

Saints Alive

by Warren Wiersbe

A saint is a person who has trusted in God's Son, experienced God's grace, and received God's peace, making them different from the world.

Duration: 36:33

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 23:39-43, John 8:11, Acts 9:1-19, Galatians 3:28, Ephesians 1:1-14, Ephesians 2:8-9

Topics: "Christians"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the three basic wars that every human being faces: the war within oneself, the war with others, and the war with God. The speaker references James, who explains that these wars stem from our desires that war within us. However, Jesus Christ offers peace amidst these wars. The speaker also emphasizes the concept of grace, highlighting examples from the Bible such as Jesus forgiving the woman caught in adultery and promising paradise to the thief on the cross. The sermon concludes by emphasizing that grace is God's favor to the undeserving and cannot be bought with wealth.

Transcript

We turn to Ephesians chapter 1 and I shall read the first 14 verses.

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

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before him in love having predestinated us unto the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will to the praise of the glory of his grace through which he hath made us accepted in the beloved in whom we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace in which he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence having made known unto us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself that in the dispensation of the

fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ both which are in heaven and which are on earth even in him in whom also we have obtained an inheritance being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will that we should be to the praise

of his glory who first trusted in Christ in whom ye also trusted after ye heard the word of truth the gospel of your salvation in whom also after ye believed ye were sealed with that holy spirit of promise who is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory and so the plan of salvation reaches from eternity past to eternity future and we are a part of that plan and vitality to the christian life that one simple

word will not describe what a christian is now we use the word christian most of all the words and yet interestingly enough it's found only three times in the entire new testament i was reading acts chapter nine recently and was impressed with how many different names for christians are found in that chapter we are called disciples and we are called brethren and we are called those that call upon his name we're called those who follow the way and we're also called saints at least three times in that chapter god speaks of us as saints and that's what paul does in ephesians chapter one verses one and two he addresses this letter to the saints who are at ephesus and to the faithful in christ jesus now i suppose some of you are a little bit shocked to find out that believers christians are

called saints if you'll check the dictionary or the encyclopedia you'll find that most of the people out in the world don't have the clue don't have a clue as to what it means to be a saint they tell us that a saint is a person who has isolated himself from the rest of humanity he's gone off somewhere to develop sanctity to get closer to god and yet paul was writing to saints who were right in the big city of ephesus a city with i suppose some 300 000 people in it they were not sitting on top of a pillar they were not off in some cave they were in a busy prosperous popular city and yet they were saints there are those who tell us that saints are manufactured that if you have been living a pure life and if you can point to the fact that you have performed some miracles then we'll make a

saint out of you but we have to wait until you've been dead at least 50 years to do this now i respect people who have this conviction but you don't find it in the bible in my ministry i have to be limited to what we have in the word of god isaiah says to the law and to the testimony if they speak not according to this word it's because there's no light in them you see these people that paul was writing to were not out performing miracles they had experienced a miracle and they weren't dead people they were living people he's writing to living saints he did not write this letter and send it to the dead letter office he sent this to people who were alive and could read it now there was a time when they were dead they were dead in trespasses and sins but they had experienced something that

had made saints out of them and so the question before the house this morning is simply this what is a saint they say what difference does it make well it makes all the difference in the world here is paul writing a letter now i have no right to read anybody else's mail i have no right at all to apply to myself which does that which doesn't apply to me and i like this letter i like paul's letter to the ephesians we're going to be spending weeks and weeks and weeks in ephesians in chapters one two and three he spells out doctrine basic doctrine and he points out my wonderful riches in christ and in chapters four five and six we have duty and he spells out our responsibilities in christ ruth paxton says in chapters one two and three we have the believers wealth in chapters four five and six

we have the believers walk and she is right now i want to know does this wealth belong to me do i have any right to take ephesians as a spiritual bank book and go up to the throne of grace and say god this is what you said i want that for my life i can't do it unless i know i'm a saint dr harry ironside who was pastor here for 18 years had a sweet wonderful way about getting next to people now as you folks know who have been here for many years dr ironside traveled widely in conference ministry and he'd often leave this

church on a sunday night and go down to the lasalle street station and hop a train and go off someplace i was reading the other day that interesting little story about how he spent four days on a train going across to california and fell into conversation with a group of

women who belong to a religious order and they had a good time discussing the bible and finally dr ironside looked at them and said ladies have you ever seen a saint oh they said no we never have he said would you like to see one they said well yes we certainly would he said look you are looking at saint harry and he was right because according to the word of god saints are living people until god calls them home to heaven and then they really enter into life life eternal and everlasting in the presence of the lord you see this word saint simply means one who is different because he's been set apart that's all it means it doesn't mean someone who's striving and trying to become holy by being religious the word saint means one who is different because he has been set apart he doesn't set

