



World Christian Fellowship

www.wcflondon.com
wcflondon@gmail.com

Philippians 47 Who is the Saint?

Philippians 4:21-23, *Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. ²²All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household. ²³The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

The word "saint."

It appears in verse 21.

It appears again in verse 22.

Saint is a familiar word to us but understood wrongly by most people.

Roman Catholic theology says, "A saint is one who has exhibited unsurpassable devotion to Christ."

Other words it is your devotion to Christ has no capability of being surpassed by anyone in anyplace.

The Roman Catholic Church says that people, however, who have lived lives of unsurpassable devotion to Jesus Christ are worthy to be called saints, to be canonized which word means

to be made the spiritual standard or lifted as the spiritual models.

Saints are to be

- venerated,
- prayed to,
- appealed to,
- praised,
- exalted and
- honoured.

These statues of saints are placed in churches. The statue itself then becomes the focal point of veneration.

People kissing those saints.

People bowing their knees before those saints.

People bringing flowers and gifts to the saints.

People will be burning candles.

People will be offering incense.

People will be just there meditating upon the virtues of the life of that individual.

This is done because the Roman Catholic Church teaches that because of the unsurpassable devotion to Christ these people exhibited in their earthly life, they have been exalted in their heavenly life to a position of special clout with God.

The reason people appeal to them and honour them is so that they in receiving our honour and our prayers will intercede with

God for our needs. They become intermediaries, intercessors for us and we want to stay in their good graces. Since they by holy life on earth have special clout with God can gain things for them.

Another thing Roman Catholic theology teaches is that they have special work of interceding with God for the souls of people which are captive to the pain of purgatory.

So, as they pray to the saint to appeal to God to release the one that you love from the pain of purgatory. In a Roman Catholic Church candles at the feet of the saints and as long as the candle is still burning to plead with God to get that soul out of purgatory.

These things make us feel very uncomfortable with being called a saint.

The whole idea of sainthood can be a bit uncomfortable for us.

Paul's favourite word for Christians is the word "saint."
He uses it over sixty times in his epistles.

Apostle Paul when he speaks of saints, most times his reference is to very ordinary Christians.

V 21, *Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you.*

V 22, *All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household*

Both of those references that the term is very commonly used.

Paul identifies all the people in the Philippian church as saints!

Philippians 1:1, *Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:*

Now Paul comes to the end of his letter to the Philippians, he reminds them of the identification he gave them at the very beginning, that they in fact are saints.

If someone asks you if you are a saint, what would be your answer?

I hope and trust God that by the time we get done with this message you will be able to happily give the right answer.

Separated from Sin

The character of saints.

The definition or the character or the nature of a saint.

The word hagios or hagioi in plural, simply means,

- "set apart ones,
- separated ones,
- sanctified ones,
- holy ones."

The concept is "being set apart, being separated."

We know that the Bible says that God is holy.

The word can be translated holy and is often translated holy in Scripture.

We know that God is holy, or God is saintly, or God is separated.

God is separated from what?

God is separated from sin!

The purest definition of God's nature.

The only attribute of God repeated three times, He is holy, holy, holy.

It defines God as utterly unlike us because we are sinful, He is separated from sin.

What is a saint then?

A saint is one who has been separated from sin unto God for holy purposes.

Anyone who is separated from sin unto God is a saint.

V 21, "Greet every saint in Christ Jesus."

In the sphere of being "in Christ Jesus" is where sainthood takes place.

That little phrase "in Christ Jesus" is a very common one to the Apostle Paul because it defines the Christian's identity.

- We are in Christ.
- We do not just believe Christ.
- We do not just believe that He lived and died and rose.
- We do not just believe that He provided salvation.
- We do not just believe that He is coming again.
- We are not only believing Christ, but we are in Christ in a union of life.
- We are bonded to Christ.

Philippians 1:21, *For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.*

Number of other times in this epistle he uses the term "in Christ" or "in the Lord."

For Paul, his very life was in Christ.

The believer has been separated from sin unto God and that separation is accomplished when we cease to be in the darkness, in sin and we become in the light, in holiness, in Christ.

Obviously, that is not completed yet until the day of our glorification. But already we have received the righteousness of God in Christ imputed to us.

We have received the indwelling Holy Spirit and with Him the life of God within us which is a righteous nature.

A believer then is a saint because every believer is in Christ, separated from sin unto God for holy purposes. That is true of all of us.

