

Walking on Water
Part 3 – Are You a Saint?
June 17, 2018

And now, the end is near And so I face the final curtain
My friend, I'll say it clear I'll state my case, of which I'm certain
I've lived a life that's full I traveled each and every highway
And more, much more than this, I did it my way

I've loved, I've laughed and cried I've had my fill, my share of losing
And now, as tears subside, I find it all so amusing
To think I did all that And may I say, not in a shy way
Oh, no, oh, no, not me, I did it my way

For what is a man, what has he got?
If not himself, then he has naught
To say the things he truly feels and not the words of one who kneels
The record shows I took the blows and did it my way

Yes, it was my way

This was written and sung by Frank Sinatra.

As I read and thought about these words I wondered, how did it work out for him, doing it his way, so I read up on him. I didn't work out too well.

Frank Sinatra may have seemed glamorous in the public eye but his life was littered with multiple wives, affairs, illegitimate children, depression, anger then finally death into an unsure eternity.

I actually was depressed as I read about his life. I don't know about you, but I don't want to do it my way.

As part of my ministry, I started something a few years ago. I started encouraging people who were nearing death to write a letter to their children while they still had the mental capacity to do so. Some did and others did not.

But I wonder, if your life was nearing its end what would you write? I did it my way? I hope not.

When the apostle Paul was nearing the end of his life he decided to write a couple of letters. One to a Christian named Philemon, one to the church at Colossae and one, the letter we are going to take our teaching from this summer, a letter to the church at Ephesus.

Look with me at the first two verses of this letter from Paul.

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...”

In beginning our look at this letter a couple of things pop out here in this greeting.

1. Paul knew who he was, he was called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God.

I think there is no greater thing in life than to know who you are. People struggle all their life, trying to find the purpose for their lives. Paul didn't have that problem. He got next to His Creator and his Creator told him who he was and what He wanted him to do.

Again, can there be any greater place in life to be than this? To know why you have been created and to fulfill the things your Creator wanted you to accomplish during your stay here on earth?

Paul didn't try and figure it out his way, he went to the source, the Creator of the universe, his Creator.

2. Paul knew the message he wanted to share at the end of his life

Again, can there be any greater thing in life, especially as you sum up your life, than sharing all the knowledge, understanding and wisdom you have gained with your loved ones?

Paul does this and he sends his letter to the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus.

3. Paul knew who he was writing to: the saints who are faithful in Christ Jesus

I thought it best for us to understand this title Paul gave his audience. He called them saints.

For some, saints are those individuals who have been given this title, sainthood, by the church. The church examined their lives and determined through their good works, the working of a miracle and other qualifiers, they are worthy of sainthood.

As I looked up the use of the title saint in the New Testament, it seems

4. New Testament Saint - The only qualification to be a saint was to believe and accept the work of Jesus Christ on the cross

Let's take a look at some of the next verses Paul wrote. In them I think we will find the qualifiers of sainthood.

Ephesians 1:2-8a, “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³ 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, ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love ⁵ He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷ In Him (Christ) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace ⁸ which He lavished on us.”

We will break this down more in the weeks to come but I wanted us to see what makes you and I a saint.

5. God made the choice that you and I would be holy and blameless before Him (verse 5)

Now while I will try and speak in the future about what it means to be chosen, predestined, the fact that I wanted us to focus on this morning is we have the opportunity to be holy and blameless before God. God, nobody else, made the choice that we get to be saints in His eyes.

How does this happen? **Verse 7. In Him (Christ) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses.” (trespasses - our sin nature and the sins we have committed)**

It is through accepting the purifying, cleansing and forgiving blood of Jesus that we get to be holy and blameless before God.

I wanted to give you a visual this morning of exactly what occurs when someone accepts Christ.

6. Through no fault of their own, each person is born into sin. Romans 3:23, “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.”

Every person has a sin nature passed on to them through generations, all the way back to the original sinner, Adam.

Like this jar here. Each person, when they are born, are filled with dark, black sin. Some people live out this sin nature in very dark and destructive ways, some live pretty good lives but still, they have a heart problem whether they admit it or not. Their heart has been polluted by the sin nature passed onto them.

7. The call to salvation: Romans 10:13, “for whoever will call in the name of the Lord will be saved.”

When a person decides to call upon Christ for salvation, a lot of the time all they are thinking about is salvation from hell into heaven for eternity. And while that is true, the reason they can get out of hell into heaven, into a holy God’s presence is because of the cleansing, forgiving blood of Jesus.

