

I Am A Saint

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- [0 : 0 0] Take your Bibles and turn to the Gospel of John, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.
- And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world.
- They were yours. You gave them to me, and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you, for I gave them the words you gave me, and they accepted them.
- They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I prayed for them. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours.
- All I have is yours, and all you have is mine, and glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you.
- [1 : 5 5] Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me.
- None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction, so that scripture would be fulfilled. I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.
- I have given them your word, and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world, but that you protect them from the evil one.
- They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth. Your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.
- For them, I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. You have spent another week in the world, and have you found that it is ever trying to squeeze you into its mold?
- [3 : 1 4] And one of the molds it wants to squeeze you into is how to think about yourself. And sometimes it is beating you down and telling you you are worthless, you are zero, you are a nobody.
- And lo and behold, at other times it can be puffing you up and telling you you are Mr. Wonderful, and you are so deserving and worthy. And then there is the devil too, whispering into your mind deceitful lies about who you are.
- And then your own flesh that is all too willing to take up with the lies of the world and the devil about yourself. How important it is then for you to be constantly soaking yourself in God's word.
- Where he's continually reminding you of who you are. You who are in Christ. Your new identity in Christ. How you're to think of yourself and then to live in the light of who you are.

So we're studying the Christian's identity. Lately we've been in John 15 where we saw God tell us, we heard God tell us that we're his friends. And have you been living as his friends?

[4 : 24] We're his branches, branches in the true vine of Christ. And today we hear him tell us that we are saints. Now for various reasons we may not be very quick to take those words upon our lips and say, I am a saint.

Because I live with me. And I know something of my struggles and my temptations and my failures and my sins.

And I know all too well that identity is still mine, oh wretched man that I am. I don't do what I want to do and I do what I don't want to do. I know who I am.

But then so does God, doesn't he? He's familiar with all of our ways. Not a word on our mouths before we speak it. He knows it all together. Not a thought in our heads.

Not a desire in our hearts. He knows it. Nothing is hidden from him. And he searches us through and through.

[5 : 30] And yet, if I read my Bible, I can't avoid the fact that he still says, I'm his saint. What does he mean by that?

Well, I'm glad you're asking that question because that's where we're going this morning. What does it mean to be a saint? Saint, since that is an identity. Based on God's word, I can say and stand before you and say, I am a saint.

I'm not going to ask you to call me Saint John, lest you confuse me with another John by that title. But I will affirm that I am a saint.

And all of you who are in Christ are just as much saints as that disciple who leaned upon the breast of Jesus in the upper room. Saints. Because it may be difficult for you to claim that, I'm not going to even ask you to profess that sainthood and to say that until I prove it from the scriptures.

I think we're all far more reticent to say that, to describe ourselves in this way than the Bible itself is. And perhaps no small part of that is due to the teaching of the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox churches that would claim that saints are a privileged class of Christians.

[6 : 51] An elite group. The rangers of all Christians. They've met a high bar of qualifications that set them apart from ordinary Christians like you and me.

They're the saints. So in the Roman Catholic Church, for instance, there's a whole process by which people achieve sainthood. Here's the five steps to becoming a saint in their system.

First of all, usually the person has been dead for at least five years. Now that would disqualify most all of us here, wouldn't it? They did make an exception for Mother Teresa on that very point.

The second step, there's an initial investigation into the person's life to see if they're deemed worthy of having lived an exemplary life well enough to be up for further consideration to this special committee.

And in this investigation, no stone is left unturned. If there's skeletons in the closet, they will be found. And if the person passes this initial investigation, they're given the title servant of God.

[8 : 01] Now the servants of God are ready for the third step. And this is a special committee for this very purpose to identify saints. They examine all the data and the documents, the testimonials.

And if the person had heroic enough virtues and great enough achievements, then they're called venerable. And now they're ready for the fourth step. One miracle must be proven to have happened through their intercession.