In Jesus Christ and His sacrificial death and resurrection we become in Christ.

Paul says to the Roman church,

- we are joined with Christ,
- we die with Christ,
- we rise with Christ,
- we walk in the newness of the life of Christ.

To the Galatians Church,

Galatians 2:20, *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

That is not true of other world religions.

People are not in Buddha.

They are not in Mohammed.

This kind of union of life is distinctively Christian. We are therefore distinctively the separated ones who are the saints.

There should be no reluctance in your heart and mind in calling yourself a saint.

If you were to identify the most troublesome sinful church to which a New Testament letter is written, what church would it be?

Corinth!

1 Corinthians 1:1-2, *Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes, ²To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours:*

Even the Corinthians were saints.

With all our failures and foibles and problems, we are saints.

What is the character of a saint?

One who has been separated from sin unto God, set apart for holy purpose.

That occurs because that person by faith in the person and work of Christ is in Christ.

We possess the righteousness of Christ, are separated from sin and its dominion, someday separated sin, and its presence.

1. The worship of saints.

V 20, *"Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen."*

Saints are not to be worshiped.

Saints are to worship.

Saints are not only known by their relationship to sin and to God through Christ, but saints are known by their worship.

V 20 is a great doxology.

Doxology comes from a Greek word doxa which means glory. A doxology is simply a word about glory. It is ascribing glory to God.

A doxology is the fitting response to doctrine, to truth.

This outburst of praise flows from the Apostle's exuberant joy over the whole letter which has literally expounded the heretofore unheard truth of God.

Doxology simply means divine honour, divine praise, divine adoration.

That is what a doxology is.

- ✓ Gives glory to God.
- ✓ Adores God,
- ✓ Honours God,
- ✓ Respects God,
- ✓ Fears God,
- ✓ Worships God,
- ✓ Praises God.

A similar outburst of doxological praise occurs at another high point in Paul's letters. Romans chapters 1 through 11 provide for us the greatest doctrinal treatise in all of Scripture. The monumental discussion of the significance of the coming, the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

After this profound truth, Paul can no longer contain himself.

Romans 11:33-36, *Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!* ³⁴ *“Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counsellor?”* ³⁵ *“Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them?”* ³⁶ *For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.*

And after bursting at the seams, as it were, he then settles down to write the last part of his book.

Romans 16:27, *to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.*

Praise is always the fitting response to truth.

This is the reason when we worship God, we worship Him in spirit and in truth.

The Apostle Paul then tells us about the worship of saints. We are the worshipers, not the worshiped.

What is our focus for this 10 year?

Philippians 3:3, *For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh*

A Christian is a worshiper who worships in the power of the Spirit, gives the glory to Christ, puts no confidence in the flesh. We are worshipers.

This should not surprise us.

John 4:23-24, *Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."*

So, we are worshipers, to worship God forever and ever and ever and ever and ever.

"Now to our God and Father."

What do you mean our God?

The God of Christians, the only God, the only true God, the God of all saints.

So, we are to worship the true God in a personal way because He is our God.

Hosea 6:6, *For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.*

God does not want ignorant sacrifices; He wants worship out of the knowledge of who He is.

You cannot truly worship God if you do not understand who God is.

You cannot worship unless you worship the true God in the true way!

Worship is always a response to truth and doctrine!!

When we go through the New Testament and find the doxologies and they are outbursts of praise in response to great truth about God.

The only way to know God and understand all that is revealed about God is to make the knowledge of God the primary pursuit of your life and the church too!

The truth about God is the resource of His people.

If you are not overwhelmed alone by who He is then certainly you can be overwhelmed by what He has done in providing His bounty for you.

Paul is not only praising God because God is a God who can supply everything, He is praising God for God is a God who has supplied everything.

It is not only who He is and what He is capable of!

So wonderfully do we praise God in truth and truth alone.

But Paul does not stop there.

"Now to our God and Father."

There is a sense in which throughout the New Testament God is called Father, related to being the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Frequently the New Testament speak of God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that is intended to lead us to understand that He and God are equal. God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ bearing the same deity and the same common life.

Unlike the pagans, we do not go to God fearfully. We go to one who loves us and is our Father, we go as little children.

That is different than the worship of the world and also in Old Testament.

How do you best understand God?

Who came into the world to reveal God?

Christ!

To know Christ is to know God.

This is the reason we will teach and preach on the character of God which character is marvellously, perfectly, holy manifest in Jesus Christ.

