###  Warm Springs Church Logo June 25

# Wrecked

**1 Kings 22:48-49 NIV**

**Now Jehoshaphat built a fleet of trading ships to go to Ophir for gold, but they never set sail — they were wrecked at Ezion Geber.**

Are You A Wreck?

When I became convinced that God wanted me to work full-time in Christian ministry, I had to sell my car to raise enough money to go away to college. I certainly missed it when I arrived in Bolivar Missouri but it wasn’t a terrible sacrifice to make. Nearly everywhere I needed to go was within walking distance or else a friend would take me or loan me his car. But then I moved on to New Orleans for graduate school and it was a much different situation. The campus was located in a pretty poor part of town and it was not so easy to get about without a car. I was far too poor to afford a car though so I just accepted the situation without complaining. Every once in a while I needed to borrow a friend’s car and to get to church I had to find someone who would give me a ride but I never felt deprived living without a car until I got married. I had the opportunity to work at a psychiatric hospital but I needed a car to get there. Mary Jo had a good job and so we bought a little Toyota Corolla. It had just enough leg room and head room for me and it got good gas mileage. It was an older car but it ran perfectly and having it gave me a new sense of freedom. I could go wherever I wanted when I wanted to go there. I didn’t have to wait for Mary Jo to get home to take me places. I felt like a real man. Of course living in New Orleans is an adventure for a car owner. One time I got up and went out to my car and found it resting on concrete blocks. Someone during the night had kindly decided all four of my tires and rims were too old so they took them off my hands. I actually really enjoyed that little car. The air conditioner worked fabulously which is a great benefit in hot and humid New Orleans. Just a week or so before Mary Jo and I were scheduled to leave New Orleans after graduating, a friend of mine knocked on my door. Someone driving a giant RV had as he turned onto the street from our apartment parking lot put his foot on the gas accidently rather than on the brake and smashed into my Toyota. Because it was parked behind Mary Jo’s company car, the RV squished my car like an aluminum can. It was wrecked.

Wrecked is an interesting term because in many ways it is totally subjective in how it is used. You can say you had a wrecked childhood but what does that mean? Were you beaten as a child, molested, living in poverty, abandoned…or just didn’t get a cell phone until you were ten? How do you decide if your childhood was wrecked? We say the same thing about marriages. Some might say their marriage is wrecked but what does that indicate? You don’t talk to each other? There isn’t any romance in it? It has been rocked by infidelity or drug abuse? What does it mean to have a wrecked marriage? Or perhaps you might tell someone your family reunion was wrecked by some problem or difficulty. Would everyone who attended it say the same thing? Would they look at the weekend as wrecked? If someone tells you that his house is a total wreck, would you upon arriving agree with the assessment? You might think it looks pretty nice, better than your “wrecked” house. Someone might describe themselves as a total wreck after getting their grades. Would you agree with her, that she really was a total wreck? Does every person without make-up after just getting out of bed actually look like a wreck or do some of us look pretty good, self-assessments aside. Do you ever see yourself as a wreck? Have you ever viewed your life that way?

We are as a general rule, fascinated by wrecks. It is pretty commonly observed that even when a wreck is on the other side of the freeway, traffic slows down so everyone can get a good look at it. Nothing is more curious to us than the celebrity whose life becomes a wreck and we are entranced when we see images of a plane wreck. But what if we were the wreck? What if it was universally accepted that we were the wreck? What would we do about that?

One of the most common mistakes made within the Christian community is the belief that the task of the Church is to improve the lot of those in the community. We think we are here to make good people better or floundering people solve their problems but this is where we swerve off the road. It is not the goal of the Church to make better drunks, kinder fiends, stronger weaklings, smarter fools, bigger children or more comfortable sinners. The Church is not the garage where fender bender lives get a new paintjob. It is not a clinic where sick people get an aspirin. It is not and has never been a counseling center for manic/depressives to get a shot of Prozac. The Church is a wrecking yard where totaled cars go to be demolished; a morgue for the dead to be laid to rest. The Church is the last stop for life to be found; it has never been otherwise.

An astounding statement in scripture is dumbfounding if we think it is the goal of Christian people and of the Church in general to fix damaged people. Paul made it clear what is really to happen when the Church gets involved with people. “**I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live but Christ lives in me**.” (Galatians 2: 20a NIV) Does this sound like someone who has been fixed or someone who has died, who has become a demolished wreck? How can one person live if another lives in the same person without being a split personality? The Church has a single message. Die, so that Christ may live in you.