And if they can prove that, they pass the fourth step and they're called blessed. Dying as a martyr of the Christian faith will also get you right there as blessed.

And the fifth and last step is that a second miracle now must stand the test and scrutiny and be seen to be proven to have happened through their intercession before the Pope then himself must declare them a saint.

And so to date around 10,000 were told, estimated of about 10,000 such saints have been recognized by the Roman Catholic Church. The Orthodox Church would have the same saints, basically up to 1054 when the two split.

[9 : 16] And after that they would have different saints. And they too have a similar process of becoming a saint. More emphasis given on the doctrine that you must have interpret the Bible according to their church fathers.

Exceptional service in the Orthodox Church. And then the last one is really a bit strange. That the holy relics of the dead person must give off a fragrance and cause miracles to happen.

Giving them the proof, they think, that God's grace dwells in their holy relics. So these two denominations make sainthood then, this elite class of Christians, based upon great accomplishments, exceptional achievements.

And the church is then instructed to pray to these saints because they can help you in life and bless you, such as bring you good health and healing and safety and travel and help you to sell your house.

A financial blessing upon your work, protection for your family and even your pets. These are saints according to the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church.

[10 : 26] Well, so much then for man's traditions. When we turn to the scriptures, we see something starkly different. For the Bible teaches that every single believer is a saint.

Every single believer is a saint. This is simply another identity statement of every person who is in Christ.

So my first assignment this morning then is to establish the biblical proof of this assertion that all believers are saints. And it's really quite simple because over 70 times the Bible refers to believers as saints.

About twice as many times in the New Testament as in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, and especially in the Psalms, some 15 times we find God's people described as saints.

I'll not give you the references, but the Psalms say, Sing to the Lord, you his saints, praise his holy name. Love the Lord, all his saints. Fear the Lord, you his saints.

[11 : 31] Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. He's raised up for his people a horn of the praise of all his saints of Israel.

The people close to his heart. He promises peace to his people, to his saints. So clearly, all God's people are called saints.

And it's even more clearly seen in the New Testament. Ben, is there any way we could get that opening screen up that you had? Thank you.

This was our memory verse for today. And it's just an example of what we find in many of Paul's letters. So let's review our memory verse for today.

Let's say it together. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, by the will of God, to the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus.

- [12 : 31] Well, leave it there for a while, Ben. Thank you. Right away, we see that the saints are alive, don't we? They're alive on earth. Paul's not writing to dead people in heaven.
- We find, secondly, they're also called the faithful. These are just different names for the same group of people. They're the faithful ones.
- Could be called the believing ones. And then thirdly, they're in Christ Jesus. They have been united by faith to Jesus Christ, like the branch in the vine.
- And then thirdly, they're in Christ. They're in Christ. They're in Christ. They're in Christ. And then if you go further into the letter of Ephesians, you find that these saints are just ordinary Christians.
- You come to chapter 5 and 6. They're not the top crusts who have distinguished themselves by some extraordinary spirituality or works.
- [13 : 32] We find that there are ordinary Christian husbands who need to be told. Husband, love your wife as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.
- There are ordinary wives that need to be told to submit to their husbands and to respect him. There are ordinary Christian children who need to be told to obey their parents and to honor their father and mother.
- There are ordinary Christian fathers who are told not to exasperate their children. There are ordinary slaves in the household who need to be told to wholeheartedly obey their masters.
- And not just when their eye is upon them, but at all times as working for the Lord. And ordinary Christian masters who have slaves under them. Who need to be told that they have a master in heaven.
- And so treat their slaves as they would like to be treated. These are ordinary rank and file Christians living in Ephesus. Many of them haven't been Christians for all that long.
- [14 : 39] And yet all of them are called saints. Saints. Saints. That's their newfound identity in Christ. Now it's the same with many other letters of Paul.
- The believers in Corinth, for instance. They weren't known for their super high level of spirituality, were they? There were many problems in the church in Corinth.
- There were divisions among them. They were going to the law courts and suing each other in front of the world. And then they needed fundamental instructions on basic morality and sexuality.
- These are Corinthian believers. And yet as Paul sits down to write this very imperfect group of believers, the Holy Spirit directs them to write. To the church of God in Corinth. To those sanctified in Christ Jesus.
- Called saints. So these believers with some big hang-ups and mess-ups in Corinth are nevertheless given the identity as those in Ephesus as saints.
- [15 : 46] He writes his second letter to the church of God in Corinth. Together with all the saints throughout Achaia. Not just you saints there in Corinth. But in the whole district of Achaia. Believers are called saints.
- He speaks of all the congregations of the saints. It's the identity of all believers in every place. And so when signing off his letter, not just in Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, but often in other places.
- All the saints send you their greetings. Saints there, saints here. Exchanging the loving greeting in Christ. Well, we could multiply similar examples in Philippians, Colossians, Romans, and many references.
- As I said, some 70 references in which God calls his people saints. So to read the New Testament then is to discover very early on that all believers are saints.