In that doxology Paul adds "amen."

Amen is a confessional endorsement.

"so, let it be."

So, saint worship God in Spirit and Truth.

2. The fellowship of saints.

V 21. *Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you.*

Greet, three times the word is used, it's the verb in each of those three statements, it's all about saluting each other.

A bond of fellowship is certainly implied in the terms here. It implies a note of affection and a desire for one's wellbeing.

Now this is a monumental and unique element of the Christian faith that we are to love one another the same.

We are to consider others better than ourselves. There is no stratification in the body of Christ. There are to be no favourites. God is not a respecter of persons. We are not to elevate some over the other.

Paul shows us here that in his affectionate desire for the spiritual wellbeing of the saints he included everybody. This is his heart.

Philippians 2:1-2, *Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.*

The fellowship of the saints is that we are not elevated above each other. A saint is not a super-person. We are all saints, and we are all worthy to be called saints.

When we are worthy to be called saints by God, then we are worthy of the affection and the love of each other!

"Greet every saint in Christ Jesus,"

Paul is telling the pastors and elders and deacons to go greet the people on his behalf individually, assuring them of his love and his desire for their spiritual wellbeing.

Mark 5:31, *You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'"*

Jesus felt the little lady who touched His garment. He always had that sense of being touchable.

So, in the church there is no star. We are all commonly saints. None of us is superior to or inferior to the other, we are what we are by the grace of God.

"The brethren who are with me greet you."

Paul was a prisoner in Rome for this time writing this letter, he had some people coming to see him. He calls them the brethren who are with me and they send you the same desire for spiritual wellbeing and affection.

During his imprisonment **Timothy** was with him because he refers to him **Philippians 1:1 and 2:19**.

Epaphroditus, that godly saint who had come from Philippi, he too was with Paul.

Philippians 1:14, *And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.*

Indicates that there were some other brethren who were courageously preaching the Word of God without fear, so there were a group of other preachers.

Very likely that **Tychicus and Aristarchus** were there.

There are many who would tell us that **Luke** was there, and **Mark** was there.

It is very likely **Onesimus** was there, the runaway slave who ran into Paul and was converted to Christ, who went back then to serve Philemon.

Others would say a man named **Jesus Justus** was there.

There are some unnamed brethren who were there with him.

That as high up the ladders of stratification as they might be, these gentlemen are only described as the brethren. Again, we pull them down from any supposed rank and we talk again about the commonality of sainthood.

Timothy may have been unusually gifted.

Epaphroditus may have been a noble Christian soul.

The preachers at Rome, there were unquestionably some extremely gifted men.

None would argue about the spiritual qualifications of Tychicus and Aristarchus.

Mark and Luke who wrote the Gospels and Church history.
Onesimus the runaway slave.

They are all put together in one term "**brothers**"

The fellowship of saints is a common bond without divisions.
There were not any backward collars in Paul's group.

Paul when identifying himself said, "I am the least of all Apostles," and "I am the chief of sinners."

Jesus Himself in Matthew 23 said to the Jewish leaders and to the Apostles, "Don't call any man father?"

Do not let any man pass himself off as superior to the brotherhood. You are brothers.

The heart of Christian fellowship is that we are all saints, no superior to the other, though differently gifted and at points in our life differently faithful.

But we are all one brotherhood, we are all one fellowship, we are all one body in Christ.

- The Christian singer is not a soloist, he is a member of a choir.
- The Christian soldier is not solitary figure, he is a member of an army.
- The Christian scholar is not a privately tutored learner, he is a part of a class and a school.
- The Christian son is not just a lonely child, he is a member of a family.
- The Christian runner is not an individual performer, he is a part of a team.

That is the fellowship.

Saints are common possessors of the eternal life of God who share their love with each other.

So, sainthood is characterized then by being separated from sin unto God for holy purposes through faith in Christ.

The worship of saints is godward praise in response to truth and blessing.

The fellowship of saints is a loving and non-discriminating mutual care.

3. The Joy of saints.

V 22, All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household."

Why Paul is mentioning this?

The reason is that this is the joy of the saints!

What is the joy of the saints?

Repentance of sinners.

In Luke 15 Jesus told a story about a lady who lost a coin, looked all day, found the coin, called her friends, and rejoiced.

Then Jesus told a story about a man who had sheep, lost a sheep, found the sheep, called his friends and they rejoiced.

