

The Book of Romans, Lesson 6, Romans 1:7, "Sinners to Saints"

- We are going to be looking at two related subjects today, who are God's people and how are they supposed to live.
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1. God's People are the people that the Bible calls saints.

- ✓ There is a lot of confusion over the term "saint", so it needs to be addressed. What is a saint? Lots of definitions are in our world, but the only definition that matters at all is God's definition. Paul writes this letter to the "saints at Rome" it is not written to just anybody at Rome, only the saints. Saints are the "beloved of God" according to this verse. Who is that, since God loves everyone?, John 3:16. God loves everyone but only a select group are ever called "beloved by God." It is a term used only for believers, those who have placed a saving faith in God's son Jesus, 1st John 3:1. God has special love that is only for His special children. The same differences exist in the way we love, one love for our fellow man but another for our own children. In the same way, the Bible never calls an unbeliever "beloved." In order to become one, you have to be born one, as per John 3:3 and John 1:12-13.

2. The issue of sainthood.

- ✓ Saints are beloved of God, but saints, as opposed to common thought, are not good all the time. It is a mistaken idea that believes that saints are only those who are acting saintly. This church often did some unsaintly things which included things such as putting up with a church member who was sleeping with his stepmother, taking each other to court, dividing over prideful and immature things, getting drunk at the Lord's supper service, 1st Corinthians 1:2. The Bible teaches that saint is a name given to all believers at the point of conversion not at the point of them cleaning their lives up. The only real difference, at least initially, between a saint and a sinner is the Savior. Every letter in the New Testament is written exclusively to the saints and no one else. The letters of the New Testament have no meaning for anyone but the saints. Within these letters, the saints are rebuked for many unsaintly things. Paul tells the saints at Rome in Romans 12:9 do saints have to be told such things? You bet! The purpose of the New Testament, largely, it tells saints how they are to be living.

3. How to live as a saint.

- ✓ What is the faithful life of the saint? What does it look like? We don't have time today to go through the entire New Testament, but a faithful life of believer can be illustrated this way, "Lover of violin music." Ages ago, there was a man who loved violin music went out and bought himself a violin and a radio so he could listen and, hopefully, learn from the great orchestras. He also bought a lot of violin music, all the great scores. As he listened to the radio and piece was announced, he'd find that piece in the music that he had available and try to play along as best he could. "Beethoven's 7th symphony" would be announced and he find the piece and tune his violin and try his best. The music on the radio was played by professionals exactly as Beethoven had written it, but the man's attempt was nothing short of miserable. Missed beats, chords, lost his place, broke a string. The music, of course, went on without him. When he would gather himself, he would try to find his place and saw away as he had before. It was terrible, but he was trying because he loved violin music so much. Over time as each piece was repeated, he would find small parts that he could play fairly well, and he'd play those parts with all his heart. Mostly he struggled, but less and less as time passed and his determination remained unswayed. Day after day, month after month, year after year, this man stayed at his love of violin music. He took great pleasure in fiddling along with the orchestra. They never waited for him, of course, their music was something that he had to keep up with. If he tried to play Yankee Doodle while they played Tchaikovsky, only confusion and discord resulted in his home, nothing changed with the orchestra. After years of determined work, the man became a credible violinist. He learned to submit himself to the style, tempo, and key of the orchestra and music they played.
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Such it is living the faithful life of a saint; it begins with a desire to honor God by doing things according to His will. Difficult at first, play as best you can but you miss a lot, nevertheless when you find a verse or passage you can negotiate, you play it for all its worth. Playing and practicing what you know will enable you to play more as time passes. Mistakes are inevitable, we are going play off-key but we cannot quit. We must submit ourselves to the will of Leader of orchestra. If we don't follow Him and try to play our tune, there will be nothing but discord in our lives. As we learn to surrender to His Lordship, we will become better and better and doing things His way. When we come to a piece that is too hard to play, and we all do, we need to say to the Lord, "you know my heart, I want to remain on key. Take me though this, Lord. If I miss it, please forgive me. Give me strength to go on and fill me with the desire to please you in everything." God smiles us when we approach life this way and He will rejoice over us as father would his child's piano recital. A parent doesn't go because it's going to be great and his child is going to do it all right, he goes because this is his child. Faithful living as a saint is not getting it all right, but it is a determination to get better. Playing the all the parts you know for all they are worth.
