

# **St Martins C3 – September 29, 2024**

## **Under Construction – Local Construction**

### **Sermon Summary:**

Our aim in this series is to give you the tools to grow in godly character. The work God chooses to do in you and me is for us to become like Jesus, as like him as if we were his brothers and sisters. In this Becoming-like-Jesus project, there is always work to be done.

### **Read Romans 8:29**

When we become Christians, our life gains new foundations; they are secure. We do not doubt our eternal destiny and have been changed, but there is still work to be done.

### **Read 1 Timothy 6:11-12; James 1:2-4; Philippians 1:6; Romans 12:2**

It's an ongoing process. One that makes us a new person by changing everything about us. God has created us with the ability to grow and change throughout our lives.

Let us hear clearly from scripture that it is awesome that God has saved us, but we are not finished yet. There is more local construction that he wants to do inside of us, and we can change.

*Every Christian is called to engage in the relentless pursuit of improvement.*

This is much more than self-improvement. It is about how we become closer to God, more holy and fully embrace the life that God has for us.

So, here is the question:

*What is God working on you at the moment?*

In this series, we will focus on the positive things God wants to build in us, but we still need to deal with our sins. If you are struggling with a sin, good! Keep on struggling, at least you haven't given in to it.

### **Read Philippians 2:12-13**

Here are three things to do to overcome a sin in your life.

#### **1 – Pray**

Our reliance on God is a key factor that will make a big difference in our hearts and lives.

#### **2 – Work At It**

Research, journal and implement strategies. Work hard to change our minds and change our actions.

#### **3 – Get Others to Help**

Surround yourself with people who can help keep you accountable, pray for you and give you direction.

Leave today with the determination that you will never stop growing.

## **Connect Group Material:**

### Key Point

Every Christian is called to engage in the relentless pursuit of improvement.

### Questions

What stood out to you from this week's message?

What does this message tell you about God and humans?

Has there been a time when you felt like God was working on your life? If so, describe it. If not, why not?

What is one godly character trait you lack or sin you are tempted to accept?

Name two or three things that would be different if God completed His work in your life.

If God asked your family where they would like the "chiselling" to start on you, how would they answer?

What tools might God use to work on areas of your life that need to be reshaped or removed altogether?

What do you think would be the most painful or uncomfortable thing about the chiselling process?

What are you working on this week, and how will you do it?

## **Monday Devotion: God's Chisel**

***Read Ephesians 2:10***

For today's devotion, watch and reflect upon the full video we showed at church on Sunday. You can find it at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3QckBL2DfVg&t=299s> or search for God's Chisel on YouTube to watch the full version.

(Note: you will see this is a preview of the real thing which we purchase to show on Sunday. It came with some devotional notes, which we have included in a few of the days of your devotional notes here.)

The actual word that's used for "handiwork" in the Greek of Ephesians 2:10 is *poiema*, which is where we get the word "poem." Isn't that amazing? The creator of the universe created you like a poet sits down and composes thoughts to create a work of art. How special you are! It is true: God doesn't make junk.

Once you have seen it take some time to reflect upon what God spoke to you about as you watched it.

## **Tuesday Devotion: God Has a Plan For You**

***Read Hebrews 12:1-4***

We are not on the planet by chance. God created each one of us for a purpose. The book of Hebrews compares our life purpose to a race and calls us to be encouraged by those who have gone before us in the race and to give our best. We also see that sin is something that can trip us up and keep us from doing our best in the race. Our job is to run and avoid the sin.

In living out our purpose, we may grow tired of “running” and feel like we can’t do it. That’s why we have a goal on which to fix our eyes—Jesus Christ, who came to the earth to live a perfect life and die on the Cross for our sins. Jesus set the perfect example for us to follow.

Here is a prayer you can pray today.

*“O God, grant that looking upon the face of the Lord, as into a glass, we may be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory. Take out of us all pride and vanity, boasting and forwardness; and give us the true courage which shows itself by gentleness; the true wisdom which shows itself by simplicity; and the true power which shows itself by modesty.” —Charles Kingsley, 1819-1875*

## **Wednesday Devotion: God Has An Encouragement for You**

***Read Hebrews 12:5-11***

God knows that in our lives we will not understand everything. We may be asking right now, “Why, God? Why?”

We may not get the answers we want and certainly may not understand them. However, God wants us to be encouraged and understand that if we’re experiencing God’s discipline, then it’s for our own good and because God loves us.

Good parents discipline their children because of love. They’re training and teaching the children because that’s best for them. God is the same way.

The book of James says the “testing of your faith produces perseverance,” so you should “consider it pure joy...whenever you face trials.” It may sound crazy but try to remember that God wouldn’t discipline you if God didn’t love you and believe in you.

In the end, we will be more like Christ because of God’s discipline. God is in the process of using discipline to chisel away everything that doesn’t look like Christ. You see, ultimately, our purpose on this planet is to bring glory to God and show the world what God looks like. If God is disciplining you, God has great plans for you. We have to learn to celebrate God’s discipline and blessings.

## **Thursday Devotion: Prayers of Change**

**Read Romans 5:3-5**

Here are two more prayers from ancient authors that you could choose to pray as you commit to changing.

*“O Lord God, destroy and root out whatever the adversary plants in me, that with my sins destroyed you may sow understanding and good work in my mouth and heart; so that in act and truth I may serve only you and know how to fulfil the commandments of Christ and to seek yourself. Give me love, give me chastity, give me faith, give me all things which you know belong to the profit of my soul. O Lord, work good in me, and provide me with what you know that I need.” — Columbanus, 550-615*

*“Lord, make us to walk in your way: ‘Where there is love and wisdom, there is neither fear nor ignorance; where there is patience and humility, there is neither anger nor annoyance; where there is poverty and joy, there is neither greed nor avarice; where there is peace and contemplation, there is neither care nor restlessness; where there is the fear of God to guard the dwelling, there no enemy can enter; where there is mercy and prudence, there is neither excess nor harshness’; this we know through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” — Francis of Assisi, 1182-1226*

## **Friday Devotion: A New Identity**

**Read Matthew 16:24**

A little while ago, I was reading two books side-by-side. One was about how God has made us as people, unique and amazing. It said, *“Remember, God sees you as strong, courageous, brilliant, creative, and special.”*

The second book I was reading was by some monastic writers from hundreds of years ago who warned of the danger of self-love. It said: *Christ did not say, “If anyone will come after me, let him enjoy himself, let him be gorgeously dressed, let him be drunk with delight.” He never even said, “Be glad that you are perfect and that you can see how well you are doing.” No, Jesus said, “If anyone will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.” His path winds up the side of a steep mountain where death will be present on every hand.*

Woo. The two books are not opposed to each other, they are two sides of the same coin. For us to grow we need to know our awesome identity in Christ. For us to grow we need to die to our old identity and lay down ourselves.

The path God has for us is not always an easy one. There are days when it feels like winding up a steep mountain where death is present on every side. Yet, for God to make eternity fully bloom in our lives that is the path we must walk. Pray that God would help you to lay down your old identity and walk in the new identity he has for you.