

Saints • Ephesians 1:1

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *Posture*

1. When I was young, my mother was constantly reminding me to stand up straight
 - a. shoulders back!
 - b. hips forward!
2. Then when I was in grade school, my teachers started in on me with the same thing
3. One year, they made us walk around with books on our heads
4. I hated it - but it was good training because now I realize *correct posture* is important to *good health*

B. *Postures*

1. In Paul's letter to the Church at Ephesus, he reveals three different postures that we are to take in regards to three different relationships
 - a. in our relationship with God, we are *seated* with Christ
 - b. in our relationships with others - we *walk* with Christ
 - c. and in our relationship toward the devil - we *stand* with Christ
2. Sit - Walk - Stand!
3. Ephesians is written around these three postures
4. If we want to be spiritually healthy, we need to know what it means to sit, walk and stand with Christ.
5. And it all begins with verse 1 of Chapter 1 . . .

II. TEXT

A. V. 1

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:

1. Paul opens the letter with the greeting typical to letters of that day; by stating who it's from - then who it's to
2. It was to the *saints* who are in Ephesus
3. Now - when I say the word "saint," what image does it conjure up in your mind?
4. What picture rises from your gray matter? What do you see?
5. Most people think of someone especially *holy*
6. And the image they see is of *thinness*; hollow eyed gauntness
 - a. beards, sandals, long robes
 - b. stone cells, no laughter, silence
 - c. hair shirts, cold porridge and even colder baths
 - d. fasting, long prayer vigils

- e. wild rocky deserts, up before dawn [1]
 - f. saints have unusual names like *Fatima*, *Bernadine*, *Benedict*, *Ambrose* and such
7. Others think of stained glass windows or plastic statuettes on a dashboard
 8. It comes as a bit of a surprise to realize that as Paul uses the word "saint" here, he meant *all* the believers at Ephesus
 - a. there wasn't some select group of monks and nuns that he addressed this to
 - b. in the first 300 years of the Church, this is how believers referred to one another
 - c. they were *saints*
 9. And the *reason* why they called each other this, was because that's what Christians are - Saints!
 - a. the word simply means—one who is *set apart*
 - b. in other places the Greek word is translated as "*holy*"
 - c. if something is holy, it simply means that it is set apart from *common* use for a *special purpose*
 - d. example: everyday Corell and fine china
 10. Christians are *saints* because they are set apart from the common, run of the mill, everyday life of the world for a special life apart, one devoted to the purposes of God

B. Saints

1. If you're a Christian - then you are a *saint*!
2. And rather than diminishing the image of special holiness that word has conveyed to us, we ought to embrace it and realize that in God's eyes, it applies to us
3. We *are* a special people to Him
4. A little boy was asked in Sunday school what a saint was
 - a. thinking of the stained glass windows in the chapel, he said
 - b. "A saint is a person whom the light shines through."
 - c. exactly!
5. They are men and women through whom the light of God's love and truth shine into this world
6. Saints don't sit on dash boards - they live in homes and have an address
7. They don't exist in stained glass windows - they clean windows in offices and houses
8. They don't work in monasteries and nunneries - they work at Vons and Lucky's and Bard Elementary School
9. They don't ride sunbeams - they drive Dodges and Fords
10. And they don't have halos hovering over their heads - they have baseball caps and cowboy hats
11. As saints, you and I are called to live out our specialness in the midst of a world that is fallen and in trouble
 - a. we aren't called to live "stained glass lives"
 - b. we are to be light in the midst of darkness; salt in the midst of decay
12. Paul goes on in the rest of this letter and writes about how we live as saints in 3

different relationships:

- a. first, our relationship with God
- b. then, our relationships with others
- c. and finally, our relationship with the devil

C. Seated With Christ - 2:4-6

{4} But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

{5} even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

{6} and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

1. The first and most important relationship Paul deals with is our relationship with God
2. And the posture of that relationship is being *seated* with Christ
3. Typically, when you sit down, it's a picture of rest, and that's the way it's meant here
4. At that time, chairs were not in the abundance that we see them today
 - a. and people didn't sit until their work was done
 - b. they labored in the field or at a mill
 - c. so if you were sitting, it meant your work was done and you were now resting from your labor
5. When Paul says we are *seated with Christ in heavenly places*, it means that in the spiritual realm, work and effort are done, and now we are at rest
6. We have to begin here - seated with Christ, if we are to go on to anything else
7. You see, the key to everything in the Christian life is to remember that it is not our effort, not our work, that merited forgiveness and eternal life
8. It was the work of Christ on the cross that gained us forgiveness and His resurrection that gives us life
9. And here is what separates Christianity from *every other* religion -
 - a. whereas they put the burden on man to be good and earn his way to God
 - b. Christianity believes in the finished work of Jesus as sufficient for our salvation
 - c. it's not about what we do, but what He has done!
10. When Christ's work was accomplished, He ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Father; His work was done, so He sat down
11. Our faith in Jesus means that we have been lifted out of a merely physical existence lived on Planet Earth into the spiritual realm
 - a. and there, we are *seated* with Christ
 - b. our relationship with God is one of *rest*
 - c. we don't have to prove ourselves worthy
 - d. eternal life isn't conditioned on how many good deeds we've done in the last week
 - e. it's an accomplished fact and our sure possession
12. When you come before God, you can come in complete confidence, knowing that In Christ He accepts you without hesitation
 - a. He doesn't turn to one of the angels and ask for a read out on what you've

- done recently
- b. when God looks at you, He sees you seated in Christ and extends to you the same love and acceptance He does Jesus
- 13. But now, let me ask - what kind of seat do you think Christ sits on?
 - a. Paul says here that we are seated together in Christ
 - b. what kind of seat is it - a stump, a boulder, a 3-legged stool?
 - c. no - the seat Christ sits befits a King, it's a throne
 - d. and a throne speaks of *authority*
- 14. Not only do we rest in the confidence of Christ's perfect work on the cross, but we also enjoy the privilege of authority in His name
- 15. Jesus grants to us the right to come before the Father and use His name {John 16:23}

"Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you."

