

“NOBODY’S PERFECT”

1 Peter 2: 19-25

So, here we are in May of 2020 – Almost 2 months removed from the COVID 19 pandemic! Doesn’t it seem longer than 2 months? Our lives have been disrupted by this invisible enemy and is there no light at the end of the tunnel? But there are scientists around the world working right now for a cure, and we are getting closer to having the answer – a vaccine that can halt the spread of the COVID 19 virus – An answer to our many prayers – A return of our lives to a more normal routine.....Does the name Alexander Fleming ring a bell to anyone with us this morning? In 1928, Fleming would discover penicillin, the antibiotic that would revolutionize medical care, save untold millions of lives – and it happened, by accident! One day in 1922, while infected with a cold, Fleming transferred some of his snot to a petri-dish – Fleming was also a slob, so he put the petri-dish with his snot on his cluttered desk and forgot about it. A couple of weeks later, Fleming found the dish and examined it – The petri-dish was full of bacteria – However, the microscope revealed one area of his snot was free of bacteria, due to an enzyme he named lysozyme. Years later, Fleming was still a slob, and he left an uncovered petri-dish next to an open window, when it became contaminated with fungus spores. When he checked it under the microscope, Fleming discovered that the bacteria near the fungus was dying – He managed to isolate the fungus and discovered it was effective against numerous pathogens that caused pneumonia, meningitis, diphtheria, scarlet-fever, gonorrhea, and many more. Thus, penicillin was discovered – As Fleming put it, “I did not discover penicillin – nature did that – I only discovered it by accident.” And maybe, just maybe, our cure for the COVID 19 virus is waiting to be discovered by accident – “Nobody’s perfect”....right? If everyone did what we were supposed to do every time, we’d have no problems – No regrets – No apologies – Sounds good doesn’t it? But, that’s not reality.....”Nobody’s perfect!” This might be the most understated cliché of all time, and we have a whole book that chronicles the universal struggle of all people, for all time. “The Bible” emphatically tells us that “Nobody’s perfect”, and one of the most fascinating things in the Bible is the life account of the only “Sinless” person in history – God’s one and only son, Jesus Christ. And in today’s teaching, we’re going to talk about something that is critical to understanding the gospel – Jesus never sinned – Do most of you have the basic points of the gospel message? Jesus came to save – Jesus never sinned – Jesus died on the cross – Jesus rose from the dead – Jesus paid for our sins with his death – Jesus is coming back. In response to this “Good News” message of Jesus, we must: Admit our sin – Trust in Jesus – Turn away from sin – Be Baptized – Follow Jesus. This is the basic gospel or “Good News” in a nutshell. And Jesus came into our world to share this “Good News” to all people – And we must be willing to share this message as well – Jesus never sinned, and what does this mean? In the Bible, one of the Greek words frequently translated is “Sin” or “Hamartia”, which means “Missing the mark”....And our Lord Jesus never “Missed the mark” – Jesus never got off target – Jesus never sinned, not one time, not one moment, not once in his life. And this fact is so far from our reality, that it’s hard to even imagine. Can you imagine speculating about Jesus – That boy Jesus aced every test! He never struck out in Little-League – The adolescent Jesus never picked on the nerdy kids – He always plugged his ears when his buddies told dirty-jokes. Ah, but that’s not what being sinless looks like – It’s way beyond all of that! And you and I have never met a sinless person – Not you – Not your saintly grandmother – Not Mother Teresa – Not even Saint Peter! Only 1 person in all of human history lived a sinless life – Jesus Christ – No sinless person before Jesus – No sinless person after Jesus left our planet. What does God’s word say about sin? Everyone sins.....Every one! Stop looking around now – Don’t judge your neighbor, cause every one sins, including you! The cat-is-out-of-the-bag...Everyone has been “Outed” as a sinner – So, don’t act surprised – don’t be offended – And certainly, don’t deny it.....Every one falls short of God’s standard – All our struggles are different and our sins may vary....But from God’s vantage-point, we’re all in the same boat – The sinners boat – We all fall short of God’s standard. So, what does it mean that Jesus never sinned? Jesus never fell short of God’s standard – Jesus standard is perfection. And God’s perfection means, “Holy”. Holy means pure – Undeified – Uncorrupted – Without stain or blemish. Holy means set apart, and without a trace of evil. God’s holy standard is perfection, and we can’t live up to that standard – But Jesus did – Jesus never fell short of God’s standard.

