

I Will Build My Church

The Purpose and Characteristics of Christ's Church

6 The Church is "One", "Holy", "Catholic", and "Apostolic", Part 5

February 23, 2020

Ephesians 4:4-16

4 *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;

5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

8 Therefore it says, "*WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN.*"

9 (Now this *expression*, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth?

10 He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.)

11 And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers,

12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ,

16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

To the Glory of God

Now we're starting this new year by examining just what the Bible teaches about the "Church". And over the last several weeks, we have been looking at the four Characteristics of a true, biblical Church as defined by the Nicene Creed (AD325).¹ And that attempt by the early Church at arriving at "Orthodoxy" (Right Believing) was that a real Church was:

1. One
2. Holy
3. Catholic
4. Apostolic

... and we spent several weeks looking at what it means for the Church to be "One". And so, today, I want to examine what it means for the Church of Jesus to be "Holy".

Holy: OT: Hebrew *quodesh*: to be set apart; to be made sacred. NT: Greek *hagios*; set apart for God, to be, as it were, exclusively His

Now, even though the concept of "Biblical Holiness" has fallen on hard times of late, the Scriptures are crystal clear about this: God's Will for every genuine believer is that we all *pursue* Holiness, on purpose.

It never ceases to amaze me how so many, within the modern church, place Holiness on the backburner, or even outright ignore it. And yet, our progressive Sanctification (the process of becoming Holy) consumes more time than anything else within the *entirety* of Salvation.² We are only justified one time. And that moment when we respond to the Miracle of the New Birth, by repenting of Sin and trusting in Jesus and in His finished Work, is very brief at best. And then, from that moment until we die, we are engaged in the process of becoming Holy.

¹ The Creed was updated in AD 381 at the *Council of Constantinople*; but the section concerning the Characteristics of an "Orthodox" Church remained the same.

² "Salvation" begins in Eternity Past when God "sets His Love" upon certain elected sinners (who have not even been born), and ends with the glorification of our bodies in Heaven. The complete concept of biblical Salvation is illustrated in what is called the "*Ordo Solutis*" (the Order of Salvation).

In fact, even though far too many in the modern Church have never even thought about what it means to be Holy, the Church of Jesus being Holy is the *main* Reason why God leaves us here on earth after our Salvation. Saved people are *commanded* to *display*, or to *illustrate*, or to *show* the wondrous Glory of God's Grace through our ongoing pursuit of Holiness. This is what the Apostle Paul meant when he wrote this in **Ephesians 1:3-6**:

Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

So, we are to *prove* to an unbelieving world how magnificent God's Grace really is by being radically transformed in our nature (by what God alone did for us) so that we, *individually*, become "Holy". This is *why* the Apostle Peter said this in **1 Peter 1:14-16**:

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts *which were yours* in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior; because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.**"**

But then Peter went on to teach that not only are we to become "Holy" as individual believers, but the Church, *collectively*, is also to become "Holy" as well.

1 Peter 2:9&10

But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.

So, the main Reason why God moved mightily to take us out of the

Darkness of our wicked Sins, and to wash us, and save us, was so that all genuine believers would become that "holy Nation" *together*. And I would suggest to you that the Way in which we all become Holy *individually* is by becoming Holy *collectively*. In other words, there is no such thing as the Church of Jesus being Holy without the individual members also being Holy. And so, the individual members striving for Holiness is what makes the Church Holy.

But we must understand that the individual members becoming Holy is NOT some accident. Nobody trips and falls into Holiness. Nobody becomes Holy without *purposefully* striving for it. And nobody will *remain* Holy without the individual members *continuing* to strive for Holiness. So, striving to be Holy is both a *purposeful* and a *continual* Effort by every believer who has experienced the Miracle of the New Birth.

The writer of **Hebrews** infallibly taught that Holiness is NOT some side or peripheral Issue, but is so important and so vital that unless a person actually becomes Holy, he will NOT even see God.

Hebrews 12:14

Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification [Holiness] without which no one will see the Lord.

And that means that Holiness is NOT something that *some* believers pursue, while others (who are equally saved) are able to just "opt out". No, the Miracle of the New Birth *compels* each believer to strive to honor and please the Lord by and through humble and joyful Obedience. And that purposeful and ongoing Effort to show the magnificence of God's Grace by striving to honor Jesus in all that we do and say is what Holiness looks like. And it is what the Church that Jesus created by His Life, Death, and Resurrection looks like.