Sainthood is the identity of every single Christian. By which I don't mean that you're on your way to sainthood. No, right now as you sit there in your pew, if you're in Christ, you are a saint.

[16 : 52] And I don't mean positionally. As in not practically or actually that you're a saint. You are a saint according to the scriptures.

That's your real identity in Jesus Christ. So, with that, are you ready to affirm your identity in Christ as a saint?

If so, say with me, I am a saint. I am a saint. Is it still a little squeamish to say that? A little difficult to come to terms with that?

Does it sound a bit too self-serving and maybe proud? As if we're claiming something that we're boasting of our level of holiness? Well, perhaps that little bit of uncomfortability is just due to the error of how saints have been taught and grown up in a world that views saints as something different than what the Bible teaches.

There's surely nothing in being a saint that gives us a reason to boast. Any more than saying, I'm forgiven.

[18 : 07] I'm justified. I'm a saint. For it's all the work of God in his people. So, that's what I've sought to do is show you that the Bible teaches that every believer is a saint.

Secondly, what does it mean then? What does it mean to be a saint? Well, just briefly, what it doesn't mean is that I'm in a superior class above other Christians.

It doesn't mean I'm perfectly sanctified, that I rarely, if ever, sin. It doesn't mean that I'm holier or more dedicated than most Christians or that I've done some exceptional things to achieve sainthood.

And it surely doesn't mean that we should pray to any saint for help. For there is but one mediator between God and man. And he is the man, Christ Jesus. Not Mary, not the saints, but Christ Jesus, our Savior.

So, that's not what it means. It doesn't mean that. Then what does it mean? Well, the word saint comes from a whole group of words. And their meaning should become clear as you hear this group of words and the ways that they're translated.

[19 : 13] It carries the idea of being holy. That's the same word. Hagios can be translated holy or saint. And so that gives you an idea of what saint means.

Holy, sanctified, sacred, set apart, separated to God, dedicated to God, consecrated, devoted to him. So a saint is a holy one.

It's the same word. And some translators would have to the holy ones in Ephesus. To the saints in Ephesus. It's the same word.

To be holy is to be set apart to God. To be separated to God. That's the basic idea of this concept of holiness.

And the Greeks used it to speak of people in their religions that were set apart, devoted to their gods. This idea is clearly seen throughout the Old Testament.

[20 : 15] God is called the holy one, isn't he? And we'll see later that that's that's the problem for us. But it's the truth that his he's holy, holy, holy.

Well, what is that? He's separated from everything else that exists. He's in a class all of his own. He he's set apart. There's no one morally pure like him.

God is holy. The Sabbath day was made holy. And is to be kept holy by us. What does that mean? God set it apart from the other six days of creation.

And he rested. And now he says to us that you too are to keep it holy. Set apart from the other six days. In what way? Well, he tells us six days you are to work and to do all your labor.

