

"THE SWEETEST SONG"**Date:** March 31, 2019**Speaker:** Pastor Chris Potter

(Vs) 2nd Peter 1:3,4 NIV – "His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."

2nd Peter – Peter's Farewell speech

- Jesus' followers are to be people who never stop growing in the character traits that mark God's own divine nature.
- The more we do so, the more that nature becomes our own.

This passage communicates 2 main thoughts...

1. We have everything we need to live into our God given purpose (Divine Nature)
2. Truly living in this divine nature comes after escaping *"the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."*

Peter gives us a pathway forward in this...

- *(Vs) 2nd Peter 1:5-9 NIV*
- *Love is the ultimate way that we participate in our "Divine Nature."*

"Self-Control is the ability to do the right thing, even when you don't feel like it."

– Drew Dyck

- Most of us view self-control like that overdue dentist appointment – necessary but dreaded. It feels boring and confining – like the cop that shows up to shut down the party.
- Self-control is an invisible virtue, operating behind the scenes to sustain a healthy, holy life.
- According to the American Psychological Association, Americans consistently name a lack of willpower as their number one-character deficit.

"The Bible portrays Self-Control not as restrictive but rather as the path to freedom that produces love."

The two dominant themes in the scriptures are:

- 1) light and darkness
- 2) freedom and slavery.

(Vs.) 1. Cor. 6:12 – You say, "I am allowed to do anything"--but not everything is good for you. And even though "I am allowed to do anything," I must not become a slave to anything.

What we think is freedom often isn't, at least not lasting freedom.

(Vs) 2nd Peter 2:19 NIV – "They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for "people are slaves to whatever has mastered them."

Question – How can I surrender my entire life to Jesus when pockets of it aren't under my control?

- First thing we have to do is identify ourselves on the self-control spectrum...

"All we know is what we want... and our 'wanters' are broken." - Jonathon Wilson

- What we do, we do everywhere...
- Evil – Any action, thought, or attitude that is contrary to the character or will of God.

"The reservoir of evil in all of us is deeper than we know and the barriers against its eruption are shockingly fragile." – Marguerite Shuster

When we inevitably come across areas where we lack in self-control/encounter temptation, the scriptures show us 2 responses...**Flee It! (2 Cor. 2 & 2 Timothy 2)**

- Often we underestimate the power of temptation and overestimate our ability to resist it.
- In Homer's classic, "The Odyssey": *The main character Odysseus embarks on a perilous journey, escaping many dangers on his journey home from the Trojan War. None of these dangers is more deadly than the Sirens. These mythical mermaids are beautiful, seductive. But their appeal is deceptive. In truth, they are murderous. Odysseus understands the danger and knows he is vulnerable to their song. He hatches a plan to sail past the Sirens without succumbing to their song. He instructs his sailors to tie him to the mast and commands them also to stuff their ears with bee's wax so they do not hear the Siren's singing.*

We must account for our own weakness...

- Identify areas and situations that you have fallen prey to temptation and write out a plan for how you'll react to those situations in the future.

Face It (Romans 13:14)

- Self Control = Self Awareness
- “You can’t face it if you don’t feel it.”
- **Argonautica** – The Argonauts must sail past the same sirens that threatened the sailors in The Odyssey. But they escape their deadly snare with a very different strategy. As they sail past the sirens, they hear the singing. But they have a legendary musician and poet Orpheus on board. He draws his lyre, **and plays a louder and more beautiful song, drowning out the sirens music. Enthralled with Orphues’s sweeter song, they pass by safely.**

The best way to avoid sin, the most powerful means of self-control, comes by listening to a “sweeter song.” For us as Christians, this means tuning into God’s ultimate purpose for us.

- So much of our happiness and effectiveness depends on what we choose to pay attention to.
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**“O God help us to be masters of ourselves that we may be servants of others.”
- Sir Alec Patterson**

- Gaze – to look at something and see it all the way through

“The expulsive power of a new affection” – Thomas Chalmers

- Instead of restraining the hand it aims to capture the heart.
- The biggest threat to our freedom isn’t any external enemy. It’s our ability to control ourselves.
- Satan wants to convince you that you are not powerful, but remember you already have everything you need to overcome him!
- Place God at the Center of your Life. Flee Temptation. If you can’t flee it, stand and fight. Eliminate Distractions. Set sanctified goals. Grow your willpower. Break bad habits and replace them with healthy ones.

“Self-Control is about finding ourselves, our true selves, in God and in what God has made us to be. It is realizing that all of our little wants are secondary to what is our deepest desire. To live into our divine nature, our ultimate purpose.”