So, being a part of the true Church means that each individual believer *avails* himself of the various "Means of Grace"³ that have been given by God to the Church so that we become the "holy Nation" that Peter taught. And *part* of those "Means" is what are called "Ministry Gifts" that God gave to the Church. And this is what the Apostle Paul was describing when we wrote this in **Ephesians 4:11-16**:

³ **The Acts 2:42**: Bible Study; Fellowship; Communion; and Prayer

And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

In other words, being Holy is NOT something that is left up to the individual believer to figure out on his own. Becoming Holy is one of the *primary* functions of the Christian Church. It is a *community* Effort. And it is an *ongoing* Effort. The people of the Christian Church being Holy is WHY God gave the “four-fold Ministry Gifts”⁴ of:

1. Apostles
2. Prophets
3. Evangelists
4. Pastors/Teachers

Now the Ministry Gifts of both the Apostles and Prophets have ceased, *not* because God has somehow lost His Power, and *not* because the Bible isn't true (as some teach), but simply because those two Ministry Gifts were *unique*, and *special*, and very *narrowly* manifested in the development of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, which was used to *establish* the Church. And so, once that very narrow manifestation was accomplished, through the *receiving*, *articulating*, and *confirming* of 66 infallible Books and the establishment of Christianity upon the earth⁵, the Ministry Gifts of both the Apostles and Prophets *ceased*. So, we are now edified by the Ministry Gifts of both the Apostles and Prophets through the pages of the Holy Bible.

⁴ In many areas- **Ephesians 4:11** is incorrectly referred to as “the five-fold Ministry”. But the Greek clearly connects the last two Ministry Gifts (Pastor and Teacher) together

⁵ The Scriptures receive “Divine Credibility” through the Signs, Wonders, Miracles, and various other Gifts of the Holy Spirit that were given to the Apostles and Prophets during the time their Ministries were operating.

But, then the Apostle Paul was “carried along” to write that the Reason these four “Ministry Gifts” exist was:

for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ...

... so those three reasons:

- 1. The equipping of the saints**
- 2. The work of service**
- 3. The building up of the Body of Christ**

... is what it means to be “Holy”. So, the only reason that these four Ministry Gifts exist is to accomplish these three Goals. And that means that *everything* that these four Ministry Gifts do, and *everything* they teach, should be designed to accomplish these three Goals in every believer in the Church. And this is *how* the Church *becomes* Holy, and how it *remains* Holy.

But how will we know that the four Ministry Gifts are actually *accomplishing* the progressive Holiness of the individual believers and the Church as a whole? When we see three things happen:

Ephesians 4:13

until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

The One Church which Jesus is building, the One Church against which the gates of Hades itself will not prevail, and the One Church over which Jesus is Lord and Head, is also Holy. And this Church is NOT going to *become* Holy at some point in the future. No, Jesus’ Church has *always* been Holy, and it will always be Holy. So, those individuals who simply don’t care or who are *not* striving to be Holy are NOT a part of Christ’s Church.

Since the Church of Jesus is a living, breathing Organism that is made up of individual believers, this means that all who are a part of the One Church that Jesus created are all actively pursuing Holiness. So, there is no such thing as anyone, who is truly saved, who is also not

ongoinly seeking and praying and striving to *validate* the Salvation experience he has had (by Grace through Faith alone) by being Holy.

Now there is a lot of confusion in our day over just what the word "Holy" means. And many times, we *incorrectly* substitute the word "Holy" for the word "Righteous". But the two are not the same.

When we use the word "Holy" to talk about the Church and the people of God, we mean to say that the Church of Jesus and the people of the Church are "different", they are "unique", and "set apart", and "set aside" from the people of the lost pagan world. But, we are NOT merely different for Difference sake. We aren't talking about being "set apart" so we can be *weird*, or *strange*, or *isolated* from the other people. No, this Holiness; this "Apartness" ,has to do with us being sovereignly "called out" from the pagan world of spiritual Darkness and Sin, and being "called into" the Light of God's Will and Way, so that we may be *exclusively* used by God for His Own Glory.