And the seventh day is a day of rest. And as we read the scriptures, it's a day of rest unto worship. It's a day to be set aside from the usual run of the mill work that you do six days.

[21 : 18] And this day is to have a special rest and worship to the living God who himself rested on that day.

The priests were holy. So there you had the twelve tribes. And the tribe of Levi was separated from the other eleven tribes and set apart.

And these are to be the people that become the priests to offer the sacrifices and to represent us to God. A picture of Jesus priesthood, as we just saying.

And tithes and offerings are called holy. So here's all my money, my food, my animals. And some of it, a tithe of it, was to be separated and set apart, treated in a different way.

This is for God in a special way. This tithe, these offerings. They're holy. Pots and pans used in the worship of God were holy. So they're not to be used.

[22 : 22] That bowl is not to be used anymore for your cornflakes in your kitchen at home. It has been set apart from that common use into a special use for God in his worship in the temple and so on.

Dedicated for that now. Devoted for that. Set apart for that. So that gives you a sampling of the way that the Bible's teaching us what this word holy means.

And so when we come to this idea of a saint. Well now what is a saint? A holy one. Well this is a person who is holy then. This is a person who is separated and set apart to God.

Separated from sin, from the world, from uncleanness. Sanctified and set apart to God. Now consecrated to him. Dedicated to his use. Consecrated to his service.

Devoted to his glory. Now that's your identity Christian. Every one of you have been set apart from this world and from sin and Satan. And set apart to the glory of God.

[23 : 25] If you're in Christ, you're a saint. Now when and how did we become saints? Again, it was not after a lifetime of exceptional service.

It wasn't after some great accomplishments that we did. Nor was it by the investigation and announcement of a church body. That we became worthy of sainthood. But the moment we first trusted Jesus Christ and were united to him, we became saints.

We became holy ones. Sanctified. Set apart ones. Set apart for his service now. He made us saints when he united us.

God made us saints when he united us to Christ. W.E. Vine writes, Sainthood is not an attainment then. It's the state into which God in grace calls sinful men.

And in which they begin their course as Christians. It's not, well if you do exceptionally well, then down the road you can get sainthood. But rather, we start out the Christian life in a state of sainthood.

[24 : 35] Of being saints. Our first step of the Christian life is as a saint. We were sinners before we trusted in Christ. But the moment we trusted in Christ and were joined to him, we went from sinner to saint.

Just that quick. That's what union with Christ brought us. We are in Christ Jesus. And that's how. And when we became saints. When by faith we were joined to Christ.

So there you were. A rotten sinner for 30 years, let's say. Devoted to yourself. Devoted to sin. Devoted to the world. Not Jesus Christ. But the moment you trusted in Christ, you became a saint.

Set apart and devoted to God. Now, several applications grow out of this. If we understand this teaching of scripture. Then we see that there's no room for boasting in ourselves as if we made ourselves saints.

Because we didn't. These very people in Corinth that I described to you that God refers to as saints and those sanctified in Christ Jesus. He tells them it's God who chose you.

[25 : 49] It's God who called you. And effectively drew you to Christ to make you saints. He sets you apart from that condemned world that's under his wrath.

To be his people. Devoted to him. To know him. And to enjoy him forever. Paul says, So that no one may boast before him.

It is because of him. God. That you are in Christ Jesus. Who has become for us wisdom from God. That is our righteousness.

Our sanctification. There it is again. Our saintness. Our cleanliness. Our set apartness. It's in Christ. And redemption.

Therefore, as it's written, let him who boasts, boast in the Lord. If you're in Christ and therefore a saint, you have only the Lord to thank for that. So you shouldn't feel squeamish about saying, I'm a saint.

[26 : 46] The Bible's not squeamish about saying it. Neither should you. Any more than saying, I'm forgiven. Both are the work of God. He made us saints. So let's lay hold of that identity.

It's a work of God that's worthy of praise. Let's give him the praise that he's due. So that's the first application. This sainthood is nothing to take a bow and pat ourselves on the back.

