**Mike Hipes – Facebook Lesson, July 17, 2020**

Good afternoon!

Many of the New Testament letters to the churches are addressed to “the saints.” Even the church at Corinth, Paul calls saints! Now considering all the problems this church and its members had, calling them saints was saying something! What it was saying is that we need to not confuse being a saint with being sinless! It simply means being set apart for Christ! As a Christian, you are a saint! Listen to some of these uplifting verses from the greeting and closing of just a few of the NT letters about the highlighted characteristics of the saints.

Romans

Greeting: “To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 1:7 Closing: “Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles; also greet the church that is in their house. Greet Epaenetus, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia. Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you. Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.” Romans 16:1-7

Corinth

Greeting: “To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints...” I Corinthians 1:2 Closing: “I rejoice over the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have supplied what was lacking on your part. For they have refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men.” I Cor 16: 17-18

Ephesus

Greeting: “To the saints at Ephesus... He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight.” Ephesians 11-4. Closing: “But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts. Ephesians 6:21-22

Philippians

Greeting: “to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons” Philippians 1:1 Closing: “Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar’s household. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Phil. 4:21-23

Colossians

Greeting: “to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ” Colossians 1:2. Closing: “Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sends you his greetings; and also Barnabas’s cousin Mark (about whom you received instructions; if he comes to you, welcome him); and also Jesus who is called Justus; these are the only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are from the circumcision, and they have proved to be an encouragement to me. Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bondslave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God. For I testify for him that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis. Luke, the beloved physician, sends you his greetings, and also Demas.” Col. 4:10-14

Did you catch it? Wow, all these incredible characteristics of saints! To be honest there are many times that I just don’t feel very saintly? How about you?

I witnessed a man in his 20’s one time berating an older woman while she sat in her car. As I was about to get out of my car and try to help the older lady something caught my eye. As the angry man was wagging his finger and raising his voice, I noticed the large gold crucifix that he was wearing around his neck that was bouncing off of his chest as he was giving the woman a piece of his mind. In a moment he stopped his rant and returned to his car. I thought of two things at that moment. 1. Do I behave like a saint and one representing the crucified Christ? 2. Saints are not sinless but saved sinners! May we never confuse being blameless with being sinless!

There are many times saints are not necessarily saintly, however, we are saved and set apart for Christ because of His perfection not our own! We are not perfect but perfect in our purpose! Although we are human, may we know and be encouraged by how God sees us as saints in Christ! One more time looking over some of the ways God sees His saints! Loved by God, fellow workers, risked their own necks, worked hard, faithful ministers, comfort your hearts, sanctified, fellow prisoners, who are outstanding, supplied what was lacking, refreshed my spirit and yours, holy and blameless, they have proved to be an encouragement, bondslave of Jesus, laboring earnestly for you in prayer.

Let’s not look at ourselves as sinners who are occasionally saints, but rather saints who occasionally sin and who are always loved by God! Amen?

Have a great weekend!

Mike