- 16. God wants you to understand the freedom and authority that is yours in Christ
- 17. Far from seeing Him as some kind of tyrannical and angry deity, He wants you to be confident and secure in the knowledge that He accepts you without reservation
- 18. And that you have entered into a relationship with Him that yields you authority
- 19. Picture this:
 - a. there is a royal court and at one end is the throne
 - b. on that throne sits a king
 - c. and stretched out before him is a long line of subjects who have come to petition him for something or another
 - d. the line stretches down the court out the door and into the palace grounds
 - e. and it only inches it's way slowly forward
 - f. all of a sudden, in comes the prince, returning from some royal errand
 - g. he needs to speak to his father, but he doesn't wait in line - he doesn't have to, he's the prince!
 - h. no - we walks right past all those who are waiting in line, strides right up to the king, and speaks to him
 - i. he does this because he has the authority to
 - j. and his father doesn't rebuke him for interrupting because this is his son
 - k. that is the authority that has been granted to us - to come boldly before the King of the Universe and address Him as Father

{Heb 4:16} Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

- 20. You are seated with Christ in heavenly places

D. Walking With Christ - 4:1

{Eph 4:1} I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,

- 1. As we relate to God, we are *seated* with Christ
- 2. But in terms of our posture toward one another and the world, we *walk* with

Christ

3. Walking is a frequent NT idiom for our *behavior*, our *lifestyle*
 - a. it includes our *actions*, and our *speech*
 - b. and even to a certain extent, our *attitudes* and how we express them
4. Notice what Paul says here - we are to live in such a way that it is worthy of our calling
5. What is our calling? He told us already in 1:1 - We are saints
6. We are people who are set apart from the common and fallen things of this world to the special plans and purposes of God
7. In the past, some people have read this and understood it to mean that they had to leave the world
 - a. so they moved out of the city and into caves in the wilderness
 - b. or they banded together into monastic communities and shut themselves in behind cloistered walls
 - c. is that what it means to walk worthy of our calling?
 - d. does being separated to God mean fleeing to a monastery?
8. Not at all - that is certainly not what Jesus did and it is not what he told His followers to do
9. Rather, walking worthy of our calling means to live in the midst of this world without getting sucked in to it's way
10. Walking worthy means being who and what we are as saints without apology
11. It means being different - not weird, just different
12. I'm sure no one ever thought Jesus was weird - but He was certainly different
13. In fact, He was so different, it repelled the self-righteous, while attracting those who were honest enough to admit their need
14. Friends, there is no such thing as a secret agent Christian; you can't hide it and bring it out on Sunday mornings
15. Paul tells us here that we are to live *outwardly* what we are *inwardly*
16. And what you are is a saint - so live like one!
 - a. when that beer is stuck in front of you - remember who you are
 - b. when they are conspiring to lie and cheat and want you to join them - remember who you are
 - c. when the gossip starts to go round the circle - remember who you are

E. Standing With Christ - Eph 6:11

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

1. Our posture toward God is one of being *seated* with Christ
2. Our posture toward others is one of *walking* with Christ
3. And here we see that our posture toward the devil is one of *standing* with Christ
4. Paul paints an incredible picture of how we are to stand against Satan - as a warrior, a soldier in the army of God, equipped in all the battle gear we need to make sure we can overcome our foe
5. Last week I saw a program on which some talking heads were giving their opinions on what happened in Littleton, CO two weeks ago

- a. one of them mentioned the devil
 - b. and the others expressed their dismay that he believed in a literal devil
 - c. they pooh-poohed the old fashioned and out of date idea of Satan as a real being
 - d. they said he was just an archaic way to deal with the mystery of evil
6. How these educated people can witness something like the massacre at Columbine High School and *not* believe in the devil is baffling to me
 7. Satan exists, and the war between God and the devil is real
 8. Earth is the battlefield - and we are on one side or the other
 9. You can't claim an exemption from this battle
 - a. you can't walk away or retire
 - c. there is only one posture we can take if we are going to survive
 - d. we have to stand our ground
 - e. we have to be vigilant and ready
 10. The devil will not honor your attempts to be a pacifist
 11. He will not sit down at a peace table and negotiate a cease fire
 12. He has one objective and only one agenda - your destruction
 13. And he will use every possible tactic and strategy to get the job done
 14. So our response can be only one thing - Stand; alert, awake, and ready

III. CONCLUSION

A. *To Come*

1. In the next several weeks, we are going to take and in depth look at what Paul says about sitting, walking and standing in Christ
2. Today, I just wanted to give an overview of Ephesians
3. And to be reminded that being a Christian means being a *saint*

B. *You Are A Saint*

1. As you go to work, or the store, or school this week, remember who and what you are
 2. You're special because of what Christ has done
 3. The life you have is filled with purpose and meaning that is not shared by those who don't believe in Christ
 4. Toward God, you are *seated* in heavenly places - so be confident and bold in your coming before Him in prayer
 5. Toward others, *walk* in a manner that befits your calling as a son or daughter of God
 6. Toward the devil, *stand* steadfast, ready to defend the ground you've taken and to extend the boundaries of the kingdom of God
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[\[1\]](#) White, John *The Fight*