This is why the Bible teaches that God is "jealous" over us.

Deuteronomy 6:15

for the Lord your God in the midst of you is a jealous God; otherwise the anger of the Lord your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth.⁶

Because God has chosen us, because God has "set His Love" upon us, because God determined back in "Eternity Past" to forgive us, and save us, and to wash us, and to make us His very Own, God will simply NOT allow us to then live unto ourselves. We will belong to Jesus *totally, exclusively*, or we will belong to the world and the Flesh and the Devil. But know this, you will NOT belong to both. It is truly "Either-Or", NOT "Both-And".

We must understand that we simply *cannot* have it both ways. We have been bought and paid for by and through what Jesus alone has done for us. So, we now belong to God. Forever. We have been *purchased* and *forcibly* taken out of satan's cruel grip. We have been *violently* delivered from our Sins, and the Damnation and Wrath of God that was against us because of our Sins. And we have been gloriously

⁶ According to her own Testimony, this is the Verse that cause Oprah Winfrey to reject Christianity;
<http://www.bpnews.net/28150/oprah-and-a-jealous-god>

brought now into the "Liberty" of the children of God. And that is wonderful.

But that flip side to this concept of being "called out" and "set aside" by God (Holy), the other part of no longer being held captive by satan, is that we no longer belong to ourselves either. We have been "brought out" so God could "bring us in". We have been "set aside", and "made different", and "called out", so we may then live our lives (with complete abandon) to the Glory God to make Jesus look magnificent.

And God is fiercely jealous over us with a godly jealousy and has no Plans, *whatsoever*, to share us with Sin, or with satan, or with ourselves. We belong to God, *completely*, or we don't belong to God *at all*. So, if for some reason we become "weary of Well-doing", if, for some reason, we become "bored with God", if we begin to "despise our birthright", if we grow tired of being "God's people", and if we begin to long after the pagan world (that God delivered us out from) with desire and pangs of lust, if, for some reason, we seek to take our hands off the plow and look back (like Lott's wife), listen to what God has said:

2 Peter 2:20-22

For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them. It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire."

So, if (after a period of time) we are no longer satisfied with being washed, and forgiven, and made white, and we seek to return back to our former dark life, we haven't lost our Salvation. No, we are simply proving that we were deceived about whatever Salvation experience we think we had, and we were never truly born again to begin with. In other words, those who think so little of what God has done, and who seek to snub their noses in God's Face and frolic in the pleasures of this fallen world, they will have what they desire. They will have the world with all its troubles and disappointments, and, ultimately, they will scream in Hell throughout the endless eons of Eternity, because they

trampled upon the Grace of God and rejected His Mercy. And they will miss all the Glories of Heaven because they counted the Grace of God as something to belittle.

In other words, our being "set aside" so that God may use us for His Own Glory is both *exclusive* and *forever*. We have been "chosen" to live our lives (with absolute abandon) so that our living *proves*, or *displays*, the inherent Value and Worth of the Grace of God and makes Jesus look irresistible to the world.

Now even though many would agree with that much, the people of the Covenant of Peace Church have learned over the years that we must go even deeper into this. And so, I have been faithful to teach you all that us living *exclusively* to the Glory of God, and NOT to the Ways of the fallen world, and NOT to our own glory, not only honors Jesus Christ, but it also brings forth the fullness of Joy in us as well.

So, we are NOT merely "bond-slaves" of Jesus. That is NOT what the Bible teaches. No, we are *happy* bond-slaves. We are *contented* servants. We are *satisfied* believers. We are a people- who *delight* in dying to Self and to Sin. And we are the *privileged* and *blessed* possession of an infinitely jealous God.

It is truly a Joy to serve the Lord. I have never known more Peace, never had more Joy, never known more Satisfaction than when I am on my face down at the Feet of my dear, sweet Jesus. And so, the more we pursue Obedience, and the more we pursue Holiness, the more we please and honor Jesus Christ. And the more we please and honor Jesus, the more Joy and Delight comes to us.