It's reason to pinch ourselves and say, I can't believe it, Lord, that you would make me a sinner to become a saint. Secondly, it teaches us that sanctification is both an initial act completed at conversion and a process lasting the whole of our Christian lives on this earth.

It was to these very imperfect baby Christians in Corinth that barely out of the womb of the new birth that Paul writes and says, to the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus called saints.

A lot wrong with them yet, but they are called sanctified past tense. Right now, as you receive this letter from me, you Corinthians have got a lawsuit going uptown against each other.

[28 : 06] You are sanctified in Christ Jesus. And since every believer is sanctified in Christ Jesus at the moment of faith and union with Christ, saints then becomes the common New Testament term that is given.

For the Christian or the sanctified ones, the holy ones. And that clearly points to the past tense of our sanctification, that there was something that we were sanctified in the past at conversion.

Professor John Murray's chapter on definitive sanctification is helpful at this point. He says that usually when we think of sanctification, we think of the process of becoming more and more like Jesus.

And to be sure, that is a part of sanctification. But he points out that more often in the New Testament, sanctification is said to be not a process, but a decisive once for all finished act.

Accomplished the moment we're placed into Christ. And at that moment, we are those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus. Now, he's not saying we're perfect at that moment.

[29 : 23] He's not saying our transformation into Christ likeness is complete, but he is saying that this aspect of initial sanctification is complete, is over. It's finished. We are sanctified.

And that starts at the beginning then of that. That decisive act is at the beginning of the Christian life. And it's so central to our identity as to who we are that it becomes the title for us.

We're called saints all these times. Why? It's pointing out that we have been sanctified, have been past tense. The moment we came to Christ. So though we have a lifetime of sanctification process before us, the Christian life begins with this decisive break with sin.

And indeed, without this initial sanctification, it would be impossible to live a holy, sanctified life as we grow in grace.

But this is the good news that enables holy living. Something happened when we trusted in Christ. We were joined to him.

[30 : 31] We were sanctified, set apart by him for God. Whereas before, we were set apart for ourselves and sin. He did something the moment we were joined to him. He set us apart now for him, for God.

Now, the background to all of this sanctification process is the fact, as I said earlier, that God is holy. He is too holy to dwell with unsanctified, sinful people.

So what does he do? He sanctifies them. He makes them holy. He makes them saints. And how does he do? By uniting us to Jesus.

He puts us into Christ. And at once, what was Christ? That perfect obedience, his perfect righteousness, is put to our account in heaven. So we're saints declared righteous in heaven.

But more than that, something happens here on earth. The moment we trust in Christ and are united to him, we partake of his death and burial and resurrection life.

[31 : 39] As Romans 6 taught us, as we looked at that passage, that we who are in Christ, when Christ died, we now take that death as our death to sin.

And when he rose again to a new life, that is our new life that we now have in Christ. So that Paul says, so that's why it's nonsense for a believer to ever say, shall we go on sinning that grace may abound?

No, it can't be. Why not? Because a saint is a saint. And you are saints. And you are joined to Christ. And his death to sin is now your death to sin.

So that sin is not your master anymore. It's no longer, you're no longer its servant to be drug around. No, now you have a new master, Christ. When did that happen? The moment you were joined to him.

You were set apart to a new master. And you were given new life. A new resurrected life to be able to live this new life in Christ.

[32 : 42] A sanctified life. We were regenerated by the Holy Spirit in which we had our old heart taken out. That old heart that was stubborn and insisted on going my way.

That was taken out of Ezekiel 26 or 36, 26. And instead, a soft, pliable heart that's pliable to his will was put in.

The Holy Spirit was given to us to make us careful to obey his commandments. You see, this happens at the moment of union with Christ. And so we're sanctified.

We're called saints. We're set apart from sin and now have power to live a new life. So here's conversion. And on this side, we're sinners.

