

desire for God. Now, I am at my core a new creation who still has some fleshy temptations. The core of who I am has changed. The sinful nature that defined me has been cut away and I am a new creation.

This is essential to understand because we often dumb down our faith by saying that we're just "sinners saved by grace." As a Christian, I am not just a "sinner saved by grace." I was a sinner saved by grace at the moment of salvation. But once I was saved and transformed, I am now a new creature in Christ, fully capable of living faithfully and fruitfully for Him. When we hold onto our "sinner saved by grace" identity, we often use it to excuse our sinful tendencies and our failure to live differently. "Well, what do you expect? I'm just a sinner saved by grace." Yet we're so much more than that.

2) ... symbolizes the miracle of new life .

In Genesis 17:16 we read that after the incredibly long wait, God was actually going to bless them with a child. And that child would be the father of a great nation. That child represented the miracle of new life. Because God's plan to give Himself a people involved the physical descendants of Abraham, it makes sense that the sign (of circumcision) had to do with sexuality.

In the New Testament (Colossians 2:13-15; John 1:13; John 3:3; Romans 6:6-8; Romans 8:10-11; 2 Corinthians 4:10-11; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:3; 1 Peter 1:23) we read about spiritual circumcision. In Colossians 2:13 Paul says that we were "dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature." Now, though, God has made us "alive with Christ." We have been given the miracle of new life – new spiritual life.

In Abraham's case, the promise was going to happen physically through a physical son so the sign of circumcision was a physical one. In our case, the promise is going to happen spiritually through spiritual change to our heart. The promise of physical descendants (Jews) meant that the sign should be focused on the point of transmission (circumcision). The promise of spiritual descendants (Christians) means that the sign should focus on the point of transmission (the heart).

This is a miracle of new spiritual life. We have died with Christ and been raised to newness of spiritual life. We have been born again. We have been given new life. We have been given abundant life. We have been given, incredibly, eternal life. And that new life happens through a circumcision of the heart – a cutting away of the sinful nature.

3) ... represents a removal of reproach .

In Genesis 17:17 (and Genesis 15:2-4; Joshua 5:2-9) we see that the disappointment and discouragement that Abraham and Sarah had endured for all those years undoubtedly left a scar. The presumption back then was that barrenness was a sign of disapproval from God. Abraham speaks to this in 17:17 when he laughs at the thought that this burden he's been bearing can now be rolled away. How can it happen when he's 100 and Sarah is 90? Verse 18 indicates that he was banking on Ishmael as the avenue of God's answer. With Abraham, circumcision was a sign that the discouragement and disappointment of all those years of childlessness were over.

In the New Testament (Matthew 26:28; Luke 3:3; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38; Hebrews 9:22) we see for us this circumcision of the heart and the new identity and new life that comes with it represents a removal of the reproach that we had on us before. One of the problems we were dealing with was that even if we had some desire to get to God, we couldn't get there because of our sins.

In Luke 24:47, Jesus tells His disciples the disappointment and discouragement that has been felt before in wanting to be close to God but having no way to deal with

our sin has been removed. Just as Abraham's physical circumcision was a sign of the removal of reproach, so the death and resurrection of Jesus and the spiritual circumcision of the heart that brings is a sign of the removal of reproach between us and God.

4) ... symbolizes higher expectations .

In Genesis 17:1, 9 God speaks to Abraham about the promise of what He intends to do through him. In verse 1 we see the first time that God places an expectation on Abraham. We see this also show up in verse 9 that God expects Israel to fulfill His covenant, an expectation of obedience. We know that one of God's frustrations with Israel down through the years was their failure to consistently fulfill the covenant.

In the New Testament (1 Corinthians 7:19; Romans 6:11-14; Romans 8:12-14) we are encouraged that because of what Jesus has done for us, we are able to be obedient. We are able to live lives where we keep His commandments. Not perfectly, of course, but through the power of the Spirit we can live dramatically changed lives. We can live in His power.

This is a breathtaking shift: to go from someone mired in their sin with no chance of being right before God in their own power to someone who is able to faithfully (although not perfectly) live out the commands of God.

