

I Am In Christ - Romans 1:7, 1 Peter 2"
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

One of the most difficult parts of understanding and wrestling with our identity is that we are born in sin as sinners. Many in our culture will recoil when we use this language, yet, at the same time we as humans keep proving this truth. There is really no other explanation for the events in China with the Uyghur Muslims or the conflict in the Middle East. But I don't have to look that far to know the reality of human sinfulness, the truth is that I am the greatest sinner I know. I can see the way my own heart responds to situations and honestly examine so many of my actions and I see that there is something broken and dark within. This sinfulness and brokenness has led to our deepest failures, flaws, and broken relationships. This leads to guilt, shame, and often depression. The truth is that so much of our identity is wrapped up and tied to our failures.

Yet, we don't want these things to define our existence and identity. So we tend to respond in a few ways. Some will lean in to what we have been told and absolutely define ourselves in the shame of our sin. People see themselves as addicts, divorcees, promiscuous, and they just stay in these behaviors almost accepting the guilt and shame as a part of life. Others will try to do acts of atonement, taking actions that they believe in some way will make up for the failures of the past. This can be done with good works and benevolence, serving the poor, caring for the hurting, or giving money to causes. Guilt can raise a ridiculous amount of money. The truth is that every religion encourages this (except of course the Gospel). It can be a certain number of "Hail Mary's", a pilgrimage to Mecca, or a trip to Ganges River to bathe, but the truth is that religion often leans in to our identity built on guilt and shame to motivate us to good living that will in some way atone for our sin. Still others will come to the point where they absolutely reject the idea of guilt and shame and fully embrace identities based on lifestyles that are contrary to our design and God's will. Sadly, this path rarely satisfies the soul, and if it does it is because we as humans have seared our conscience deeply, which is not a good thing.

But this is why the Gospel is so beautiful and rich. Christ has died for our sin, making atonement. His death both made us right with God and is the cleansing agent for our sin, guilt and shame. And we have this new identity in Christ. One of the labels that reveals this label is somewhat shocking, but it is right there in Scripture over and over. Read the greeting at the beginning of most of Paul's letters and you will see it. "To all those in Rome, who are loved by God and called to be saints." (Romans 1:7) "To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together." (1 Corinthians 1:2a) "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus." (Ephesians 1:1). You get the idea, over and over Paul addresses the members of the church as saints. These are the people who come to church each week like you and your family that Paul is addressing, and he calls them "saints". Along the line somewhere the people in the church were separated into classes. There were the "aints", those who are just average Joe believers trying to make it in the world. And then there were the all-stars, those whose works went way above what they were expected to do, who had so much merit they could pass it around to others. These are the Saints. But there are two huge problems with this view. The first is practical, the Scriptures never set up these categories. It just doesn't exist. There is sometimes a difference in where a person's giftedness and calling leads them to serve. So the church does have elders and deacons, but these are not two classes of believers. The second is theological.

When we create classes of believer in reality we are saying that there are good Christians and not so good. The obvious outcome is that we are teaching that our standing before God is based on some level of good works and merit earned in life. At this point though, we are actually believing a different Gospel, one that cannot save. Now listen carefully. We are saved by works and good merit. But it is never our own. I am saved by the work of Jesus Christ and He alone has merit worthy of my salvation. And here is the deal, when I trust in Him I am placed in Christ and I become a "saint". C'mon, say it out loud. Call yourself a saint! You are

Saint _____.

So what exactly is a saint? The word actually comes from the Greek word “holy” and literally means “holy one”. My guess is that you don’t feel like a saint, you don’t feel holy. The basic meaning of holy means to be set apart for a specific purpose, often for sacred purposes. In the Old Testament we had holy things like lampstand, vases, utensils, etc. These things were exactly like other objects with this exception, they were used in devotion to the worship of Yahweh God. But this is painting a picture for us to show what God has done for us. In Salvation God has taken that which is ordinary and set us apart for Himself, to be His prized possession and His holy people (See 1 Peter 2:9-10). This holiness means that God has dealt with our sin and shame on three levels. We are declared holy first, meaning God has forgiven us, made us perfect and clean. Yes, we still sin, but did you know that this is no longer your core identity? Then it is His work in pouring grace into our lives that makes our lives match this calling and day by day removes the grip of sin on our lives. And this is eternal. If you are a believer in Christ you are a saint, a holy one and at the same time we are becoming holy in our lives and we grow in Christ. And one day that holiness will be perfect forever. The stench of sin will be removed forever and we will be eternally free from all guilt and shame.

So this week when guilt and shame creep up in life, you remind that ole Devil and yourself that you are a saint. When temptation comes remind yourself that you have been dedicated to God in Christ, and that what He has for you is way better than the weak and shame-filled promise of that sin. You are a saint!

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Ezekiel 44	Ezekiel 45	Ezekiel 46	Ezekiel 47	Ezekiel 48	Titus 1	Titus 2

Reading from this past week: Romans 1:7, 1 Peter 2:9-10

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Romans 8:12-16

Family Worship

Song - *Who You Say I Am*

<https://youtu.be/lcC1Bp13n> 4

Gospel Project

Story: Paul’s Second Journey

Story Point: Paul and Silas planted churches

Big Picture Question: What is the Bible about?

Answer: The Bible is the story of God’s plan to save people through Jesus.

Scripture: Acts 15-18

New City Catechism

Question #20: Who is the Redeemer?

Answer: The only Redeemer is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse: 1 Timothy 2:5

Scripture

Romans 1:7, 1 Peter 2:9-10

- When you hear the word “saint” who do you think is being spoken of? Do you ever think of yourself with this term?
- What does it mean to be holy? How does the reality that we have been declared holy help us when we feel guilt and shame?
- Who’s merit and works makes us a saint?

Prayer

*Give thanks to God that He has already made you holy, made you a saint.

*Pray for our city’s first responders, the police, fire, and paramedics serving our city.