So, most of the time when we speak about the Holiness of God, we are actually referring to God's Own Personal Purity and Righteousness. And surely God is both Pure and Righteous, but that is *NOT* the dominant meaning of the word "Holy". The biblical word "Holy" has two distinct meanings:

1. God's "Apartness" or His "Otherness"
2. God's unique *Actions*

1. The "Apartness" of God

When we use the word "Holy" in our description of God, we are referring to the profound *difference* between God and everything else

that He made. God is NOT like anything else in all the Universe. God is *better*, and *higher*, and more *valuable*, and more *important* than anything He made. So, "Holy" doesn't refer to sinlessness (in and of itself); it means that God is "other" or "different" or "set apart" or "unique" from His Creation in His Worth, and His Power, and His Beauty, and His Wisdom, and Importance and Glory.⁷ So, the Holiness of God is the *summation* of all His unique Attributes and Qualities that make Him to be God. In other words, when you add up all that God is, you come up with His Holiness. So, Holiness is all that makes God to be God, and not merely an exalted Human. And this Truth makes it correct and proper for us to worship God. But it is also what makes it foolish, sinful, and offensive not to.

God is "unlike" anyone or anything that He made. He is *superior to* and *more important than* anything else. God is the single most valuable Commodity in the entire Universe. And because God is Omniscient and knows everything about everything, no one knows, understands, and appreciates the great Value that God is more than God Himself.

So, God's Love is manifested NOT like a mother and child, and NOT like a Father and son, and NOT like any other human example. God's Love is manifested in God's white-hot Passion to be seen, and known, and valued, and glorified by His creatures. Because the very BEST thing God can give us is *Himself!*

But Sin stops that from happening. And so, God had to take on Flesh and become Man, and live *sinlessly*, and die *vicariously*, and then rise *triumphantly*, in order to give wicked rebels Himself. And God has to move *powerfully* and *decisively* to radically and eternally change us to the degree that we delight in Him. And until we find the fullness of our own Joy in Jesus Christ, we are NOT fully glorifying God, and God is NOT being fully valued. And so, *part* of what our progressive Holiness does for us is to make us to be that kind of people. And all of *that* is the Love of God!

We must always remember that God is not "like" Man in that He does not think, speak, act, love, or desire what we do, or even in the same way that we do. God's Holiness makes Him infinitely *worthy* and *deserving* of our adoration, our worship, our love, our devotion, and our

⁷ God is absolutely sinless. And so, *part* of God's Holiness is His sinlessness. But Holiness refers to much more than simply that God is sinless.

obedience. And His perfect Holiness also makes it proper for God to be angry and offended when we do *not* honor Him in the way that He is entitled to be honored. Therefore, God is correct to Judge us when we do *not* worship Him.

One of the greatest Sins that anyone ever committed was when God's Own people (the Jews) began to try to "bridge the gap" between themselves and God (without Jesus) by thinking of God and referring to God as though He was nothing more than an exalted Man. And in **Psalm 50:21b**, God addressed that Sin when He said:

... You thought that I was just like you; I will reprove you and state *the case* in order before your eyes.

Now when we speak about people or objects being "Holy", we are speaking about them being "set aside", "consecrated", or "made different" precisely because of the "Touch" of God that is upon them, NOT because of any *inherent* holiness or sinlessness in them. For example, in **Exodus 3:5**, God told Moses:

... Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.

So, here, the very dirt that Moses was standing on was *made* "Holy" only because God was there speaking to Moses from the burning bush, and NOT because the dirt *itself* had any holy Qualities in itself.

So, too, all genuine believers are called to "be" Holy in the same sense due only to God's Grace and Presence in our lives. We are called to live "counterintuitively" to the ways of the lost pagan world and be "set apart" or "different" from those who are lost and unsaved. And again, that doesn't mean that we are to simply be strange or weird, but rather we should struggle daily against the lusts of our flesh by the Power of the Spirit to live in humble and joyful submission to the Authority of Scripture in our daily lives, all to the Glory of God. And, in doing that, we will *never* do "what is right in our own eyes".

Now unlike what many of the unbiblical cults teach, when we are called to be Holy (**Leviticus 20:7, 1 Peter 1:15&16**), that does *not* mean that we are able to share in God's Divine Majesty or Deity, or that we are to reach a position of sinless Perfection. That is blasphemy. We are

not gods now, we will *never* be gods, and human beings have *never* been gods. All of those who have been born after Adam fell are slaves. And we are either “slaves of sin” (**Romans 6:20**), or we are “bond-slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ” (**Ephesians 6:6**). But, we have never been “Masters of our own Destiny” or “Captains of our own ships”. That is Humanism (Pelagianism), and is *not* taught in the Bible. Only Jesus Christ is the Master. And we are either under subjection to His Divine Authority, or we are yet in our sins, heading for a devil’s Hell.