himself apart to find god he is set apart because god has found him now in these first two verses of ephesians chapter one paul gives us the characteristics of a saint there are four of them i hope they are true of us today number one a saint is a person who is different because he has trusted in god's son paul an apostle of jesus christ by the will of god to the saints who are at ephesus and to the faithful in christ jesus now he's not writing to two groups of people saints and faithful you would expect saints to be faithful this word faithful means believers it's translated that way several times in our new testament paul's not writing to two groups of people paul is writing to one group and he's saying i am writing to the saints who are at ephesus even to the believers in christ jesus

it's the same word that jesus used when he said to thomas be not faithless but believing same word same word that lydia used when she said to paul if you have judged me to be faithful come into my house if you have judged me to be a believer come into my house a saint is someone who has trusted in god's son now i meet many people who say well pastor i have faith well faith in what well i have faith i have faith in goodness i have faith that somewhere up there somebody loves me this is not what these saints had here was a specific faith in a specific person my dear friend you are not saved by faith in anything we are saved by faith in and notice the phrase he uses here the lord jesus christ verse 2 not just jesus i hear a great deal being said these days about jesus not just jesus christ

not just christ the lord jesus christ you see paul had founded this church in ephesus and he had preached to them the lord jesus christ christ is his official title it means messiah the anointed one christ is his prophetic name throughout the old testament they were looking for a king and a prophet and a priest and every king failed and the prophets even were sinners and the priests were sinners but there came one who was the christ the anointed one and he fulfilled all these old testament pictures and that person is our lord jesus christ so when you trust him you're you're trusting the anointed one the messiah now he's not just christ he's jesus christ the name jesus is his name as savior thou shall call his name jesus for he shall save his people from their sins jesus is the new

testament word for joshua joshua means jehovah is salvation and so we have the anointed savior but he is not just simply jesus christ the anointed savior he is the lord jesus christ and that word lord means he is god you see it doesn't say grace be unto you in peace from god our father and from isaiah the prophet grace be unto you in peace from god our father and the apostle peter grace be unto you in peace from our father and from jeremiah now it says our lord jesus christ because he is god and so when you put your faith in him you are putting your faith in the messiah the savior god who is the only savior of the world now when the apostle paul was saul of tarsus he believed in a messiah no question about that every jew who is

taught in the old testament scriptures believes in a messiah

but saul of tarsus didn't believe that jesus of nazareth was the messiah and then one day on that damascus road saul of tarsus saw jesus of nazareth and then a word came to his lips which he would never have used before lord and so when he put it all together he had the lord jesus christ you see paul dared to call himself a saint nine times in ephesians you find paul using the word saints one of his favorite words for believers the saints his inheritance in the saints walk in a life that becometh the saints praying for all the saints over in chapter three paul says unto me who am the least of all the saints paul you you really you're really proud there that's a little bit of arrogance to call yourself a saint i mean you're a murderer you stood there and held the clothes while they

murdered stephen saul of tarsus you dare to call yourself a saint yes i do on what basis i have trusted the lord jesus christ so a saint is a person who is different because he has trusted god's son now when you trust god's son you change addresses you say marvelous i'd like to move out of my neighborhood you won't physically but you will spiritually two little prepositions in verse one are so interesting these saints were at ephesus in christ jesus you get that every believer in jesus christ has two addresses a physical address a geographical address at chicago at what will met at los angeles but a spiritual address in christ jesus the apostle paul uses this little phrase in christ 164 times in his letters it's an important phrase it means this when you were born you were born in adam

that made you a sinner when you were born again through faith in christ you were taken out of that old relationship and put into a new relationship in christ these saints were at ephesus physically but in christ spiritually someone says i'd like to be a christian but you know where i live it's pretty rough ephesus was pretty rough pornography was rampant in fact pornography was religious the temple of diana was one of the seven wonders of the world and people flocked from all over the world to see the temple of diana it was filled with religious prostitution it was an art gallery it was a bank and the city of ephesus had money and pleasure and religion and yet there were saints in that city there were people who trusted christ and they didn't say oh you can't be a saint in ephesus if you

can be a saint in ephesus you can be a saint in chicago a saint is one who is different because he has trusted god's son secondly he is different because he has experienced god's grace grace be unto you and peace from god our father and from the lord jesus christ now paul is not the one who bestows grace grace and peace are great words the old testament jew when he met a friend said shalom peace the new testament greek when he met a friend said grace and today in the lord jesus christ there's neither jew nor greek bond nor free male nor female we're all one in christ and so he says of these saints they are those who are recipients of grace and peace and so our second characteristic of a saint is he is one who has experienced the grace of god now ephesians is the book of god's grace 12

