

## Message – June 22, 2014

**What is a masterpiece?** Michelangelo said, “I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free.”

The story has it that when Michelangelo was commissioned to do the sculpture of King David he looked at hundreds of blocks of marble before he decided on the "right" one. To most of us all those blocks shown to him would have looked more or less the same but for Michelangelo it needed to be a certain piece of marble - nothing else would do.

Why was that?

It was because he knew exactly what he wanted his David to look like. **He** could see the end result in front of his eyes.

When asked how he was going to create such a fine figure as King David out of such an enormous chunk of marble his answer was: "That's easy. All I have to do is chip away everything that is not David." Isn't that incredible? And so easy...

But why am I telling you this story?

Do you know what your David (end result) looks like?

*“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (EPHESIANS 2:10)*

The actual word that’s used for “handiwork” in the Greek 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.

God expects those who follow Jesus to look more and more like him from the inside out. When they say that a person is given a *new life* in Jesus, it sounds like everything’s going to be different from that point on, doesn’t it? Well, it doesn’t. It means that that person has taken the first step toward a lifetime of change, which at times can seem pretty uncomfortable – downright painful, sometimes! It can seem as though God uses a chisel and hammer to chip away at and shape our lives so we can become the people God longs for—true followers of Jesus. This chipping away and shaping is known as the process of sanctification. That’s a big word with big

ramifications (oops, another big word!). Regardless, our sanctification in Christ is a big part of our walks, and we need to pay attention to it.

The greatest gift God gives us is salvation in Jesus Christ. When we accept God's gift, we have eternal life. But God doesn't expect us to sit back and cruise through the rest of life. God expects salvation to be worked out in us for the rest of our days. The longer we live as followers of Jesus, the more our lives should look like his because of God's work in us and through us.

Sometimes this process of becoming more and more like Jesus in every area of our lives can be pretty challenging—and even painful. It doesn't take long before we're faced with areas in need of improvement. Christians still struggle with issues such as anger, pride, jealousy, and bitterness. While those sins are indeed forgiven because of what Jesus did on the cross, the effects and consequences of those sins remain. That's why God desires that we deal with them constructively.

>> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3QCkBL2DfVg> <<

At the beginning of the video, Tommy's character prays and asks God to do whatever it takes to make him into the image of Jesus. That type of honest prayer is one of the most dangerous (yet Christ-like) a Christian can utter. What Tommy prays sounds a lot like Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane: "May your will be done." Opening our lives to God in such a manner won't leave us the same as we were before we prayed.

The idea of God with a chisel and hammer chipping away at our lives may not sound like a lot of fun, but such painstaking work is exactly what must take place for us to become the people God desires. This process of God chipping away with a metaphorical chisel is known as "sanctification."

Remember what Tommy wrote in his journal at the time he received salvation from Jesus? "I can't wait to see what God's going to do with me." Have you ever felt like that? I have! (Getting and being sober, says Brad)

Repeat after me: I AM GOD'S MASTERPIECE!

And one more time... **I AM GOD'S MASTERPIECE!**