And as we step into Christ, we become saints. And over here, we're dead in transgressions and sins. And now we're alive in God, in Christ. Alive to God, in Christ.

[33 : 40] We were the old self. We're now a new self. We were slaves to sin. We're now slaves to God and to righteousness. My master was Satan and sin.

And now I have a new master, Jesus Christ. And so the old life of sin was replaced with a new life of holiness. From being dedicated to living for me to being set apart to live for God.

All that in a moment. That's the past tense of our sanctification. That's what makes us saints. We are now set apart to God. As Murray concludes, we have been decisively and irreversibly set apart from sin unto God.

That's this initial sanctification that takes place. Sometimes lost people, if they're honest with me, will tell me, and they are very honest when they tell me this, that the thing that's holding them back from following Christ is they don't, they're afraid they couldn't live the Christian life.

They've been to church long enough that they hear what's required in God's word. And they, I couldn't live that way. And I'm afraid to make a start because I, well, they're absolutely right, aren't they?

[34 : 57] It takes Christ to live the Christian life. You've got to be made a saint first to live the Christian life. And yet, that's the good news. That he'll make you new.

He'll put new desires and thoughts and a new will. He'll redirect that will of yours his way. So that he will enable you to live this Christian life.

No, without, that's right. You can't. Any more than a branch on the ground can bear fruit. But united to Christ. Oh, you can bear this fruit of this Christian life. Will you right now come to him and trust him to save you from your sin?

Become a saint. And prove it by your sanctified life that he, by his spirit, works in you. So there is a beginning.

Initial sanctification that takes place and is done at conversion. And then there's the process all the rest of our lives. The third lesson is that all saints are sanctified. All saints are sanctified.

[36 : 03] And we saw that in 1 Corinthians and chapter 1 and verse 2. They're sanctified in Christ. Past tense. They live holy lives. They live sanctified lives.

They live different than they did before. They're now directed toward God. To be sure, there are degrees of sanctification. Degrees of holiness. But there are no unholy Christians.

Christians do unholy things. But it is not their character. It is not the stamp of their life. It's not what characterizes them. No, what characterizes them is they're holy. That's why they're called saints.

They are holy ones. Something has happened. They've been cleansed by this washing of regeneration. And by the application of the blood of Christ. Something has happened to them. Not only the record in heaven, but to their heart.

Here on earth. They're new creatures. Nothing's the same anymore with Christ, you see. All saints are sanctified.

[37 : 01] And live lives sanctified to him. The world lives for self. Saints live for God.

The world's unholy. Saints are holy. By definition. It's what they are. So someone's not living a holy life. Not set apart from sin. Going on just the same way they were before they made a profession of faith.

Then there's no reason for them to be assured that they are a saint. Because all saints are sanctified. All saints are sanctified.

There's not such a thing as an unsanctified saint. It's like saying there can be dry water. No. Water by definition is wet. And saints by definition are holy.

They're sanctified. They're set apart to God. That's what we're saying. And you find it in Revelation 14 and verse 12. It defines saints as those who obey God's commands and remain faithful to Jesus.

[38 : 04] You see it here. Who are the saints? Well, they're the faithful. They're the ones who are trusting in Jesus Christ. You can see it in their lives. It's something that's evident. They're bearing the fruit of faithful.

Trust in Christ. All saints are sanctified. And that calls for a searching of heart. Doesn't it? The proof of being united to Christ is this sanctified life.

That's lived for God's pleasure. For without holiness, no one will see the Lord. Hebrews 12, 14. What's he saying? Without sanctification.

Without being a saint. No one will see the Lord. That's the word group. Last application. Saints are called to be what they are.

Saints are called to be what they are. We've seen this with all the identities, haven't we? Saints are called to perfect holiness.

[39 : 05] They're called to the all-out pursuit of a greater sanctification than what happened the moment they trusted in Christ. So we are told to make every effort to live at peace with all men and to be holy.