times in these six chapters paul talks about grace grace grace mr moody had an interesting experience one time mr moody said there are three books everybody should own number one a good study bible number two crudence concordance and number three a topical textbook and one week mr moody was doing a lot of studying preparing sermons and he was using his crudence concordance studying grace and he got so filled with what he was learning he got up from his table and went out the door and stopped the first person he met on the street and said what do you know about grace and the surprised man said grace who and d l moody said the grace of god i wonder if you've ever gotten excited about the grace of god now ephesus was a wealthy city but it wasn't wealthy enough to buy grace grace is given you

know what grace is grace is god's favor to the undeserving that's what it is someone has made an acrostic out of grace g-r-a-c-e god's riches available at christ's expense grace grace is god's favor to the undeserving without expecting anything in return now sometimes you do favor for undeserving people hoping to get something back grace means god's favor to the undeserving with no expectation of return one day god spoke to a man in ur of the an idolater and said abraham i want you to follow me and abraham turned his back on idol worship and became the founder of the hebrew nation that's grace one day jesus looked up a tree and saw a little man on a branch and that little man was a tax collector and he had a pretty bad record as a financial wizard and jesus said the key has come down i'm

going to go to your house today salvation has come to your house that's grace one day they dragged a woman before jesus and said we've taken her in the very act of adultery moises said we should stone her what do you say and jesus said to that woman ultimately when her accusers left neither do i condemn they go and sin no more that's grace they hung jesus on a cross and while he's hanging there dying for the sins of the world he turns and sees a thief and that thief says to him remember me when you come into your kingdom and jesus says today you'll be with me in paradise that's grace one day a jewish rabbi named saul of tarsus was storming down the road and he was out to get every believer he could get and jesus appeared to him and translated him out of darkness into light and saved him

that's grace now my friend have you experienced the grace of god he tells us over in chapter 2 how they experience this grace i can hardly wait till we get to chapter 2 and you have he made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins but god who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us for by grace are you saved hath quickened us together with christ and raised us together with him into the heavenlies that's grace grace means god does for us what we can't do for ourselves grace means god gives us what we can't earn by ourselves grace means god supplies to us what we never deserved and never could merit and once we get it we don't deserve it that's grace it's no wonder that john newton told us to sing amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me and what a

wretch he was a saint is a person who has trusted god's son and experienced god's grace we're going to see as we go through ephesians how rich we are because of god's grace but let me say this do you know that when you've experienced the grace of god you have everything you'll ever need that's amazing when i was born into this world thank god i was born with everything i needed to be able to grow up and be a normal human being when you're born into god's family by his grace he grants to you through his riches of his grace all that you will need until he comes and takes you home it's a marvelous thing a saint is one who has trusted god's son and experienced god's grace now there's a third characteristic of a saint he has received god's peace paul an apostle of jesus christ by the will of

god to the saints who are at ephesus and to the believers in christ jesus grace be unto you and peace from god our father and from the lord jesus christ you see when you believe in god's son and receive god's grace you also receive god's peace there's so much fighting in this world oh my here in the city of chicago we turn the radio on to get the latest news about what needs to be put back together again and we get the international news about nation fighting against nation but let's not talk about nation against nation or class against class or race against race let's just talk about the three basic wars that you fight every human being has three basic wars he's at war with himself and he's at war with other people and he's at war with god that's what james tells us from whence come wars

and fightings among you come they not even hence from your desires that war in your members he says because you you are at war with yourself you're at war with each other and because we're at war with

ourselves and each other it's an evidence that we're at war with god and yet jesus christ comes to give us peace it's a beautiful thing over here in chapter 2 i'm going to jump ahead and let you read it i can hardly wait till we get there actually ephesians chapter 2 verse 14 speaking about our lord jesus christ he is our peace peace is not a document it's a person peace is not a philosophy it's a person peace is not a religion peace is a person he is peace that means that when you're in him you're in peace and you are in him when you've trusted him and so he is our peace at the end of verse

