1 Corinthians 1:2

a) Why? Because the sin issue has been handled?

- 1) "Christ ...will appear a second time, **not to deal with sin**, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him." Hebrews 9:28

(b) **To forget that the sin issue has been handled or to be constantly remind that you are a sinner is so monumentally destructive to your walk as a Christian, that it can accurately be described as the single greatest deterrent to your growth as a disciple.**

1. “For he who **lacks these things** is blind, seeing only what is near, having **forgotten the cleansing from his old sins.**” 2 Peter 1:9

(1) **What does Jesus, Paul, Peter, and John have to say about the sin issue?**

(a) Instead—let’s believe the words of Christ!

1. “You shall **be perfect**, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.” Matthew 5:48

(b) Instead—let’s believe the words of Paul!

1. “May the God of peace himself **sanctify you completely. May your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved *blameless** at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Thessalonians 5:23

a) ***“You shall be blameless with Yahweh your God.”**
Deut. 18:13

b) Pay attention to this amazing revelation...

1) **“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ** also loved the assembly and gave himself up for her,

that he might **sanctify her**, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, **that he might present the assembly to himself gloriously, not having spot or wrinkle** or any such thing, but that she should be **holy and without defect.**" Ephesians 5:25-27 WEBUS

c) Who is she? What is Paul really saying?

1) "This mystery is great, but **I speak concerning Christ and the Church.**" Ephesians 5:32

d) That's you... glorious, not **having spot or wrinkle** or any such thing, ...**holy and without defect.**

(c) And, let's believe the words of Peter...

1. "but just as he who called you is holy, **you yourselves also be holy in all of your behavior**, because it is written, ***"You shall be holy, for I am holy."**" 1 Peter 1:15-16 [*Lev. 11:44-45]

(d) And, let's believe the words of John...You are designed and empowered to walk like Christ!

1. "**God's love has most certainly been perfected in** whoever keeps his word. This is how we know that we are in him: he who says he remains in him **ought himself also to walk just like he walked.**" 1 John 2:5-6

- a) What was Jesus' walk like and what is it meant to produce in you?
- 1) "For him **who knew no sin** he made to be sin on our behalf, **so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**" 2 Corinthians 5:21
- 2) "For we don't have a high priest who can't be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, **but one who has been in all points tempted** like we are, **yet without sin.**" Hebrews 4:15

F. **Tempted, but without sin! Is it possible?**

(1) **Contemplate the title of this message. Voluntary or Mandatory?**

- (a) "**No temptation** has taken you except what is common to man. God is faithful, **who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able**, but will **with the temptation also make the way of escape**, that you may be able to endure it." 1 Corinthians 10:13
1. Let's do a rapid diagnostic test.
 - a) Contemplate your last sin: was it voluntary or mandatory? Now, go back one sin: was it voluntary or mandatory? Now, keep going!
2. Then, ask yourself a few final questions:
 - a) If my sins are voluntary, can I stop volunteering?

- b) If my sins are voluntary, do I want to stop volunteering?
 - c) If my sins are voluntary, should I stop blaming the Devil?
 - d) If my sins are voluntary, should I stop blaming others?
- 1) “Everyone who sins also commits lawlessness. Sin is lawlessness. You know that **he was revealed to take away our sins**, and no sin is in him.” 1 John 3:4-5 WEBUS
- (b) Stop volunteering to sin and begin following in His footsteps...
 - 1. “For you were called to this, because Christ also suffered for us, **leaving you an example**, that **you should follow his steps, who didn’t sin**, “neither was deceit found in his mouth.”” 1 Peter 2:21-22
 - a) Those steps...**holy, guiltless, undefiled, separated from sinners...** Hebrews 7:26

G. Tempted

- (1) **XXX: XXX**
 - (a) XXX
 - 1. Xxx
 - a) Xxx

1) Xxx

(b) XXX

1. Xxx

a) Xxx

1) Xxx

(2) **XXX: XXX**

(a) XXX

1. Xxx

a) Xxx

1) Xxx

(b) XXX

1. Xxx

a) Xxx

1) Xxx

(3) **XXX: XXX**

(a) XXX

1. Xxx

a) Xxx

1) Xxx

(b) XXX

1. Xxx

a) Xxx

1) Xxx

FILL-INS

1. **XXXX**

A. XXXX

1) XXXX

2. **XXXX**

B. XXXX

1) XXXX

3. **XXXX**

C. XXXX

1) XXXX

4. **XXXX**

D. XXXX

1) XXXX

5. **XXXX**

E. XXXX

1) XXXX