We will see this perhaps a bit more clearly if we examine the life of one of the most famous people in the Old Testament. At the ripe young age of seventy-five, God told Abraham to leave his relatives and the land where he had made a home and move to a place God Himself would tell him to settle. **The Lord said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you.” (**Luke 19: 10 NIV) Abraham did just that but not perfectly. He brought his wife Sarah but also his nephew Lot with him. God had told him to leave behind his relatives but he didn’t or couldn’t. He was still alive. He went down to where the Lord told him to go and pitched his tent in the land of Canaan. But then when a famine came to the land where the Lord had told him to build his home, he didn’t stay. **Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while…**(Genesis 12: 10 NIV) He was still alive. He went to Egypt where his cowardice nearly got his wife brought into the harem of Pharaoh. After God got him out of Egypt and directed him back to Canaan, the Lord promised Abraham that he would have descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky. This was of course a tremendous promise, especially for a man who was by now into his eighties. Abraham believed God though and it was only after he and his wife Sarah got impatient with the length of time it took for him to father children that the two of them decided he would try to get Sarah’s servant girl pregnant as a way of finally having children. **He slept with Hagar and she conceived.** (Genesis 16: 4a NIV) This was not from God. This was Abraham doing what seemed best because he was still alive. That is what living people do. They do as they wish and Abraham did as he wished. But when God did open up Sarah his wife’s womb and she bore a son through her husband Abraham, Sarah regretted her decision to have Abraham father a child through Hagar but it was done. That is how it is when you remain alive. You make decisions you regret although you think you are smart and have an idea what you should do.

Here is where this whole matter turns permanently. Abraham was told by God to sacrifice his son on Mount Moriah. The Lord told him to take the son of promise Isaac and kill him there. **Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, Isaac, who you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about.”** (Genesis 22: 2a NIV) For the first time in his life, Abraham completely trusted God in a matter. Without questioning him, without excuse making or debating, without hedging on the command, Abraham brought his son, his wood for the fire, his fire and most importantly his dagger up the mountain and there he began to do perfectly what he was told to do. Abraham created an altar, stacked the wood for the fire on it, bound his son so he could not wriggle free, and laid Isaac his son on the altar. Without wavering, Abraham raised the knife to strike Isaac dead and it was only when the angel of the Lord called to him and stopped him that he ended the sacrifice. But by this time Abraham was dead. He was dead and completely dead. No longer was he his own but he was God’s. Every value he possessed, every dream he owned, every idea he claimed died that day as the dagger was raised to the Heavens.

Some would call what God did a cruel trick. Others would wonder why God would make such a fierce demand. This is still being said of the Lord. Why would He expect this of me? How come He hasn’t helped me with this? Why am I suffering here? What is the reason for this? We have mistaken everything about God and what He is doing here and now. The Lord is going to fully and completely kill us. All we want and hope and love must die in us that Christ may live thoroughly in us. As long as we think all that is necessary for us is to be kinder or warmer, or cuss less or make better brownies we will never be in Heaven. We are wrecked, thoroughly wrecked by sin and we must be demolished so that we may be new creations. God killed Abraham as soon as he lifted the knife and when you put your trust in God for salvation through Jesus Christ, you too die. But you do not just become wrecked. You are made new and Jesus Christ lives in you. The Lord through Jesus Christ is making you a new creation and for that to happen, you have to die. It cannot happen any other way. A new creation that is just the same creation, only improved is not a new creation. Jesus Christ must live through you and for that to be so, your sin and will to disobey God must be demolished. The first part came at the Cross when Jesus Christ absorbed your sins in His body and He died with them. The second part, your will to disobey God is being destroyed today and tomorrow and the next day and this will go on until it is finally shattered forever. The message of the Gospel is not one of hope for all those who have no interest in being born again, for those who don’t want to be alive in Christ and through Christ and with Christ. The Gospel is despair to those who want to live like Abraham before he raised the dagger on his son. But for those who want the will to sin and the desire to live away from God to be demolished forever, the Gospel is perfect and complete joy.

Take this week as a time for you to give yourself wholly to Christ as Lord of your life. Each time you are offended by someone or hurt by that person’s actions, thank the Lord that Christ lives in you and you are being crucified with Him. When you let it go, let go of the offence and let go of your desire to strike back, you let more of Christ live in you. When you stop fussing about some inconvenience you face and stop complaining about something your husband or wife or child did, you let Christ live in you more fully and completely. When you choose to believe God is working whatever difficulty you face at the moment into good for you, Christ lives more fully in you. Give up your fight against the Lord and let Him make you into the perfect Christian. Give God freedom this week to work in you extensively and kill off the desire you still have to live without God. You are free to be hard and cold toward God or brimming with the joy and peace He alone can make grow within you. It is your choice. Raise the dagger. Or don’t…