With Abraham, the sign of circumcision brought with it higher expectations. God said He wanted Abraham to walk blamelessly. With us, the sign of spiritual circumcision brings with it higher expectations. God desires for us to walk blamelessly before Him and He has provided us the spiritual resources to pull that off.

5) ... promises abundant fruitfulness .

In Genesis 17:3-8, God promises enormous physical blessings and fruitfulness through Abraham. God isn't just promising a little move of His power, but something far-reaching and lengthy. God intends to pour out His blessings upon Abraham. Abraham was promised incredible physical fruitfulness through Isaac.

In the New Testament (Matthew 3:8; John 10:10; John 15:16; Romans 7:4; Philippians 1:11; Colossians 1:10) we are promised abundant spiritual fruitfulness through God working in our lives. In John 10:10, Jesus says that following Him will allow us to experience abundant life. This new life that God given us is intended to allow us to live in a way that brings glory to God through the fruitfulness that He produces in our lives.

Conclusion

We've talked about a lot of ideas within this sermon. The big one that I want to close with harkens back to the idea of our new identity. Abraham was given a new name and a new identity. We have been given a new name ("Christian") and a new identity ("righteous, holy, chosen"). Going back to that verse that we said was the most important reference to circumcision in the New Testament, our sinful nature has been taken away through what Christ did for us. Our identity has been changed. Let's act like that. Know who we really are at our core and live out that identity. Don't presume failure; expect victory.

Live Out Your Identity!

Sign, Sign, Everywhere a Sign

Back in the seventies, there was a one hit wonder band called *The Five Man Electrical Band*. Their only hit was called "Signs." The chorus went like this:

Signs, Signs, Everywhere there's signs. Blocking out the scenery. Breaking my mind. Do

this! Don't do that! Can't you read the signs?

You can say whatever you want about seventies rock and roll, but that song was true then and still is true today. We have signs everywhere, don't we? The signs tell us where we are, when to stop, when to go, when to be careful. When we can't speak or people can't hear us, we just use a sign to tell people what we want them to know.

Like the Salvation Army woman who was informed by a policeman that a local ordinance prevented her from ringing her bell to invite contributions. She was contrite and apologetic that she had "broken" the law. But the next day she was back at her post doing a brisker business than ever. She had two signs she was waving in the air, first one and then the other. One sign said "ding" and the other said "dong." As the saying goes, there is more than one way to skin (your favorite animal).

Signs are a way we communicate and often how we identify things. Signs are important in the lives of God's people also. They may not be printed signs but we do portray who we are by the way we live. There are things that Christians are supposed to do to identify themselves as Christians, like The Lord's Supper and Baptism. Doing these say that we belong to God. People should be able to identify God's people by observing what they do and how they act. Our lives are signs to the world.

We are baptized because we have trusted in the mighty power of God. Our sin is cut away and we tell the world that we now are one of God's children. It seems there are many people today whose only testimony is that they were baptized. If you claim to be a Christian, you must have a testimony. Sure, baptism should be a part of your testimony. But there also must be a time that you knew that you believed and accepted what Jesus has done for you. Baptism is the sign of salvation, an outward expression of a circumcised heart. Baptism, according to The Scriptures, is not the salvation experience. The faith that we place in God through Jesus Christ is how God makes a covenant with us. We solidify that testimony through baptism.

Baptism is our circumcision. It symbolizes the removal of the old sin in our lives and it identifies us a child of God. It is not what saves us. True salvation will be followed by a life change. We are not the same person we were before we met Jesus. . There are other signs that Christians should be showing in their lives. After his circumcision God told Abraham that He must serve Him faithfully. When we are bonded with Christ through our belief in him, we are to serve Him faithfully.

God Bless You!

Bro. Allan

Opportunities For Service

Living out Your Spiritual Commitment . . . and Fulfilling Christ's Divine Plan

Sunday, August 28, 2016

Choir Rehearsal..... 9:00 am

Sunday School 9:15 am

Morning Worship.....10:30 am

Nursery: Volunteers as needed

Ushers: John Lewis ,Gary Yarbrough ,
Joseph Coats, Isaac Waters

Alternate: Larry McKahan

No Evening Worship.....