Then Jesus told a story about a man who lost a son, found the son, called his friends, had a feast, they rejoiced.

the Scripture says that when a soul is saved there is joy in heaven.

The joy of heaven over the salvation of a soul.

What is the joy of the saints on earth?

The greatest, highest joy we have is to see someone come to Christ.

Acts 15:3, *The church sent them on their way, and as they travelled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the believers very glad.*

Why?

Because it is always the joy of the brothers to see souls saved.

Nero was the Caesar, and everybody knows what Nero thought about Christ and Christians. Nero had fancied himself a god, a competing lord and demanded that the people in the Roman Empire worship him.

Now the household of Caesar would not just have been his own family, the household of Caesar is a word to indicate all who were in his direct employ.

When we study history, we find it very interesting groups of people lived in the Caesar household.

Courtiers, princes and higher ups in his personal court, judges, cooks, tasters, Musicians, custodians, builders, soldiers, and financial officials.

Who are these who got saved?

Two groups:

First, those who had come to Christ in Caesar's household since Paul had become a prisoner. Paul being the instrument of God that he was, you can be sure that the Roman soldiers who had been chained to him heard the gospel.

Philippians 1:13, *As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ.*

It is one thing to be chained to Paul, to guard him, it's something else to have Paul chained to you.

The result was people were coming to Christ in the Praetorian Guard. So, some of those in Caesar's household that you can rejoice over are converted soldiers and others who heard the Word, too, who were part of serving the Caesar.

Second, people who were Christians before Paul's imprisonment. The gospel had already come to Rome and many had come to know Christ.

Archaeological founding shown us amazingly many parallels on the list of government workers with the list of names in Romans chapter 16.

Many of those names appear on the lists of Caesar's households. So, you have some people being converted out of

Caesar's household while Paul was a prisoner. You have some who were already Christians before that.

How thrilling that the household of Caesar, the enemy of Christ had yielded up many souls to the conquering Christ.

What is the joy of saints, beloved?

The joy of saints is to see someone else come to Christ.

The joy of saints is to see one won to the cause of Christ.

4. The resource of saints

V 23, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit."

There is something we, desperately need.

What is it?

Grace.

You may think you had received Grace already when you were saved.

Grace was the unmerited favour or better the undeserved beneficent love of God to me in Christ that redeemed me.

Grace was the starting point of my redemption when God in Christ forgave my sin.

Yes, but it is not the end of grace. That is the beginning of grace, and you are still in need of grace as much as you were then.

You are no more worthy of your salvation now than you were then. So, you are sustained by grace just as you were saved by grace. It is grace by which our whole life exists.

Romans 5:2, *Through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.*

We live in it.

Our life is governed by grace, guided by grace, kept by grace, strengthened by grace, sanctified by grace, enabled by grace.

Paul started out in chapter 1 verse 2 wishing them grace. He ends up wishing them grace and again comes full circle.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

What do you mean by your spirit?

Your person, inner man.

Every single epistle Paul wrote ends the same way!

1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon.

Why?

Because when the letter is over the life goes on and the life is dependent on grace.

Who is grace?

It is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The name of Christ is mentioned 40 times in these four chapters, one every couple of verses, Christ is the heart of the whole thing.

Paul began by describing himself as a slave of Jesus Christ. He addresses the Christians as saints in Jesus Christ.

- When referring to his imprisonment he says my bonds are in Jesus Christ.
- When he speaks about life, he says for to me to live is Christ.
- When he speaks about death, he says for me to die is Christ.
- When he exhorts people to godly conduct, it is to be like Christ.
- When he calls for proper attitudes, it is to have the mind of Christ.
- When he speaks of choices and desires and hopes, he says they are to be built on trust in Christ.
- When he speaks about joy it is the joy of Christ.
- When he speaks about strength it is the strength of Christ.

- When he calls for power and knowledge and fellowship, it is the knowledge of Christ, the power of Christ, the fellowship of His sufferings that he longs for.
- When he looks for eternal hope and glory, he says I am looking for Christ.
- When it is spiritual steadfastness he needs, it is in Christ.
- When it is sufficiency he wants, it is in Christ.

It is Christ!

Our whole life is Christ!

- ✓ Called by Christ,
- ✓ Saved by Christ,
- ✓ Mind of Christ,
- ✓ Become like Christ.

That is the message. To be like the beloved Redeemer.
We are saints, not yet all we should be!