



Theme: Beautiful and Beloved – Enneagram and Understanding
“The Apostle Paul, and the Good Person – Type 1”

Sermon preached by Aaron Strietzel

September 26-27, 2020

Scriptures: Acts 8:1-3, Acts 9:3-9 and Romans 5:8

VIDEO Sermon Starter

SLIDE “The Apostle Paul, and the Good Person – Type 1”

My name is Aaron Strietzel and I’m the Three Springs Campus Pastor at Summit Church. Today we wrap up our sermon series using the Enneagram as a tool for helping us better love God and love others as we love ourselves.

How many of you have ever had a season or a time where you did something and really messed it up, made a mistake, or lost your temper? Have you ever said something that you wished you could take back? Almost as if you were trying to pull the words back into your mouth?

I had one of those times once when I asked when someone I knew was going to be having their baby. Their reply? “I had her a couple of weeks ago.” Looking back these times can be funny, but at the moment I was so embarrassed and full of shame all I wanted to do was walk away.

As a pastor, I’ve had more than several shame spirals after giving a sermon. I don’t think people mean to be that way, but more than a few times

people have said something after a sermon that just cut my heart and made me feel awful.

I'm willing to bet you've been there too. I'm sure we have all had multiple experience of what Brene Brown calls a "shame spiral." We often get stuck in the shame spiral when we make a mistake, or we feel stupid for something and it sends us spiral down often saying to ourselves over and over "I wish I wouldn't have" or "I was so stupid" or "what was I thinking?"

You know who we are thinking about during those times right? Ourselves. Only we aren't kind and loving with ourselves, are we? And you know what else? It's much more difficult to be loving of others when we are caught in those shame spirals isn't it?

But how do we get out of those spirals? Better yet, how do we step back and gain a little perspective on what consistently sends us in a spiral?

We've been talking about a tool called the Enneagram

GRAPHIC Enneagram Personality Types - Persons

PERSONALITY TYPES



As you can see up on your screen, the enneagram tool suggests that people fall into one of nine primary motivations. Now, technically each type has three subtypes so each person falls into 1 of 27 different types, and then you throw in your wing (one of the numbers adjacent to your type) and that creates even more nuances, but all that to say that it doesn't so much put you in one of nine boxes but tries to help you see the box you tend to put yourself in.

One of the things that is most helpful from the enneagram is it highlights your constant struggle, or the places where you might experience consistent shame spirals in your life, which can help each of us to become more aware of them and hopefully, with the Spirit's help, begin to take steps

to overcome them so we can better learn to love ourselves and at the same time love others.

Today we are finishing up the enneagram types with type One, sometimes called the reformer or the perfectionist. Each type has what is called a “vice” or major struggle and a “virtue” or what they move towards when they are healthy and integrated.

Slide Vice – Anger/Resentment
Virtue – Serenity

So for type One’s the vice or struggle is anger or sometimes people call it resentment. Since One’s are so passionate about justice, morality, what is right, they can sometimes fall prey to their anger, frustration, or resentment when things don’t go the way they should or the way they thought they should. Now, to be clear it’s certainly not that One’s walk around angry all the time, it’s just that their focus of attention tends to move toward what is missing or what can improve. On the positive side of the coin, it helps them bring change and growth to their lives or organization they work for. But on the negative side of the coin, it can mean that at times they will become impatient, frustrated, or angry because something didn’t match the ideal they had in their head.

We all experience this in our lives, but One’s tend to deal with this more than other types since their focus is often what is missing.

However, the virtue they bring when healthy is a sense of serenity. They can work hard for the things they believe in, sometimes speak truth in ways that may be difficult for others to do, and make sure things are followed through with but they can do this from a place of serenity as they can learn to release the outcomes, be ok with the imperfections, and become more flexible.

Graphic

Enneagram Type 1	
AT THEIR BEST	AT THEIR WORST
Ethical	Judgmental
Reliable	Inflexible
Productive	Dogmatic
Wise	Critical of Others
Idealistic	Uptight
Conscientious	Controlling
Honest	Anxious
Orderly	Jealous
Self-Disciplined	Fixed on Imperfections

 Your Enneagram Coach

If you resonate with a lot of these descriptions on the graphic above, it just might be that you are an enneagram type One.

The Biblical narrative that most represents types One is the story of the apostle Paul. As we have mentioned before, we don't know Paul was a type One, but his life and epistles tend to reflect a lot of type One aspects.

Paul, who was first called Saul, was a Greek speaking Jew who had been trained as a Pharisee. We first encounter Saul in the book of Acts, Chapter 8, just following the first death of a Christ flowerer named Stephen.

Bible **That day a severe persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the countryside of Judea and Samaria. ² Devout men buried Stephen and made loud lamentation over him. ³ But Saul**

was ravaging the church by entering house after house; dragging off both men and women, he committed them to prison.

Acts 8:1-3

Enneagram type One's tend to be passionate, zealous, and strong fighters of what they believe in. We see these tendencies in Saul who was a zealous Pharisee who believed he was doing the work of God.