So, all genuine believers are called to live and act and speak and behave in a way that testifies to the fact that God has “set us apart” or “made us different” from our normal fallen sinfulness. So, to be called to Holiness, therefore, is for frail sinful humans to attempt to reflect the moral Character and Activity of God, and to mirror or emulate (however weak and clumsy that may be) His Holiness.

We must be careful though, that as we strive to be Holy, we do not assume a smug, Self-righteousness as though we are morally *superior* to others due to the fact that God has called and chosen and redeemed us. That is *horribly* dishonoring to the Savior, Who bought us. We are *not* “better” than the lost pagans of the world. But, we are “blessed” because, in spite of our own unworthiness, God chose to “set His Love upon us”. But we must always remember that God didn’t choose us because He saw some “Good” deep down within us. No, in many ways, we may actually be *more* wicked than the non-elect. But, in order to receive all Glory for Salvation Himself, God chose to save guilty rebels through no action or quality in them at all. Truly, Salvation is “by” God’s Grace and “through” the Gift of Saving Faith, ALONE. And this is why Paul warned us in **Romans 12:3**:

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

... we must always remember that this overarching Humility is NOT unconnected, but is *part* of what it means for us to be Holy.

Not Our Own

True biblical Holiness is completely *foreign* to Man. It is *alien* and *external* to all of Humanity. Holiness is not *intrinsic* to Mankind in any way; it does not originate from inside of *any* human being. Holiness is a gracious Gift and Calling of God, and, therefore, when understood properly, it will humble our hearts, break our pride, and shatter our arrogance.

We must remember that it is the Presence and Purpose of God, alone, that makes the ordinary to be *extraordinary*, the common to be *uncommon*, and the unholy to be Holy.

2. God's Unique Actions

God's Holiness not only means that everything about God, *Personally*, is both "special" and "unique", but it also means that everything that God *does* is also just that "unique" and "special" and "different" from what humans or animals or any other created thing (angels) can or would do. And that means that no one is like God.

And yet, God desires that His Church be like Himself in Holiness. And the way that we are to understand this is that the Church of Jesus is to be "unique" from every other institution on earth. The Church should be "special" and "different" and "set apart" from other clubs, groups, or organizations, precisely because the true Church is made up of people who have been "made Holy" through the finished Work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And in our hyper-politicized world, it is very important that we understand that the Church is NOT the State. Human Government is a creation of God. Government was God's idea. God is the One Who set up Human Government in the beginning. And so, the State is "under" God in that God is superior to the State, and the State is always accountable to God for what it does.

Yet the State is NOT organized, and does NOT operate in the same way as the Church. And so, while the Church is accountable to God, the Church is NOT accountable to the State. The Church and the State are separate and should NEVER be united. Every attempt, throughout all of human history, to blend the Church and the State

together has been an unmitigated disaster. It resulted in "Christendom", which is NOT the same thing as Christianity.

As citizens of the State, we *can*, and we *should*, participate in the ongoing operation of our Government. And, here, in America, we are allowed to choose our leaders, and to influence Legislation. And to *whatever* extent we *can* influence Government to operate with integrity and honesty, we *should*. But we must take heed to ourselves that we do NOT look at Government as being a *part* of the Church. It isn't. And it never has been, and never will be.

And that means that the biblical Pattern for Holiness is NOT simply to vote for the right political candidate. It is that saved men begin to strive, individually, for Holiness. And then those Fathers, Sons, Brothers, and Husbands lead and influence their Wives and Children so that the Family strives for Holiness. And then those holy Families influence the Church. And the holy Church influences the Community. And the Community influences the Region, and the Region influences the State.

Called to be Holy Ones (Saints)

The Holiness of the Church is the logic behind the remarkable word that the Bible uses to describe all genuine Christians: "saints", which literally means "*the holy ones*" or "*the sanctified ones*". The New Testament *repeatedly* uses this word to identify all genuine believers in Jesus Christ.

