

ALPHA COUNSELING SERVICES

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Celebrating Thirty Six Years of Service

2014

Dear Friends,

Recently someone was telling me how they had given up on trying to do much of anything because they just couldn't do anything right. I was reminded of an August years ago when I received a small box full of blackberry jelly jars. On each label was the title "Freedom to Fail Jelly". Earlier that year I had preached a sermon titled; "The Freedom to Fail" in which I had encouraged Christians not to give up on their interests, hopes, and especially their service to God because they couldn't do what they wanted perfectly. I had grown up with a standard set for me that no young person could accomplish and in some areas just gave up. Often in our Christian walk we avoid new projects and refuse to take on responsibilities because the risk of failure is too great. The assumption is that if something is not done perfectly it's a complete failure. Then we believe our identity is that of a **FAILURE**. We assume our performance equals our identity. That is the way our fallen world operates but, God introduced a totally new identity in the New Testament. We who are Born Again were placed into Christ and our new nature, from God's view, is that of Saint, or Holy One. What we need is to agree with God about who we are and not look back at the old messages we received from our past. God's opinion is far better and more accurate than the very best I got from others.

Now back to the jelly. A women, in our church, who had grown up on a Midwest farm had tried and failed to make jelly that measured up to her mother's standard. From the criticism and her frustration with not measuring up to her mother's standards she concluded that she couldn't make jelly and never tried again. Because of her new understanding of her identity in Christ and never having lost the love of jam and jelly she decided to make jelly no matter how it turned out and that is how she came to name it. The jelly was excellent!

Well, the rest of the story is I have been invited to speak in a church next Sunday and just couldn't

come up with what God wanted to say to this congregation. Then I woke up in the middle of the night thinking of the jelly that came one August many years ago and just knew that was what He wants them to hear. Although I never heard His voice speak the words, the message was clear.

We are the Righteousness of God, IN Christ Jesus, and we must never forget who we are!

Richard

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Reprint from 2000

"do we also remember that our union with Christ gives us freedom from the power of sinning? Do we remember that Christ carried us in Him on the cross and we too have died to sin? Much of the defeat I see among Christians is caused by not knowing the great inheritance given to us on the cross.

Romans 6 in the Living Bible puts it like this: v5 "For you have become a part of him, and so you died with him, so to speak, when he died: and now you share his new life, and shall rise as he did. v6 Your old evil desires were nailed to the cross with him; that part of you that loves to sin was crushed and fatally wounded, so that your sin-loving body is no longer under sin's control, no longer needs to be a slave to sin; v7 for when you are deadened to sin you are freed from all its allure and its power over you. v8 And since your old sin-loving nature "died" with Christ, we know that you will share his new life...v11 So look upon your old sin nature as dead and unresponsive to sin, and instead be alive to God, alert to him, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Do you see that? As Christians when we sin it's because we don't know who we are in Christ. After salvation many feel abandoned by God to struggle with sin and worry. They don't realize that He made everything possible for our victory!

When we continue to think of ourselves as
'just sinners who keep sinning'
we are not living in our inheritance.