15 it tells us that jesus christ is making peace you know how he's doing that he's taking people and saving them and he's building his church where there are no distinctions human we're all one in christ and so he is our peace and he made peace through the blood of his cross and in verse 17 he came and preached peace and he's still doing this how's he doing it through you and me over in chapter 6 paul tells us now put on your feet the gospel of peace the preparation of the gospel of peace the shoes that we wear as christians are the shoes of peace not war shoes and so jesus christ is our peace and he purchased our peace and he's making peace and then he's sharing peace through you and me and i speak to some people just now who don't have any peace you're trying peace by running away

you're trying peace by alcohol or narcotics you're trying to get peace through escape that's not going to work a saint is one who is different because he has received god's peace my friend when you have peace in your heart between you and god you're not afraid of anybody else when there's peace between me and heaven i'm not afraid of earth you're not a threat to me when god has given me peace and the reason we have so much fighting these days is because of selfishness and greed and defensiveness and fear a psychologist i was reading about recently said that fear that rebellion rebellion is fear turned inside out and many people who are fighting on the outside are fearful on the inside but when you have god's peace when you're one of his saints you don't worry about that and so a saint is

one who's different because he has trusted god's son he has experienced god's grace he has received god's peace it's a marvelous thing to use your energy all day long in peace and not in war it's a wonderful thing at the end of the day to go to bed and look up and look at god's face and say thank you god there were problems today and difficulties today but thank you that i was able to use my life in peace and not in war there's a fourth characteristic of every saint of god a saint is a person who is different because he has trusted god's son he's experienced god's grace he has received god's peace and he has entered god's family our father grace be unto you and peace from god our father this last week i read a book on success you say i'm so glad you did pastor you could use some that's

true i read a book on success after i read it i gave it to dr philip and i said i want you to read this and see what you think of it we both came to the same conclusion now god is mentioned in this book the creator not the father jesus is mentioned in this book the teacher not the savior you see when i look up to heaven i don't talk to a creator he is my creator he made me i don't talk to a judge he cannot judge me oh you say that's awfully arrogant no no it's scriptural there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in christ jesus if god sends judgment upon me he's judging his own son because i'm in him you see i have received peace from god the father he's not going to declare war after giving me peace a christian is one a saint is one who has entered god's family it's not god

the creator god the legislator god the great beyond god the judge i was reading one of emily dickinson's letters the other day she's that strange poetess from a century ago and she wrote this to a friend i am not very religious but my family is every morning they pray to an eclipse that they call their father now when i pray to my father he's not an eclipse he's not some spiritual enigma some nebulous thing way out there

he's my father and a saint is one who has entered god's family and he really can say father now here's an interesting thing you trace this word saint through the new testament and you'll discover only once has it ever used in the singular it's always plural the saints in rome called to be saints the saints here the saints there only once does he use the singular and then

he puts every in front of it every saint the saints are together they belong to a family it's never a saint an isolated saint off someplace it's always these saints we belong to a family so the particular family he was writing to was in ephesus there was a church family in ephesus there was a group of saints in ephesus they were known as the church in ephesus and a saint is one who has entered god's family now that is such a devastating truth that i think we take it for granted and miss the explosiveness of it for me to say i'm in god's family and god is my father means for me to say i have god's nature my children are in my family and unfortunately they have my nature if i'm in god's family i have god's nature that means that the very divine nature of god is within me he has graciously

shared with me his life when you get to chapter two of ephesians he describes what we were like before we were saved dead living for the world living for the flesh living for the devil but now he says through god's grace you have been saved and you belong to the family of god because we belong to the family of god the saint has a blessed fellowship with other christians i know you unsaved people think we saints are crazy we're not crazy we're different we're not odd we're different because we are saints we stand out from the run of the mill kind of person in the world today you see we have trusted god's son what are you trusting we have experienced god's grace what are you experiencing we have received god's peace what have you received we have entered god's family whose family are you in

i was reading a devotional book the other day obviously written by someone who didn't know his bible and he said this quote a saint is a sinner that keeps on trying unquote and i shouted out loud there was nobody there to hear me and said no a saint is a sinner that keeps on trying that's heresy that's blasphemy a saint is a sinner who has trusted jesus christ and no longer lives like a sinner because he has experienced god's grace and received god's peace and entered god's family and paul writes in this book and says i want you to live the kind of a life that becometh saints if you wait until after you're dead to become a saint you'll never be one it's appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment if you wait until you live a perfect life to become a saint you'll never be

one because there's none righteous no not one if you wait until you perform a miracle to become a saint you'll never be one you have to experience a miracle i invite you today to become a saint a set apart one let god pick you out of this world spiritually and put you into jesus christ where you have a living lasting union with him you're in christ if you say i'm not one of god's saints you can be one of god's saints by trusting christ father we're grateful that we don't really belong to this world system we're thankful that we have tasted and seen that the lord is good we have experienced the grace of god we're thankful father that you have deigned to call us set apart ones we're special we're different we're saints our prayer lord is that we might live as those who have been set apart

and purchased at such a tremendous price as we go through this beautiful letter to the ephesians father help us to realize how rich we are because we are your saints may there be those here who will trust the savior we ask through jesus christ our lord amen

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