All Saints / November 1, 2026
Philippians 1:1-2
"*Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus. To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*"

Saints: Who they are and How they Got that Way

All Saints Day celebrates the salvation believers have in Christ Jesus, now through faith, fully and forever in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. People typically think of saints as good, dead people. People think they are saints, because they were good and became saints when they died and went to heaven. Notice however, that St. Paul addresses his letter, not to the dead in heaven, but to the living in the city of Philippi. Although those to whom this letter is addressed, along with Paul who wrote it and his companion Timothy, are now dead and in heaven, they were all alive in the world when it was written, living by faith, believing God was their loving Father for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, whenever the New Testament speaks of saints, it almost always speaks in terms of those presently living in the world. Paul writes to the saints in Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi and Colossae. All these were alive in the body and most importantly, alive in Christ when these letters were written, sent and received.

The point is we don't have to be dead to be saints. Just the opposite, we have to be alive in Christ. There are no dead saints. Saints are people who are alive to God through faith in Christ, whether they live in the body or whether they sleep in death. Revelation chapter fourteen calls for the endurance of the saints as they suffer persecution during the days preceding and leading up to the return of Jesus and the renewal of all things. On the other hand, Revelation also speaks of those who have died in their bodies and who now dwell in the presence of God in spirit, saints. Those who are alive in Christ are saints, whether alive in their bodies, or whether they sleep in death. The believers in Philippi were saints because God made them alive in Christ. As St. Paul says in Ephesians chapter two, "*God, being rich in mercy…made us alive together with Christ.*" Saints are people made alive to God through faith in Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. Christ is Lord of His saints, whether we are alive in the body or our bodies sleep in the grave. Whether we live or whether we die, we belong to the Lord. We are all saints for the sake of Jesus, His blood and righteousness.

God makes us alive to Himself through the word and by the working of the Holy Spirit, in baptism and through the hearing of the word. The word saint, means holy. On the day of Pentecost three thousand souls were sainted, made holy in forgiveness, when they confessed their sin and sinfulness, received Jesus, believed in Him as their Saviour and were baptized into His death and resurrection. We are made holy in the sight of God by being washed with Jesus' righteous blood, by which are sins are forgiven and being clothed in His righteousness, by which our sinfulness is covered. Paul writes in the letter to the Romans, "*We were therefore buried with Him by baptism into His death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*" Saints are good people, people made good and holy in God's sight through the forgiveness of sins. Saints are people who do good things, not to become saints, but because they are saints. Saints do things that are pleasing in God's sight as the fruits of faith, inspired and worked by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us through baptism and who empowers us to walk in newness of life.

There are two aspects to sainthood described in the New Testament. The sainthood of receiving, by which we receive the righteousness of Christ by which our sins are forgiven and our sinfulness is covered over. Then following, there is the sainthood of doing things that are pleasing in the sight of God as the fruits of faith and the effects of God who works through us according to the working of His will in Christ Jesus. Our problem is that often we reverse the proper order, as if it were by our good works that we become pleasing in God's sight and merit His grace and favour. No one becomes or is a saint because of what we do. Only those who have been made holy by God through faith in Christ Jesus do things that are pleasing in His sight. As Paul says in Ephesians, we walk in the good works God has prepared for us and empowers and impels to do In Christ Jesus. To be pleasing to God we must first become His children. We become and remain children of God for the sake of His adoption of us in Christ, received through faith in His Name and by baptism into His dying and rising. Paul writes in Galatians, "*For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*" Saints are people who have put on Christ through faith and been clothed in His righteousness in baptism.

There are two types of saints, those who dwell in heaven's peace, having passed out of the tribulations of life and those who live by faith, patiently enduring the tribulations of life. Two types of saints, differentiated by their experience of Christ, one by faith the other by sight. Two types of saints, but both made holy by the

righteousness of Jesus, whom as Paul says in the letter to Corinthians, "*God made sin for our sake so that in Him we would become the righteousness of God.*" The experience of the saints in heaven is pictured in our reading from Revelation, as a passing out of tribulation and into a place of joy and an experience of peace. The persecutors of the church seek to destroy the church by killing Christians, but in truth they are giving Christians the greatest blessing, entrance into the presence of God and the Lamb.

In Revelation chapter seven St. John records what he now experiences, the saints passing into the presence of the Lord. They got there because of the blood of the Lamb in which they were washed and in which they washed their robes and made them white. In the presence of the Lamb, they hunger no more, thirst no more, grieve no more, suffer no more. The Lamb as shepherd guides them to springs of living water and God wipes every tear from their eyes. We mourn when our sainted sisters and brothers pass out of life, because we miss them. We mourn not for them. We mourn for ourselves. We rejoice for them, because free from every burden of sin and sorrow life, they now rest in God's peace.

The second type of saints are those who continue in what scripture calls this earthly pilgrimage. The saints in heaven have passed from faith into sight. We however, continue to live by faith, seeing by the Spirit through the words of scripture. St. Peter writes of the scriptures and their witness to God's purpose, plan and love in Christ saying no matter what we experience of the joys of heaven here on earth, "*We have something more certain, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns…*" The saints in heaven rest, but we press on in faith awaiting the dawning of the day and our reunion with them. The day will dawn when Christ returns, calls the saints in heaven to reunite with their bodies in His resurrection and calls the pilgrim saints to join them, being translated to bodies made glorious like His glorious body. When the day dawns faith will pass into sight, we will see with our eyes Jesus our Saviour and look full into His glorious face. When the day dawns the church in heaven and the church on earth will become one in their experience of God and both enter into the full enjoyment of heaven's joy and peace, body and soul in the resurrection of Christ. In the meantime, we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus whom we see in the scriptures, through which the Spirit speaks to our spirits and by which He gives us encouragement and hope as we continue on the pilgrim way to the heavenly vision.

As Paul says in the opening verses of Philippians and in the introduction to other of his letters, we are all saints in Christ Jesus. Jesus makes us saints, holy in God's

sight through the forgiveness of sin and the covering of His righteousness. God sees us as holy for the sake of the holiness of Jesus, whose blood sets us free from bondage to sin, the dominion of the devil and the condemnation of death so we would live in the glorious freedom of the children of God; now through faith, more fully when we pass through death, fully and forever in the resurrection of Jesus. His grace gives us peace with God. His grace is sufficient to meet all our needs of body and spirit, bring us through every challenge, trial and tribulation of life so that faith is made full in our share of His resurrection to everlasting life. As His grace has been sufficient in the lives of the countless number that have gone before us and now rest in heaven's peace, so His grace will be effective in our lives to bring our faith to its fulfillment and to the day when the saints in heaven and the saints on earth are one with other in one place and one with God in the resurrection of Jesus. In mercy Jesus, bring us to that dear land of rest. You are with God the Father and Spirit ever blest. In His Name Amen.