We will come back to Saul's story in a moment, but he went on to have an experience with Christ that forever changed his life. While he was once zealous working *against* the church of Christ, this encounter led him to work zealous *for* the church of Christ. After his conversion experience he became known as Paul. Of the 27 books in our Christian Scriptures or New Testament, 13 are attributed to Paul and about half of the book of Acts is about Paul's life. Many attribute Paul to be the most influential Christian to have ever lived.

One of the characteristics of enneagram type One's is that they make excellent teachers. They tend to see things in black and white, which helps them communicate things clearly and concisely. As with Paul, they also have a strong desire to help others improve and grow, which may be why many are attracted to working in areas that help people like social work, teaching, work in the justice system, or ministry. In fact, type One's represents the largest group of any enneagram type on staff here at Summit Church, which in some ways isn't surprising since they have such a desire to help improve people and organizations. I was able to sit down with Janelle Meyer, our director of hospitality and connections, Robb Bourden our director of administration, and Jake Forsythe our Ministry program director as they shared about their personal experiences of being an enneagram type One.

Video Janelle Meyer, Robb Bourden, Jake Forsythe

Question What have you learned about yourself in working with the

Enneagram?

Question **Is there any specific story that comes to mind that might capture the enneagram type One?**

TYPE 1
The Moral Perfectionist

 <p>PUT TO DEATH your Core Weakness of resentment that leads you to be continually frustrated, dissatisfied, or angry with yourself and others. Through Christ, you are made perfect.</p>	 <p>BRING TO LIFE your heart's Core Longing to know that you are good. You have been forgiven through Christ, and His righteousness has been credited to you. You are a new creation!</p>
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 YourEnneagramCoach

QUESTION: Does any of that ring true for you in the diagram above?

**QUESTION: Which spiritual practice have you found most helpful and why?
(Taken from the Enneagram Spiritual Formation page...**

<https://saturatetheworld.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Enneagram-Spiritual-Formation-Plan.pdf>

- i. **Downstream practices that seem to come easier.**
 - 1. **Meditating on God's Word**
 - 2. **Making the World Better**

- ii. **Upstream practices which can be more challenging.**
 - 1. **Journaling, particularly confessing areas where they have messed up**
 - 2. **Spending time in nature**

I want to invite us to return to the story of Paul. We read about his life as a Pharisee named Saul who went around putting Christians in jail, but he has an experience that turns his world upside down.

Bible ³ Now as he [Paul] was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" ⁵ He asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ⁶ But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." ⁷ The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. ⁸ Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹ For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Acts 9:3-9

While there is a lot to tease out here concerning type One's I wanted to invite all of us to think about a few things no matter what enneagram type we resonate with. Saul was blinded by a light and then asked by Jesus why he was persecuting him. What was Saul doing? The work of God, or so he thought. One thing for all of us to keep in mind here is that:

**Slide It can be possible that sometimes when we think we are doing
God's work we are actually fighting against it**

Let that sink in for a moment. I think we can look at church history and the violence, persecution, even genocide done in the name of Christ that we would all agree is not the work of God, but some people once felt so passionately that it was. If history should teach us anything it should teach us humility. We want to follow God and God's leading in our lives, but we also have an ego that tends to want to be in control and struggles to release that control. Sometimes our ego can even deceive ourselves by making us feel righteous or zealous in our cause. Keeping humility at the front of our hearts reminds us that we all miss it from time to time.

This idea of humility reminds me of a prayer by one of my favorite spiritual writers, a trappist monk named Thomas Merton

**Slide My Lord God,
I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.
nor do I really know myself,
and the fact that I think I am following your will
does not mean that I am actually doing so.
But I believe that the desire to please you
does in fact please you.
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.
And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road,
though I may know nothing about it.
Therefore will I trust you always though
I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.**

**I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.**

I love the humility and the longing to follow the Spirit's leading found in this prayer, as well as the reminder that even when we feel lost, when we don't know the path forward, that we can trust that we are not alone. While we are talking about Enneagram type One's today, I think this prayer can speak to all types. I know I've said this prayer more than once in 2020 as we all navigate so much uncertainty.

Paul's story in many ways is an archetypal story for all of us, not just those who identify as enneagram type One's. We can find ourselves in his story, sometimes at different points in our own journeys. Even though it seems that Paul thought he was doing God's will in persecuting the church, his desire eventually led him to an experience that transformed him and set him on a better path.

Paul's story also gives us hope, for those who we all know who might seem to be far away from God. If God's love can change the heart of a zealous pharisee, then surely God's love can change the heart of others.

I hope this series has helped you better understand and love yourself as well as better understand and love others, which Jesus says, along with loving God, sums up the whole thing!

I would like to close our time together with the Scripture memory verse for this week found in Romans 5:8

**Bible But God showed His love to us. While we were still sinners,
Christ died for us.**

Romans 5:8

God didn't wait until we were perfect, which would have been never. God didn't wait until we had our lives fairly well put together. God's love is given

even when we find ourselves in the shame spiral. God's love is unconditional, meaning there are no conditions that you need to meet. It goes before us and follows alongside of us in all we do, even when we mess it up.

As Methodists we call this prevenient grace.

May we all sense this prevenient grace in our lives in greater ways this week.

And may we all sense God's love and presence as we continued to worship together.