

Concerning Saints

Philippians 1:1–2 (NASB 1995)

Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons: ² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Introduction

Let me begin with a simple question:

Are you a saint?

If I were to ask you one by one, most of you would probably hesitate. You might say, “Not really.” “I try to be a good person, but I wouldn’t call myself a saint.” “Saint? That’s for people like Mother Teresa... not me.”

And honestly, that’s how many of us have been conditioned to think. We associate the word *saint* with spiritual giants—people of extraordinary holiness, people set apart in a way that feels far removed from our everyday lives.

But what if I told you... **If you are in Christ, you are a saint.** Not someday. Not when you improve. Not after you clean up your life. **Right now.**

Listen carefully to how Paul opens this letter: “*To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi...*” Paul is not writing to a group of perfect people. He is writing to ordinary believers—people with struggles, doubts, weaknesses, and ongoing growth. And yet, he calls them **saints**. So, the real issue is not whether you *feel* like a saint.

The real issue is: **Do you believe what God says about you?**

Content

1. What Makes a Person a Saint?

Let’s begin with the most important question: **What makes someone a saint?** The Bible’s answer is surprisingly simple: A saint is **someone who is in Christ Jesus.** That’s it.

Not someone who has reached moral perfection. Not someone who has lived an exceptional life. Not someone who has earned spiritual recognition. A saint is someone who has placed their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

When you come to Christ, something profound happens: Your sins are forgiven. Your standing before God is changed (from enemy to child). Your identity is transformed (from sinner to family).

You are no longer defined by your past, your failures, or your struggles. You are now defined by your relationship with Christ. And because Christ is holy, and because you are in Christ—you **too are called holy**.

Illustration: Adoption into a Royal Family

Imagine you are adopted into a royal family. You did not earn the position. You didn't prove yourself worthy. You didn't accomplish great things. You were simply brought into the family through adoption. And from that moment on, everything changes: Your identity changes. Your name changes. Your status changes.

Not because of what you did—but because of the family you now belong to. In the same way, when you are adopted into God's family through Christ, you receive a new identity: **You are a saint. You are a new creation. You are a child of God.**

Let me say this clearly: Your goodness does not make you a saint. Your effort does not make you a saint. Your discipline does not make you a saint. **Christ alone makes you a saint.**

2. All Believers Are Saints

Now here's where we often misunderstand Scripture. We tend to think there are levels of Christianity: Ordinary believers. More committed believers. And then "saints." But the Bible does not support that idea. Paul consistently calls **all believers** saints. Every church he writes to: Rome, Ephesus, Philippi, Colossae, Thessalonica, even Corinth.

And Corinth, if you remember, was a deeply flawed church—full of division, immorality, and immaturity.

And yet, Paul still calls them **saints**. Why? Because their identity is not based on their performance—but on their **position in Christ**.

Illustration: Family Identity

Think about a family. In a household, you don't rank children by status. You don't say, "This one is more of a child." "This one is less of a child." You either belong to the family—or you don't. And if you belong, you fully belong. In the same way: If you belong to Christ, **you are fully a saint. Not a halfway saint**. This truth is both humbling and freeing. It humbles us because we realize we didn't earn this identity. And it frees us because we don't have to live trying to prove ourselves.

3. Saints Are Not Perfect—But They Are Being Transformed

Now let's address the tension we all feel. If we are saints... **why do we still struggle with sin?** Why do we still fall short? Why do we still wrestle with weakness? Because being a saint does not mean you are perfect. It means **God is at work in you. You are still in the making.**

Please get this: Jesus is not only your Savior—He is also your **Sanctifier**. He is actively shaping your life: changing your desires, transforming your character, renewing your thinking, and teaching you obedience and discipline. And this process takes time. Your lifetime.

Illustration: The House Renovation (George MacDonald)

Imagine your life as a house. When God first comes in, He begins with the obvious repairs: fixing leaks, cleaning up messes, and restoring broken parts. And you think, “This is good. This makes sense.” But then... He starts doing deeper work. Walls come down. Rooms are restructured. Things you were comfortable with are removed. And suddenly, it becomes uncomfortable. Even painful.

You begin to ask, “Lord, what are You doing?” The answer is: He is not building a small, comfortable cottage. **He is building a palace.** A dwelling place worthy of His presence.

And yes—the process can hurt. But it is never meaningless. God is shaping you into the image of Christ. One day at a time.

4. True Saints Live Out Their Faith

Now we must also hear the warning of Jesus. Not everyone who claims to belong to Him truly does. Jesus says: “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven...” (Matthew 7:21).

This reminds us: True faith is not just something we say. It is something that shows up in how we live.

A true saint: trusts Christ, desires to obey God, and seeks to follow His will. Not perfectly all the time—but sincerely.

Illustration: Fruit Tree

Think about a fruit tree. You don't determine what kind of tree it is by what it *claims* to be. You determine it by what it produces. An apple tree produces apples. In the same way, a life rooted in Christ will produce evidence: growth, change, and spiritual fruit.

Not instant perfection—but a clear direction. If there is no growth, no change, no desire for God—then we must honestly examine our faith.

5. Saints Belong to the Church

Another important truth we must not overlook: **Saints are not meant to live in isolation. They belong to one another.**

Paul addresses: “the saints... including the overseers and deacons.” This shows us that saints exist within a **community of faith**.

Today, many people say: “I believe in Jesus, but I don’t need the church.” But that idea is not biblical. The church is: the body of Christ, the bride of Christ, and the family of God. Yes, the church is imperfect. But it is still God’s chosen instrument in this world.

Illustration: The Human Body

Think about your physical body. Every part is connected and necessary: the hands, the eyes, the feet and the heart. No part can function on its own. If it disconnects—it dies. In the same way: you cannot thrive spiritually on your own. We need one another: to encourage, to correct, to support, and to grow.

God designed us to grow **together**. None of us can be made perfect without each other (Hebrews 11:40).

6. Sanctification Is a Lifelong Work

From the moment you come to Christ, God begins His sanctifying work in you. And He continues it for the rest of your life. He works through your joy and sorrow, success and failure, trials and waiting. Nothing is wasted. This lifelong process is called **sanctification**. It is the process of becoming more like Jesus.

Illustration: Refining Gold

Gold is refined through fire. The heat removes impurities and brings out its purity. It’s intense—but it’s necessary. In the same way, God uses the “heat” of life—trials, struggles, and challenges—to refine us in body, soul, and spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

And here is the good news: God is committed to finishing what He started. He does not abandon His work. He does not give up on you. He will continue until He is fully satisfied with His work in you. **He is your Sanctifier.**

Conclusion

Let's return to the question we started with: **Are you a saint?** If you are in Christ—**yes, you are.** You may not feel like it. You may not always live like it. But your identity is not based on your performance. It is based on **Christ's finished work.**

And the same God who calls you a saint is the God who is shaping you into one. Day by day. Step by step. Moment by moment.

So, instead of saying, "I'm not a saint..." learn to say: **"I am a saint in Christ—and God is still working on me."** He is not finished with me yet!

Trust Him. Work with Him, Walk with Him. Stay close to Him. Because you are in His hands—and He is faithful to complete His work.

Amen.