



GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#171)
Turning "saints" into "saints."

God is in the process of turning "saints" into "saints"!

- ✓ **GOD is involved:** What he is doing is connected to what we are doing; *so success is guaranteed!*

For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.
Philippians 2:13 (NLT)
- ✓ **WE also are involved:** Under the New Covenant, the desire and ability to do these things have been *embedded* in our hearts.

"This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord.
I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds."
Hebrews 10:16 (NIV)

Saints are imperfect... but they are in the pursuit of perfection.

- ★ **We can illustrate this with the church at Corinth.** ★
- **In both 1 and 2 Corinthians, Paul calls them "saints" (or "holy ones").**

... [to] those who are **sanctified** in Christ Jesus, called to be **saints**, ...
1 Corinthians 1:2a (NHEB)

... [to] all the **saints** ... [Greeting the Christians in the *entire* area surrounding Corinth (Achaia).]
2 Corinthians 1:1b (NHEB)

- ✓ Yet, as we read 1 Corinthians, we quickly discover that the church was very imperfect, and many were acting quite childish.
- ✓ As we read 2 Corinthians, we discover that they had grown-up in many respects, though they *still* had much growing to do.

- **In 1 Corinthians:** We read about their imperfections and sin.

You are still worldly...
I am writing this not to shame you but to warn you...
Your boasting is not good.
In the following directives I have no praise for you, ...
Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; ...
1 Corinthians 3:3a; 4:14a; 5:6a; 11:17a; 15:34a (NIV)
- **In 2 Corinthians:** We read about their repentance and growth. (There were also other issues they needed to deal with.)

... your grief led to repentance.
[What it resulted in]... what a desire to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what deep longing, what zeal, what justice!
In every way you showed yourselves to be pure in this matter.
2 Corinthians 7:9b, 11 (NLT)

In order to pursue perfect holiness...

God gives us the foundational facts that we must learn and live by.

THIS INCLUDES:

- Everything that is part of "the faith."

... the faith that was once for all delivered to the **saints**.
Jude 1:3b (ESV)
- What God has revealed to us about salvation.

... the mystery ... now revealed to his **saints**.
... which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
Colossians 1:26b, 27b (ESV)
- An awareness that sin is not compatible with following Jesus.

Such sins [several examples given] have no place among **God's people** [= "saints"].
Ephesians 5:3b (NLT)

God uses his people to help us grow. (We must be willing to acknowledge each other's value.)

- God provides us with gifts and abilities, so that we all, *together*, can grow up in Christ. (See also 1 Corinthians 12, etc.)

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip **his people** [= "the saints"] for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.
Then we will no longer be infants, ...
Ephesians 4:11-14a (NIV)

We can pray for others to grow in holiness.

Just like Paul, who prayed that God would enable his readers to be blameless and holy when Jesus returns.

May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and **holy** in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his **holy** ones.

1 Thessalonians 3:13 (NIV)

- This prayer is an expression of God's will for his people... so it's *guaranteed* that it will be accomplished in those who belong to God.
- The goal is that we will be holy at the time Jesus returns.
- The "holy ones" who come *with* Jesus may be: (1) Christians who have died and are now with him, (2) angels, or (3) both.

When we pray God's will... what we pray for will happen!

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YES, OUR PRAYER IS IMPORTANT! IN FACT, GOD PRAYS *WITH US!* AND OUR PRAYERS *DO* ENTER HIS PRESENCE!

- Our prayers are *necessary*.

Pray at all times in the Spirit with every **prayer** and **request**, and stay alert with all perseverance and **intercession** for all the **saints**.

Ephesians 6:18 (CSB)

- Yet our prayers are *weak*; so the Holy Spirit joins in, so that the final result is a prayer that is *worthy* of being in God's presence!

In the same way the Spirit also helps us in our weakness, because we do not know what to **pray** for as we should, but the Spirit himself **intercedes** for us, with inexpressible groanings.

And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because he **intercedes** for the **saints** according to the will of God.

Romans 8:26-27 (CSB)

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- Even so, our weak prayers are *valuable*. They have great significance in heaven, and are compared to *incense* in God's presence.

... golden bowls full of incense, which are the **prayers** of **God's people** [= "saints"].

