

# In Christ - A Saint

This morning I want you to consider how you would answer the question “Who am I?”. You do YOU say you are. We live in an age where people are more and more confused with who they are. Many believe they are what they hear most often. They believe the right answer to “Who am I?” is whatever the media says, whatever their friends say, whatever their parents say.

OR if it's not shaped by what others say, it may be shaped by how they feel. This is the worst because how we feel is based on our circumstances and recent experiences. And if they have been unpleasant ones, how you “feel” is still being shaped by what someone says.....satan.....he will whisper destruction and death through your circumstances into your feelings.

People are confused with who they are. I'm confident in saying that every person in this room and every person listening online has been in this state of confusion at some point, maybe you are right now. Some may even have a good idea who you are but you don't actually know with confidence.

When people are asked to explain who they are, they tend to use words to describe what they do. For me it would go something like this:

I am a pastor.

I am a husband.

I am a father.

I am a Cubs fan.

I am a lover of good food, especially pizza.

These are things that I DO, they are not who I AM. I can lose my job, my family, my tastes and interests can change. And if I think these things are who I am, then if they are taken from me.....I am lost, confused, I would look in the mirror and have no idea who I am. And if I don't know who I am I wouldn't even know what I should do.....

You need to know who you are so you will know what to do with your life. I'll tell you that who you are is not dependant on others, and it's not dependant on what you do. Your true identity is dependant solely on your position with Jesus.

## **Ephesians 1:1-2 (NKJV)**

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,

To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I'm going to break these verses down this morning but we have to start with Paul, he says he is an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.

Now Paul, as you may know, wrote most of the books of the New Testament. He was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write them. And because of that what He says is truth. But He starts this letter to the church of Ephesus with "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God".

This is a church that he planted. A church that he spent about 3 years establishing and ministering in. The people know Paul well. But Paul is in prison writing this letter to this church and begins it by reminding them of his authority. That it was given by God. God chose Paul to deliver His message to the people.

That is what it means when Paul says that he is an apostle, the word apostle means a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders. Paul is God's messenger, he has been sent forth with orders to declare God's message. He says it's God's will meaning what He wishes or determined shall be done.

So what follows is important, but it's not important because Paul is saying it. We talk all the time about Paul, how awesome he is and how much he did and wrote. But it's not important because Paul said it. It's important because it is God's message given by God's messenger! This is how we should look at all scripture....

Look at how this message begins:

**Ephesians 1:1b (NKJV)**

To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:

Before I read this verse....how many of you would have used the word saint to describe who you are?

A saint by definition is a most holy thing, sacred, pure, morally blameless, consecrated. I don't know about you but that certainly is not how I typically describe myself. I don't think any of you would describe me that way either.

Next time someone says tell me about your pastor, you can say "he's a most holy thing, sacred, pure, morally blameless, consecrated."

When we think of saints, we often think of these men we read about in the bible. They have churches named after them. On the stained glass they all have little halos. These guys are saints.....they've even been confirmed as such by the Vatican!

Let's speak a biblical truth....if you are in Christ, you are a saint...just as much as Paul or Peter or John or Mother Teresa, or any other great man or woman of God.

But looking around, you may think, “surely we are not all saints here, right?” Paul wrote this to the church in Ephesus.....do you think every person in that church was perfect? Do you think that they were all genuinely following Jesus?

They were a group of people that gathered (a lot more often than we do) but there were all sorts of people, they had skeptics, they had people that were transformed believers, they had people who needed a little work and some who still needed lots of work. So who are these saints that Paul speaks of?

Anyone who is in Christ. If you are in Christ, rest assured that you are a saint. You are sacred, pure, a most holy thing.

It's all dependant on your position. There is a fine line between having an identity of sinner and having an identity of saint. It is dependent not on where you came from but where you are right now. Which line are you in? Whose authority do you live under?