For without holiness, no one will see the Lord. We're told in 2 Corinthians 7, 1. Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify. This is those Corinthian, that Corinthian bunch that are nonetheless sanctified in Christ Jesus called saints.

Now he says, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit. Perfecting holiness.

Perfecting sanctity out of reverence for God. It's God's will that you should be sanctified. 1 Thessalonians 4.3.

So the initial act of sanctification is followed by a whole lifetime of pursuing further sanctification. Becoming more like Jesus. In fact, the proof that the initial sanctification has taken place and you become a new creature.

[40 : 11] You're set apart to God is seen by this. What follows the rest of your life. You're living for a different reason, a different purpose.

You're now set apart for God. So saints, you are holy. But you haven't arrived at holiness to perfection.

So 1 Peter 1.15 says, just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do. In all you do.

You know, other religions have their holy men. And so the Tibetan monk goes up into his mountain monastery and he meditates and he does his thing up there.

Why? Because he's devoted. He's set apart unto their religion. And that's the kind of word the Greeks used of those men that were set apart or things set apart to their gods.

[41 : 13] And that's the concept that we have here in holiness. We have been set apart. But we don't go off to some mountain monastery.

As we read in John 17, Jesus says, Father, I don't take them out of the world. I want them in the world. But I want you to keep them holy. Keep them set apart from you, even while they're living in an unholy place.

And so we're to be holy, not just on Sunday when we come apart from the world and we're here. Be holy in all you do. Be holy tomorrow morning when you get up and you greet your wife, your husband, your children, your parents.

Be holy at school, at work. Be holy in your eating and drinking. What does that mean? To be doing it is unto God. Isn't there a verse about that? That whatever you do, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, you do it for the glory of God.

You see, you have been set apart so that you're to be holy in everything you do. Everything you do is to be thinking. No longer the supreme thought is, well, what do I want to do here? But now it's, what does God want me to do?

[42 : 17] What would please him? What is he commanded? I'm set apart for him. And just like that Tibetan monk in the mountain monastery is set apart to his God and religion.

We are set apart to him. And that must control all that we do. Be holy in all you do. You see, live out your identity. You are holy. Now be holy wherever you go and whatever you do.

Do it as a holy one. Do it as a saint. Live a saintly life. That's what he's saying. Same word. So Paul opens his letter to the saints in Ephesus.

You get to chapter five and verse three. But among you, you saints, there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality or of any kind of impurity or of greed.

Why? Because these things are improper for saints. Do you see what he's saying? And goes on.

[43 : 18] Nor should there be any obscenity or foolish talk or coarse joking which are out of place. But rather, thanksgiving. He appeals to their identity as saints.

Why shouldn't these things ever once be named as being found among the brethren at Grace Fellowship Church? Why not? Because they're not fitting.

They're not becoming. They're out of place. They're improper for someone who is a saint. A holy one. So he's saying be saints. You are saints.

Now be saints. You are saints. Now act like it. Live like it. Behave like it. And certainly, it rules out sexual immorality, impurity, greed, obscenity, foolish talk, coarse joking.

And there was a reason why he said every one of those to these Ephesian sanctified saints. So remember what you are, saints.

[44 : 19] And don't do anything that doesn't line up with sainthood. A man, a woman, a boy or a girl who has been set apart from sin. Set apart to serve God.

Walk worthy of your calling as saints. Be more than just a saint in name. Remember what you are by the grace of God. And by the power of God.

Live like it. Saint-like lives. And we do that looking to Jesus. Because he's the ultimate holy one. And he's the answer to this problem that God is holy and we aren't.

So how do we become saints? How do we become holy ones? That's the whole question of scripture. Can a sinner live with God and dwell with him?

And of course, the answer is found in the Lord Jesus. And we find him on the night before he was crucified praying to his father. He says, Father, sanctify them by your truth.

[45 : 19] Your word is truth. Now, they've already been sanctified. They are the saints. But he's now praying that they would be further sanctified by the truth. The truth. The word of God. But Jesus did more than pray for their sanctification.