Revelation 5:8b (NIV)

Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the **prayers** of all **God's people** [= "saints"], on the golden altar in front of the throne.

The smoke of the incense, together with the **prayers** of **God's people** [= "saints"], went up before God from the angel's hand.

Revelation 8:3-4 (NIV)

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Saints are to *love* saints. After all, they're family!

- This love for *God's people* is an expression of love for *God!*

God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and *the love you have shown him* as you have helped **his people** [= "the saints"] and continue to help them.

Hebrews 6:10 (NIV)

- This love has significance *now* – and also in *eternity!* Consider this description of the "bride of Christ" (the church, in prophecy):

"She was given clothing of fine linen, bright and pure." For the fine linen she wears is *the righteous acts* of the **saints**.

Revelation 19:8 (BSB)

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Our love for others is based on *God's* love for us.

- God's love is greater than we can comprehend. It is a great source of *encouragement*, and it influences how we live.

I pray that you ... may be able to comprehend with all the **saints** what is the length and width, height and depth of God's **love**, and to know Christ's **love** that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3:17b, 18-19 (CSB)

- *His* love will influence the nature of *our* love.

We **love** because he first **loved** us. If anyone says, "I **love** God," and yet hates his brother or sister, he is a liar. For the person who does not **love** his brother or sister whom he has seen cannot **love** God whom he has not seen.

1 John 4:19-20 (CSB)

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- This love is an obligation. We are to treat other saints well – regardless of who they are!

- ✓ They may have a major role in the church...

So you should welcome her in the Lord in a manner *worthy* of the **saints** and assist her in whatever matter she may require your help. For indeed she has been a benefactor of many—and of me also.

Romans 16:2 (CSB)

- ✓ They may be "the rest of us"...

Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for **God's people** [= "saints"] everywhere, I have not stopped thanking God for you.

Ephesians 1:15-16a (NLT)

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- This love is *incompatible* with "isolationism."

We must not quit meeting together, as some are doing. No, we need to keep on encouraging each other. This becomes more and more important as you see the Day getting closer.
 Heb 10:25 (ERV)

There are times when God's people are *forced* to be isolated.

 - ✓ When experiencing severe persecution.
 - ✓ When there are no other Christians in the community.

But Scripture *never* treats such isolation as a legitimate *choice*. It is normally considered an act of disobedience – sin.
- We can be *encouraged* when we see this love in others!

For I have great joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the *saints* have been refreshed through you, brother.
 Philemon 1:7 (CSB)

- We can *thank God*, when *saints* have love for other saints, along with their trust in Jesus! (The two – faith and love – go together.)

... since I heard about your *faith* in the Lord Jesus and your *love* for all the *saints*, I never stop giving *thanks* for you as I remember you in my *prayers*.
 Ephesians 1:15b-16 (CSB)

We *thank* [God] because we have heard about the *faith* you have in Christ Jesus and the *love* you have for all of *God's people* [= "the saints"].
 Your *faith* and *love* continue because you know what is waiting for you in heaven—the hope you have had since you first heard the true message, the Good News that was told to you.
 Colossians 1:4-6a (ERV)

I always *thank* my God as I remember you in my *prayers*, because I hear about your *love* for all *his holy people* [= "the saints"] and your *faith* in the Lord Jesus.
 Philemon 1:4-5 (NIV)

EXAMPLES of how love for the saints can be expressed in daily life.

Scripture contains many examples of these things. But in the following examples, we are limiting ourselves to the verses that contain the word "saints" or "holy ones."

- Visiting them.

As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the *Lord's people* [= "the saints"] who lived in Lydda.
 Acts 9:32 (NIV)
- Welcoming/greeting them, whether individually or as a group.

All the *saints* send you greetings.
 2 Corinthians 13:12b (CSB); verse 13 in some translations.

There are many examples of this. These greetings are sometimes combined with other expressions of love or concern.

- Having an attitude of humility.

... washing the feet of the *saints* ...
 1 Timothy 5:10b (BSB)

[Context: Since people wore sandals, and the roads were normally dusty, this specific act was needed after a journey. Today, other expressions of humility might be more practical.]
- Serving them.

