

Called to be saints
Pastor Wilson's Notes
Wednesday July 30, 2014

Scripture Text

Romans 13:11-14

11 And that, **knowing the time, that now *it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.*** 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. 13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. 14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*.

Two important things to be aware of in this last day: 1. The urgency of the hour; and 2. Our need to prepare. "Prepare" how? Prepare for what? Prepare ourselves, and prepare for the harvest of souls that is coming.

Preparing ourselves

2 Timothy 2:15

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15 is an important passage in establishing *what we must do to prepare ourselves*, and not just for the obvious. Yes, we need to study the Word to be prepared; and that studying will keep us from being a reproach unto our calling; and that studying will make it so that we are not ashamed before the Lord when someone calls upon us to give an answer of the hope that lies within us. But the main thing to be found in 2 Timothy 2:15 is Paul's instruction to "**rightly divide the word of truth.**"

There are a whole host of Christian denominations in America, and the world today, and one of the main reasons is that people FAIL to rightly divide the word of truth! What do we mean by "rightly dividing the word of truth?"

Following are the proper "divisions" of the New Testament. The NT is divided up into four parts:

The Gospels: (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) – in which we read about the incarnation of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We read about his ministry, mission and his works; and we read about his death, burial and resurrection.

The Acts of the Apostles – in which we read about the history of the early church, including its **birth** and **its establishment**.

The Epistles: (Romans through Jude)– which are the letters of instruction, comfort, exhortation and admonishment written **to the church that was established in the Book of Acts**. The Romans, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, etc., had already repented, been baptized and filled with the Spirit. (See Acts 19:1-7 for the Ephesians’ obedience to the salvation message)

The Book of the Revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ – which is a book of prophecy; a book of that which is to come. Contrary to common belief, for the child of God, it is not a fearful book; or a book to make one afraid. It is a book of blessing! (Rev 1:3, Rev 22:7)

When the “word of truth,” is rightly divided, you begin to understand the difference between truth and error, and how there ended up being so many different denominations. When we realize that the Book of Acts is the **only** book that records the very first sermon of the present church age, and the very first proclamation of the plan of salvation and the very first altar call, and the very first response to the altar call with mass conversions; then we can see that the book of Acts is the **ONLY** place we can properly go to learn **HOW TO BE SAVED**.

Regarding being prepared: the proper division of the NT is important because it establishes that in Rom 13, Paul is speaking to Holy Ghost filled, Jesus-Name-baptized **BELIEVERS!** When Paul is speaking of “casting off the works of darkness,” He’s talking to the church! When he’s giving the instruction to “walk honestly,” he’s talking to the church! When Paul writes of not walking in rioting and drunkenness; nor in chambering and wantonness; and not in strife and envying, he is talking to the church! And when admonishes to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and to not make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof, he is talking to the **CHURCH**.

Easton’s Bible dictionary defines “Chambering” as: “sexual immorality; lewdness; illicit intercourse.” The term also denotes repeated or habitual acts.

Wantonness comes from the Greek word, aselegeia, which means: outrageous conduct, conduct shocking to public decency, a wanton violence.

In seeking to be prepared, we must put off the works of darkness, and put on Christ, so that we may be prepared, and suitable for the Lord’s usage.

We ALL have a commission (Acts 1:8); and we all have a calling (I Cor 1:2). A commission to go and win the lost; and we have a calling to be “saints”.

Practical preparation

Preparation to be suitable for God's use demands that we be what the Bible says we are; and what we call ourselves— "saints". The Bible labels us as "saints":

"...Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your *saints* at Jerusalem" (Acts 9:13). "Now as Peter was traveling through all those regions, he came down also to the *saints* who lived at Lydda" (Acts 9:32). "And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the *saints* in prisons ..." (Acts 26:10). "Greet every *saint* in Christ Jesus..." (Philippians 4:21).

What exactly is a "saint"?

Saint, coming from the Greek word, "hagios": *Strong's concordance designation*: 40 *hágios* – properly, *different (unlike), other ("otherness"), holy*; for the believer, 40 (*hágios*) means "*likeness of nature with the Lord*" because "*different from the world.*" The fundamental (core) meaning of 40 (*hágios*) is "*different*" – thus a temple in the 1st century was *hagios* ("holy") because *different* from other buildings (Wm. Barclay). In the NT, 40 /*hágios* ("holy") has the "technical" meaning "*different from the world*" because "*like the Lord.*" [40 (*hágios*) implies something "set apart" and therefore "*different (distinguished/distinct)*" – i.e. "other," because *special* to the Lord.]

To boil it down, a saint is someone who has the likeness of nature with the Lord; one who is unlike others; holy; different, distinguishable from the world and distinct; someone who is set apart and special to the Lord.

What does a saint look like?

Set apart, different from the world; like God. One who is unlike others; holy; different, distinguishable from the world and distinct; someone who is set apart and special to the Lord.

What are the characteristics of a saint?

The characteristics of a saint specifically mentioned in the Bible are: someone who is hospitable; someone who practices "works of service;" and someone who shuns immorality, impurity and greed.

"that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints ..." (Romans 16:2). "For the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12). "But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints" (Ephesians 5:3).

What kinds of things does a saint do?

Who can we look to as an example for what a saint should do? What Biblical character we can look to as a model for who, and what a saint is, and what a saint should do? There is one NT Biblical character who was brash and confident enough to say "follow my example:"

I Corinthians 11:1, the Apostle Paul said:

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. (NIV)

Paul is not our ultimate yardstick. Jesus Christ is our yardstick and anything less than him is aiming too low. However, the life and example of *Saint* Paul, can give us some very practical insight into how a saint is supposed to act, and what a saint is supposed to be. Paul makes for a great model, because he is flawed and a lot like us.

He made errors in judgment (Acts 15:36-41; 2 Tim 4:11)

He was inconsiderate at times (Acts 20:7-12)

He was sometimes fearful and afraid (Gal 2:2 NLT, NASB, WEB)

What kinds of things did "saint" Paul do?

- He shared the gospel of Christ to great and small (Acts 26:22-23)
- He fasted (Acts 9:9; 2 Cor 11:27)
- He prayed (Rom 1:9, 10:1; I Cor 14:14,15; [in the Spirit and in his native language]; Eph 1:15,16; Col 1:3; I Thess 1:2)
- He worked in the natural, and he worked the altar (Acts 18:3; 19:6)
- He followed the leading of The Lord, and he submitted his will to The Lord – (Acts 16:6, 9)
- Operated in the supernatural
 - Blinded Elymas the sorcerer (Acts 13:8-11)
 - Cast a spirit out of a girl (Acts 16:16-18)
 - Miraculous healings and deliverances via aprons and handkerchiefs (Acts 19:11-12)
 - Raised a Eutychus from the dead (Acts 20:9-10)
 - Prophesied a shipwreck (Acts 28:7-9)

If we want to be used by God, we have to act like saints at home, and on our jobs, as well as at church! We can't expect to be a suitable conduit, or channel through which God can affect a lost and dying world if we live and act worldly, and never push away from the table, or never deny our flesh every once in a while.

The supernaturally-fueled influx of souls that God is revealing to us is not going to just spontaneously happen. The explosive, exponential growth that we're looking for isn't going to just appear. To bring about this supernatural harvest, God is going to use people who have prepared themselves, and have made themselves ready and available to be used.