Matthew 27:50-53

And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split. The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many.

The Acts 9:13-14

But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name."

The Acts 9:32

Now as Peter was traveling through all *those regions*, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda.

The Acts 9:41

And he gave her his hand and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive.

The Acts 26:10

And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them.

Romans 1:7

to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called *as* saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:27

and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of God*.

Romans 12:13

contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

Romans 15:25&26

but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints. For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.

Romans 15:31

that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and *that* my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints;

Romans 16:1&2

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea; that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well.

Romans 16:15

Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.

1 Corinthians 1:1&2

Paul, called *as* an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their *Lord* and ours:

1 Corinthians 6:1-3

Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints? Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent *to constitute* the smallest law courts? Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life?

1 Corinthians 14:33

for God is not *a God* of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

1 Corinthians 16:1&2

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.

1 Corinthians 16:15

Now I urge you, brethren (you know the household of Stephanas, that they were the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves for ministry to the saints),

2 Corinthians 1:1&2

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother, To the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints who are throughout Achaia: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 8:4

begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints,

2 Corinthians 9:1

For it is superfluous for me to write to you about this ministry to the saints;

2 Corinthians 9:12

For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God.

2 Corinthians 13:13

All the saints greet you.

Ephesians 1:1&2

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are at Ephesus and *who are* faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:15

For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which *exists* among you and your love for all the saints,

Ephesians 1:18

***I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,**

Ephesians 2:19

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,

Ephesians 3:8

To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ,

Ephesians 3:14-19

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know

the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 4:11-13

And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

Simul Justus et Peccator

Now there is a misconception that comes in when people assume that the word "saints" or "holy ones" means *sinless ones*. We must understand that to be "Holy" is NOT the same thing as being "Righteous". To be "Righteous" means: *to be right with God, to always be in right standing with God and His Will and Ways, to be sin free, sinless, or morally perfect*. So, to understand how this works, we must first understand the nature of Sin.

The Bible teaches that Salvation breaks the dominating influence that sin had on the believer before his Redemption.

Romans 6:1-7

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.

1 John 3:4-10

Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices

righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

When a person is lost, Sin *dominates* his life. It isn't that he simply sins; Sin has *rule* over him, and the Bible says he is the "slave of sin".

Romans 6:16-18

Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone *as* slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

Through Salvation, the *dominating* Power of Sin over our lives has been forever broken so that we are now able to serve the Lord. But our Service is not without fault due to the fact that we are still in this body of flesh, we still live in a fallen world, and the devil is still roaming through the earth seeking whom he may devour. But even though we are not sinless, we should sin less than before we were saved. So, saved people now hold two different positions:

1. We are forgiven and have been "made" Righteous by Christ.
2. We are personally sinful, constantly falling short of the Glory of God.

Salvation is owing to what God sovereignly did for us. And the Righteousness we have in our Salvation is an *external*, an *alien*, or *foreign* Righteousness. It is NOT the individual's own, personal, *intrinsic* righteousness. It is the spotless Righteousness of Jesus Christ that has been sovereignly Imputed (credited) to the believer by the agency of Faith alone. Yet the Sinfulness of the believer is entirely his own.

And this allows that all the good/godliness found in the saved person is strictly owing to what God has sovereignly did *for* him and *in* him, while all of the bad/disobedience belongs solely to the individual. This Reality is what allows for God to receive all the Glory for any Good/Obedience found in the believer, while allowing the individual believer to be held fully accountable to God for any Rebellion or Sin. And this “dual status” of the believer was best illustrated by the Latin phrase used by the Reformers:

Simul Justus et Peccator

The word “Simul” means: *at the same time, or Simultaneously*. The word “Justus” means: *Just or Righteous*. The word “et” means: *and*, and the word “Peccator” means: *Sinful*. So, the saved person is “at the same time (simultaneously) Just (Righteous) and a sinner (Peccator). And this Reality is what constantly humbles us and allows for us to continually seek after God for Mercy and Help.

So, the true Church of Jesus is Holy. It has always been Holy, and it will always be Holy. And so, those individual believers, who make up the Church, must also pursue biblical Holiness on purpose.

Amen. Let’s pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.