... the household of Stephanas: They ... have devoted themselves to serving the *saints*.
 1 Corinthians 16:15b (CSB)
- Helping those who are in need.

Share with the *saints* who are in need. Practice hospitality.
 Romans 12:13 (BSB)

Scripture has much to say on this topic. For instance... ➔

MORE about helping those who have needs.



FREE MONEY!
GRAB WHAT YOU CAN!!

Scripture **NEVER** tells us to indiscriminately toss money to the unsaved. There may be legitimate times to help them... but it is to be *purposeful, not blind*.

In contrast, Scripture **ALWAYS** tells us to help the saints – our family – but this is also to be *purposeful, not blind*.

PAUL'S EXAMPLE: The result of becoming a saint!

- Before Paul became a follower of Jesus, he used to *harm* and try to kill God's people – Acts 9:13; 26:10.
- After God saved him, he not only tried to *help* them, but also encouraged others to do the same – Romans 15:25, 26, 31; 1 Corinthians 16:1; 2 Corinthians 8:4; 9:1,12.
- It's for the saints who are *needy* – the "poor" – Romans 15:25-26. (It's NOT for the lazy – 2 Thessalonians 3:10.)
- It's voluntary – Romans 15:26; 2 Corinthians 8:4.
- It's done with prayer – Romans 15:31.
- It's done with the right priorities – 2 Corinthians 8:1-5.
- It's to be done purposefully (with planning) – 1 Corinthians 16:1; 2 Corinthians 9:1-4+.
- It helps God's people and results in an attitude of thankfulness (not entitlement) – 2 Corinthians 9:12.

Life situations are not always pleasant NOW; but God is preparing a glorious FUTURE for us!

Our *present* situation may include suffering. But nothing can separate us from God's love (Romans 8:31-39). He is the God who uses *all* things to accomplish the ultimate good in our lives (Romans 8:28).

I consider that our present *sufferings* are not worth comparing with the *glory* that will be revealed in us.
Romans 8:18 (NIV)

? IF SUFFERING IS A PART OF OUR LIVES, HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND RIGHT NOW?

[Note: The following two passages are from the book of Revelation (= prophecy); but what they say represents the perspective that Christians must *always* have, when in difficult situations.]

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- Things that happen may require patient endurance and faithfulness.

Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.
Anyone who is destined for prison will be taken to prison.
Anyone destined to die by the sword will die by the sword.
This means that **God's holy people** [= "saints"] must endure persecution patiently and remain faithful.
Revelation 13:9-10 (NLT)

- Being aware that our choices have eternal consequences. (See vs. 9-11: There is eternal wrath for those who *don't* do these things.)

This means that **God's holy people** [= "saints"] must endure persecution patiently, obeying his commands and maintaining their faith in Jesus.
Revelation 14:12 (NLT)

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We can be encouraged by a "future focus": *The Day of Justice is coming!*

- God's people will be rewarded – Revelation 11:18.

The time has come to judge the dead and to reward Your servants the prophets, as well as the **saints** and those who fear Your name, both small and great
Revelation 11:18b (BSB)

- We can rejoice when justice occurs – Revelation 18:20.

Rejoice over her, heaven, and **people of Christ** [= "saints"], and apostles, and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!
Revelation 18:20 (OEB)

NOW: We want our persecutors to repent and be saved. But if they are unwilling...

THEN: We will want God to be glorified – which means we will desire justice against those who oppose God and his people.

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Two of the things that we have to look forward to:

- We will *participate* in the coming judgment – as judges. [We should be applying this fact NOW!]

Do you not know that the **saints** will judge the world? And if the world is judged by you [in the future], are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters [right now]?
Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?
1 Corinthians 6:2-3 (NHEB)

- We have a *future* inheritance waiting for us!

... giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the **saints' inheritance** in the light.
Colossians 1:12 (CSB)

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When Jesus returns, the process of turning "saints" into "saints" will be completed!

At that time, God will be glorified in us!

... on the day he comes to be **glorified** in his **holy people** [= "saints"] ...
2 Thessalonians 1:10a (NIV)

So **YOUR MISSION** this week is:

GET READY!

Do the work of "becoming a saint"! God has empowered you to do it!

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Credits

SCRIPTURE

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