Wednesday, August 31

Youth Study..... 6:30 pm

Prayer / Bible Study6:30 pm

Adult Choir 7:30 pm

Thursday, September 1

G Team.....6:30 pm

Saturday, September 3

Women's Bible Study.....9:00 am

Sunday, September 4, 2016

Choir Rehearsal..... 9:00 am

Sunday School 9:15 am

Morning Worship.....10:30 am

Nursery: Volunteers as needed

Ushers: Larry McKahan, Bill Schottel,
Ken Kirkpatirck, Isaac Waters

Alternate: Ken Nice

Evening Worship.....6:30 pm

Wednesday, September 7

Youth Study..... 6:30 pm

Prayer/Bible Study 6:30 pm

Adult Choir 7:30 pm

Thursday, September 8

W Team.....6:30 pm

Saturday, September 10

Women's Bible Study....9:00 am

Up-Coming Events.....

August 28 — Diversicare 2:30 pm

September 3 — Women's Bible Study 9:00 am

September 5 — Labor Day! No Food Kitchen

September 11— Business Meeting and Carry-in Dinner
Please Note the Date Change

September 14 — Prayer Warriors

September 18 — SJBA Annual Meeting Green Valley Baptist

Church 4:00 pm

— Collect for food Pantry

GROW Team

Commit to **GROW!** **Everyone make a contact!** Invite someone to Bible Study and Worship this week. ☺

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Sunday Nights

We will not have Sunday Evening Service here tonight. Hope to see you next week.

Wednesday Night Prayer and Bible Study

We will meet this Wednesday at 6:30 pm. Prayer matters!

Diversicare Nursing Home
Today, August 28, 2016 at 2:30 pm

Please join us as we minister to those who can no longer attend their own churches.

Sunday School Worker's Meeting

We will not have a Sunday School Workers meeting this month.

See You At the Pole

SEE YOU AT THE POLE day is Wednesday, September 28, at 7:00 a.m. local time. All around the globe, in every time zone, students will be gathering at their flagpoles, praying for their school, friends, families, churches, and communities. SEE YOU AT THE POLE in prayer for our generation! Please continue to pray for Those in the schools of our city.

Prayer Warriors

Wednesday, September 14

10:00 am

Here at the church.

Saint Joseph Baptist Association Annual Meeting

September 18, 2016

Green Valley Baptist Church

4:00 pm

Please Make Note

The Business Meeting and Carry-In Dinner has been moved up one week because of the SJBA Annual Meeting. It will be September 11 instead of September 18.

For the Record-

Attendance: August 21, 2016

Sunday School.....	45
Visitors.....	3
Total.....	48
Contacts Made.....	2
Morning Worship.....	49
Children's Worship.....	11
Sunday Night	12
Wednesday Night	13

Financial Record:

Weekly Budget.....	\$ 2,040.52
Offering Received...	\$ 1,465.15

Offering Received by Mail:

September Counting Team:

Larry McKahan and Mike Green

September Van Driver:

George Burgess

Remember to call 232-3747

before 8 am if you need a ride.

September Birthdays:

05...Nellie Reynolds

12...Grant Schottel

20...Elmer Mayse

20...LoLeta Middleton

20...Tim Waters

22...Rachael Molloy

23...Kenny Kirkpatrick

29...Lindsey Rasmussen

September Anniversaries

No anniversaries are recorded for the month of September. If we have missed yours in error, please let us know. Thanks.

Prayer Requests ...

Maxine and George Ferbert—strength

Elvera Crow, surgery recovery

Karissa and Matt Long

Nellie Reynolds—strength

Betty Campbell—healing

Pat Puckett—eyes, healing

Marcia Hart's Family

Audrey Dugan—strength

Tim Izer and Family

Sue Higgins—regain strength

Jim Winans, surgery recovery

Alicia McKinnon

Dakota Duty, recovery

Robbie Hutcherson, Loleta's son

Lisa Bowers—Jack and Flo's daughter

Children's Camp

LoLeta Middleton—strength

Buddy Means—Mary Sharp's nephew

Ellen Blanton and Lois Ulmer—

Elvera's daughter & daughter-in-law

Stella Davis and Linda Rails—Doris

Richardson's sisters

Henrietta Caballero—Brigida's Sister

Austin Chalfant—Abby's nephew

Gary and Marilyn Singleton—health

Our Nation and our Leaders ...

Five More New Families...