

Pepper Lighthouse (Sanctification) (Discipleship) (Personal Testimony)

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son. Romans 8:29a

The Basic Bible Truth

My salvation can be described as consisting of three tenses. I was saved. At a specific moment in the past, I realized that I had a sin issue that I could not solve myself and I invited God to be a ever present, active part of my life. I will be saved. There is coming a day when Jesus will return and all will be made right again, and I will spend eternity in Heaven with Him. I am being saved. Sanctification. For the Christian, it is our calling to be constantly making an effort to become more like Christ in our actions and thoughts.

The Object

A Bell Pepper
Small Wooden Stand With 1 Christmas Light Bulb
Exacto Knife



Most people might carve a pumpkin in the fall. I have found that carving a pepper is much less messy and is not tied to a season at all. Typically, I carve it on the table as I am speaking, placing it over the light bulb for a moment to show the progress as each detail is added.

The Lesson

Earlier this week, long before this lesson began, I knew that I would be teaching here today. So, I came up with a plan, and ever since that time, I have been working to see that my plan is executed well. I needed a pepper, so I went to the store, because, in my world, that's where you find bell peppers. I went to where they are and I then looked through the selection before me and chose this one you see here. I chose it. The produce guy at the store didn't choose it. The checkout girl didn't choose it. The guy out in the

parking lot gathering shopping carts didn't choose it. It was my plan to find a pepper just like this one and set it free from the horrible doom that it was facing. Its future was a certain slicing and dicing and eventual demise in something very, very hot. I saved it from that awful future because I had a plan.

In eternity past, God also had a plan. He knew that He would need a redemption plan in place to save us from death in Hell. So, from that point on, He has been working to execute His plan perfectly and offer salvation to all. He left the grandeurs of Heaven and came to where we are, He came to this earth as a human being, as a baby, because He loved us so. He lived a perfect life and then went to the cross to pay the price of blood, for our sins. And because of His plan, when we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we are spared from an eternal doom of burning in Hell forever.

When I got this pepper home from the store I washed the dirt and grime off of it. I drizzled water over it and rinsed it off and then took a towel and rubbed it dry. Now I will begin cutting around the stem and began cleaning out and removing the inside of the pepper, that gunk that no one eats, like seeds and stuff. I have been doing all of the work. It has not helped or offered me anything that I needed.

And so it is with our salvation. God chooses us, extends the offer of salvation toward us. If we accept, we are saved from a horrible fate of Hell, and are washed in the water of the Word. As a result of that exposure to Scripture, we become increasingly aware of our failings and sin and God patiently works to remove the sin and clean us up, from the inside.

In pepper carving, there is basically one major theme that describes the process of cleaning out a pepper. The seeds must be removed. In the Christian's life, as God begins to work in our lives, He removes the seeds of doubt from deep within us. We become more and more convinced of His existence and His effort on our behalf. In short, we doubt less and less and trust more and more. That takes time. It is a process.

The next thing that I do to my pepper, is to add ears. You don't see them often on a pumpkin, because they aren't all that visible and maybe they look odd to you, but without ears, spiritual ears, we don't hear God speak. I will tell you right up front that I have never heard God speak audibly to me—ever. I don't ever expect His too, either. But with His Holy Spirit living inside of me, I don't need an audible speech. I have something far more convincing, His Spirit urging me one direction or another. He speaks in a still, small voice. That implies that we need to be listening over the noise and confusion of the world that we live in.

I will carve two eyes next. They represent the fact that I need to learn to see the world—others—through God's eyes. God sees the unlovely sinner through tear stained, loving eyes. When I can see them the way that He does, I will have taken a huge step forward in my spiritual maturity. We often remind ourselves that in Heaven, our tears of sadness will finally be wiped away. But if you read that carefully, God has promised to wipe away every tear after the end of His final judgment at the end of time. It will not only be our tears that He will wipe away. I believe He is talking about His own as well. Jesus wept. And I believe that He still weeps today.

And what would a carved pepper be without a nose? I use my nose to differentiate good and bad sometimes. For example, the first thing that I do when grabbing the milk from the refrigerator is to look at the expiration date. But the true test of edible versus inedible is "the sniff". I twist off the cap and smell the milk. The slightest hint of turning, and I respectfully decline. So it is for us in life. We are presented many options. Our relationship with God, based upon our knowledge of Scripture, should guide our every choice. It's how we avoid the pitfalls of sin, because Satan is taking great effort to disguise sin with colorful, enticing wrapping to try to trip us up.

The last detail to add to our masterpiece, is the mouth. This one is smiling. The life of being a Christian is wonderful. We may go through hard times it is true. But in the end, we have Him to rely upon. He is our comforter. As I write this, I think of some dear Christian friends of mine who are quickly losing the battle against cancer. It is gut wrenching to see them go through the pain and suffering of this terrible disease. But through even the most difficult times, they know that they have a loving Father who is watching their every moment and holding them close. The death of His saints is precious to the Father. That is something that an unsaved individual cannot even begin to comprehend. And our relationship with Him is something to share with the world around us.

We are the light of the world, the Bible says. As I dim the lights and place the pepper we have carved on top of the light bulb, you begin to see how noticeable the features are on the little vegetable. We live a darkened world that looks at light in wonder and confusion. Our living, breathing example of a Christ like life is exactly what this world needs to see to draw them closer to God. Be that little vegetable lighthouse for the world to navigate by. The manufacturers of Dr, Pepper soft drink had an add campaign in the late 1970's commonly known as "Be a Pepper". It had a cute little jingle that went with it. I'm not here to promote that soda company, but their campaign slogan is very appropriate for my object lesson. The song went like this, "I'm a Pepper, he's a Pepper, she's a Pepper, we're a Pepper, wouldn't you like to be a Pepper too?" Let 's be the vegetable lighthouse in the world that we live, so others can see Christ through the example of our lives.

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