

A Window To The Cross

Philippians 1:1-2

EXPLORING THE SERMON

- * What did you hear?
- * What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- * What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

KEY VERSES

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

REFLECTION

In Paul's introduction to the church in Philippi, he refers to his readers as saints. The Hebrew word for saint, "hagios," refers to someone who has been consecrated or set apart by God. The early Christians were often referred to as saints, but over time we have come to see this term refer to a person who has attained a certain level of holiness. **When you hear the word saint, what or who does it bring to mind? Do you consider yourself a saint?**

If a saint is someone set apart by God because of their faith, then we all share this title. Righteousness is imputed to us not because of what we do, but what God has declared and done for us in faith. **How does it make you feel to know that you are considered a saint? How does this change your perspective on your achievements or in comparing yourself to others?**

Understanding the full significance of the word saint involves understanding God's righteous anger against sin. Many today are drawn to the non-religious "loving without judgment" type of faith that is so prevalent in the world right now. **Why does this type of faith fall apart by not taking pain and evil seriously? Where do you see victims being re-victimized as if their stories don't matter?**

God looks at the pain in this world and wants to make it right and hold those accountable who have inflicted pain. We have all been on both the giving and receiving ends of pain, hurt, and injustice.

Reflect on and discuss these two things we should all feel as recipients of God's grace:

- 1) Unbelievable gratitude and worth that God sees our scars and they matter to him.
- 2) Uh-Oh! The accountability that comes with inflicting hurt or pain on others.

The forgiveness of our sins is the greatest gift we can ever receive, and the greatest gift we can extend to others. This is also the *only* unique message the church has to offer to the world - the other "things" of the church can be done by others. Nothing can make a soul feel its worth like knowing the love of God.

Where are you being called to proclaim this message or to help others know of their own sainthood in Christ Jesus?