You see that in verse 19 of John 17. He says, for their sake, I sanctify myself that they too may be truly sanctified.

I sanctify myself for their sake that they may be truly sanctified. To study the life of Christ is to study what sanctification looks like.

What does a saint look like? Look at Saint Jesus. Look at the Holy One. There's none like him in holiness. And so from the very beginning, he's obeying father and mother.

He's submitting. He's obeying every command of God. And yet he's tested. And he's being tried and tempted in every way like we are. And if just once he slipped and sinned, then he could not be our savior.

- [46 : 28] And his death would have meant zero to us for our salvation, our sanctification. It has to be the perfect lamb of God. And so he says, for their sake, I sanctify myself.
- And all of his life, he was set apart to God to do what God said, what God had commanded, what God his father was pleased with. But he was doing it with an eye to us for their sake so that they too may be truly sanctified.
- That one day they might be saints. And Jesus knew that they could only become saints. We could only become saints. If he was a faithful, sanctified one, which means every command obeyed perfectly.
- And especially the command that the father gave him to go and be damned for our sin on Golgotha's cross. And for their sakes, he sanctified himself.
- That we too might be truly sanctified. And he went to the cross in obedience to the father. And because of that, sanctification of our savior, his death cleanses us.
- [47 : 42] And makes us his own. His death gives us eternal life. His death gives us the Holy Spirit. Gives us a new heart. Gives us everything that we need to live as saints.
- So we owe it all to Jesus. Who sanctified himself that we might be saints. Truly set apart for God.
- Consecrate me now to thy service, Lord. By the power of grace divine. Remember going away to camp as a young man. And at night with the lights out, the counselor says, let's go around the room.
- And everybody give their testimony. And I was struck by how many had this two-step testimony. Well, I was saved when I was four. And then I rededicated my life when I was 12.
- Or I was saved here. And then I rededicated my life when I was 15. And it's coming around to me. And I had no rededication thought in my head.
- [48 : 44] Do saved people not rededicate themselves?
- A whole bunch? I mean, it's not like, oh, I've got a date here and I rededicate. No. Didn't you rededicate yourself this morning? God, I'm here for you today.
- I'm yours. Not my own. I've been set apart to you. I'm devoted to you. That's why I live. That's why I exist. That's why I get up today.
- Lord, I'm yours. And that's something the saint does. Consecrate me now to thy service, Lord, by the power of grace divine.
- I need your grace today, Lord. I'm that branch on the ground. Unless I am drawing near and sucking grace, there's sin-killing grace in the sap of Jesus to come in and to sanctify me today, to enable me to truly live devoted to you.
- [49 : 49] So may the Lord help us then to give ourselves up to him every day. Dedicate ourselves. Devote ourselves to him. We are saints.
- Let's consecrate ourselves to live like it. We sing in 492, Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee.
- What did we sing? Let it be set apart from the world and set apart to you. Let it be set apart and separated from sin and dedicated to you. 492. Stand with me and we're going to sing it to the more familiar tune.
- And let's really offer ourselves up afresh as saints devoted to God. 492. Let's pray.
- Holy Jesus, did you sanctify yourself for our sakes that we might be truly sanctified?
- [50 : 55] Are we sanctified? Are we saints this morning because of what you did in keeping yourself set apart to God all the way to the cross, to the empty tomb?

Well, then we bow in worship. We bow with gratitude. We say, glory be to Jesus. We also would say, then help us who are saints to come and to learn from you, to abide in you, Lord Jesus.

And so to learn from you what it is to live as a sanctified one. And we thank you that when we see you, this process that was begun in conversion and is continuing even to this day will be completed, for we will see you as you are and be made like you.

And then we will understand just how much we owe to you. Thank you. And bring others to be set apart to God and set apart from this world that is under your condemnation.

For such grace, for such mercy, we give you thanks. We pray through you, Lord Jesus. Amen.