**Ecclesiastes 7:20 (NKJV)**

20 For there is not a just man on earth who does good  
And does not sin.

**John 3:18 (NKJV)**

18 “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

**John 3:36 (NKJV)**

36 He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

**2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV)**

21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

**John 3:16 (NKJV)**

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

**John 1:12 (NKJV)**

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

This is why we can be saved and called a saint. Jesus gave His life so that YOU could be made whole. In spite of your flaws, we can become the righteousness of God in Jesus.

The spotless lamb, without sin, willingly gave His life on a rugged cross so that you could be seen as sacred, pure, and a most holy thing.

If you have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior, you are hidden IN Christ. If your life is submitted to Him, this means you come under Jesus, He becomes the authority, the covering over you. And when the Father looks at you, He sees His perfect Son.

If you are in Christ, you are a saint. You may not “feel” like it, but it doesn’t make it any less true. You have to know that it’s the truth, it’s not based on your feelings but based on your position, in Christ.

**2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV)**

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Mark Driscoll explained it like this: “We are genuinely new though not completely new.” There is a real spiritual change that happens when you give your life to Jesus. This is an instant change. You are genuinely new. It’s real. But not completely new, there are still things in you that need worked out, you still need to go through the process of becoming more and more like Jesus.

But you get a new name. You are no longer called sinner, you are a saint. It’s because of His righteousness and your new position in Him. If this is new to you, today you can make this decision.

Most of you in this room today have already made this decision. You have chosen to follow Jesus. But you don’t see yourself as a saint.....you aren’t good enough to be considered a saint....you mess up too often to be a saint.....you aren’t perfect.....

Then it’s a good thing that Jesus is good, sinless, and perfect....that’s the whole point! He did it because you can’t!

Church we have to know the difference between conviction and condemnation because recognizing these two things will help you have a proper view of you you are in Christ. And if you walk around thinking condemnation is conviction, you will certainly see yourself as sinner, not saint, which is exactly what satan wants.

Walking around in self doubt and self pity with a poor opinion of yourself is not humility! It’s not an honorable thing, it’s not godly. God wants you to have a realization of sin and to deny it when you can, and be remorseful when you can’t.

We have to stop with the mentality that “I can’t stop \_\_\_\_\_ sin” or “I can’t change”

We need to start having the mentality that “I can resist sin in Christ” “I can change in Christ”

You CAN NOT change yourself but Jesus certainly can change you!

Conviction vs Condemnation:

Conviction means to bring to the light, expose, to correct. It's to make you better, to shape you and form you to look more like Jesus. It's the work of the Holy Spirit.

Condemnation means a damnatory sentence. It's to beat you up, drag you down, and destroy you. It's the work of satan.

**Romans 8:1 (NKJV)**

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

**John 16:7-8 (NKJV)**

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. 8 And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

Conviction is from God. Condemnation is from satan.

Conviction leads to life. Condemnation leads to death.

Conviction ends in joy. Condemnation ends in sorrow.

Conviction leads to a new identity in Christ. Condemnation leads to an old identity in sin.

Conviction makes us want to change. Condemnation makes us believe we can't.

Conviction brings awareness of sin. Condemnation brings shame of sin.

Conviction looks to Jesus. Condemnation looks to self.

Conviction is a blessing. Condemnation is a burden.

Do you understand the difference? Not just in your mind but in your heart? Can you recognize the difference in the heat of the battle?

It's critical that you can because one is going to lift you up and the other is going to weigh you down!

One helps you to identify as a saint, the other causes you to identify as a sinner.

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2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Saints remain faithful in Christ Jesus. Keep pursuing Him. Keep seeking, asking, knocking. Don't give up.

Know that our God is a good, good Father. And it's not just because we sing that song. When you are in Christ and He brings conviction your way it's because He does see you as a saint, the work on the cross has already been completed, the position is yours.

He doesn't tell you that you are a bad person because you are not. As a loving Father He tells you what you did was bad or wrong and He want to fix it. He wants what's good for you. He wants you to grow.

Grace to you.....and peace from God. That is what He has for the saint.

For you to be at peace knowing you are a saint because of the grace given to you!

He is faithful to you, will you be faithful to Him today? Will you love, give, and serve Jesus because He has loved, given, and served you?

Today is your day!