We come, ask for forgiveness of our sins and even recognize our sin nature, asking it to be taken away and something new happens inside of our hearts. We experience the most powerful cleansing agent in the universe, the cleansing, forgiving blood of the Son of the Most High God, Jesus Christ.

We are washed by His blood and this is what makes us pure and blameless before God.

And then, to take it even a step further, God pours into our hearts His own presence and the presence of His Son Jesus in the form of the Holy Spirit.

So today, for those who have accepted Jesus' blood sacrifice for the cleaning and forgiveness of sins, they are waling around as the vessels of the Trinity.

But here is the rub that we struggle to understand. Sometimes, most times, even though this great work has occurred on the inside of our lives, the exterior still struggles.

The past person we used to be, the society around us, Satan and even our own fleshly impulses are so strong that they cover up the work of Christ in our hearts.

How do we work on what showing off what God has done inside of us? By getting connected to the teachings we find in His word. Paul will get into to this later in his letter. But as God shows us areas of patience, kindness, gentleness, good language and behavior and we start listening an working with God on these things, more of who we are, or even more power, more of who is on the inside begins to show up in our lives.

This is what we want isn't it? This is the natural growth of a Christian. Being cleansed, purified and having God's presence poured into us is the starting place.

All the promises, all the blessings we are going to dig out of these passages are only for those who have accepted the cleansing, forgiving blood of Jesus. It is the only way to assure your way into heaven, into God's presence for eternity. And the only way to experience His blessings in this life.

I would be amiss, not doing my calling as a pastor if I did not start with this teaching right here. With a call to salvation.

The question for all of us this morning is, have you accepted the blood of the Jesus in your life for the forgiveness of your sins?

Have you experienced the cleansing, purifying work in your heart so you can have God's presence inside of you?

If you are not sure of this, we are going to give you time to make that decision this morning. But before we do I wanted to draw your attention back to the greeting of Paul in this letter.

8. Paul is writing to the saints who are **faithful** in Christ Jesus

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..."

Paul is writing to the saints who are faithful in Christ Jesus.

If you have accepted the cleansing, purifying work of Jesus in your life then you are a saint in God's eyes. But here's the question for all of us. Are we faithful in Christ Jesus? This is only a question only each one of you can answer.

Silence.....

So here are two things to consider as the foundation for this teaching.

Salvation and faithfulness. Two things I would like for us all to consider this morning.

Silence.....

In both of these issues, you can try, as Frank Sinatra did, to do it your way. Or you can come to a place of surrender and acceptance, do it God's way and experience all the wonders and blessings of heaven.

God has reached down and made the way the way possible. Let's pray about where we find ourselves today.

Our God, Creator of the universe, there are some this morning that may know they have not accepted Your Son's offer of forgiveness. They have put off, for one reason or the other, the salvation and relationship You offer. Let them make that choice of surrender, forgiveness and a blessed life.

If this is you, a simple but heart felt prayer will do. Father, I recognize my sinfulness and my need for Your Son's forgiveness. I call upon the name of Jesus to forgive my sin. I ask for His cleansing so that I may be pure and holy in Your sight. Please send Your Spirit to take up residence in my heart and lead me in living the life You want me to live.

For some your prayer might be, Lord, I know I have been playing around with thing called Christianity and I am done with that. I want to be in a place where I can receive the life You want me to have now and for eternity. Please forgive me of my sins and lead me in living the life You want me to live.

If you prayed one of these prayers this morning, please let me or someone else know so we can pray for you and come along beside you in your Christian walk.

Becoming a saint is the beginning of learning how to receive God's blessings, to walking on water over each and every trail, temptation and circumstance that comes up in your life.

You are now ready to hear about all the good things God has in store for you and we will begin with this next week as we go deeper into the letter Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus.

Let's pray

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...”

1. **Paul _____ who he was, he was called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God.**
2. **Paul _____ the message he wanted to share at the end of his life**
3. **Paul _____ who he was writing to: the saints who are faithful in Christ Jesus**
4. **New Testament Saint - The only qualification to be a saint was to _____ and _____ the work of Jesus Christ on the cross**

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5. **_____ made the choice that you and I would be _____ and _____ before Him (verse 5)**

Verse 7. In Him (Christ) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses.” (trespasses - our sin nature and the sins we have committed)

1. **Through no fault of their own, each person is _____ into sin.**

Romans 3:23, “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.”

2. **The call to salvation:**

Romans 10:13, “for whoever will call in the name of the Lord will be saved.”

3. **Paul is writing to the saints who are _____ in Christ Jesus.**

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...”

God wants to call you into sainthood, to be holy and blameless before Him. He has made that way possible through the great work of His Son upon the cross.

Are you a saint? Yes! If you have accepted Jesus!