Parents usually have standards – You tell your kids to clean their rooms, and you have a standard in mind. Your kids tell you, “My room is clean, it’s all done.” But as a parent, you have to go look for yourself, because your standard of a clean room is different than your kids – So it goes with us and God. People like to think, “By the time I die, I’ll have done more good than bad.” This sounds reasonable, right? But this is your standard, not God’s standard – God’s under no obligation to lower God’s standard to meet ours – Our Holy God is perfect, and God is in Holy perfection. God’s standard is perfection.and we humans, we are far from perfect! We stray – We have this tendency to go our own way, but Jesus, never strayed from God’s path – Jesus never wandered off the straight and narrow path – And it’s tempting to think this was easy for Jesus, that it came natural for him – That it was easy to be perfect. But the Bible tells us that Jesus was fully human, and had a full human experience. Jesus had every opportunity to sin – temptation was no less tempting for Jesus than us – Jesus faced all the temptations we face, and yet, he never sinned! Jesus faced the temptation of greed – of power – of lust and sexual sin – Of lying – Cheating – Stealing – Gossiping. He was tempted with drunkenness, anger, idolatry, gluttony, laziness – And every other kind of sin you can imagine – Jesus was tempted in every way – just as we are – Yet, he did not sin! Can you imagine what it would be like to live this way – Every single day? We all sin every single day – Sin comes so naturally to us, that we don’t even realize we’re sinning. We sin every day by the things we do, and by the things we don’t do – We sin in our words – In our thoughts – In our attitudes – We are all desperately, hopeless, habitual sinners – Yet, Jesus, lived without sin every single day of his life.He was able to give himself as a perfect sacrifice. Our scripture lesson today from 1 Peter 2: 21 -25 says, “When they hurled insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats; Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins, in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness – By his wounds, you have been healed. ...for you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls.” Jesus was sinless, and our offering for sin, and the appropriate punishment for sin is death. Sounds kind of radical, doesn’t it, a bit harsh. But, we don’t understand how serious sin is – We don’t understand the holiness of God – And this is what Jesus has done for us – We’re so used to our sin, we don’t even notice it – We are accustomed to living with less than perfect. See, perfection is not our standard – We’re imperfect humans – It’s no big deal – But to god, these are glaring imperfections. So we naturally think, I’ll fix it.I’ll make it right. But there’s no price we could pay to have our sinful imperfections removed – Sin does not buff out! So, we lower our standards because they’re inconvenient. But God’s standards remain – perfectly Holy, and God’s only son was perfectly sinless – Jesus was able to offer himself as a sacrifice for our sins, because he is Holy. God sees through our facades – God sees the chips, dings, and imperfections in our character – And knowing we could never get it right on our own – God sent the one who never sinned, to be an offering for our sin, and by this sacrifice of Jesus, we are made right with God. Jesus was pure, he wan’t trying to trick or lead people astray – He wasn’t in it for money, fame, or popularity – He was in it for you! To save you and set you free from your sins – And to give you a better life on earth and an eternal life with God in heaven! When people persecuted Jesus – Mocked him – Ridiculed him – he didn’t sin – He never lost his cool – Never lashed out or retaliated – He forgave the people who crucified him, while they were crucifying him. Jesus personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we may be dead to sin, and the Bible reminds us that we are healed by his wounds. Jesus accepted the punishment we deserve – and by his death and resurrection, we have new life and eternal life. We were like lost sheep who wandered away – “Nobody’s Perfect”And now, we turn to our good shepherd, the guardian of our souls – The one without sin did for us sinners, what we could not do for ourselves – And this has made all of the difference in our earthly lives and our eternal lives.Jesus came to save – Trust in Jesus – Turn away from sin – Be Baptized in our Lord – Spread this good news to all we come in contact with – Carry the gospel of the forgiveness of sins, to all of the sinful. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.Amen!