The Benefits of Salvation

In all of Paul's letters Paul uses the word saint to refer to Christians. In fact, I think, it must have been his very favorite word for Christians because he used it about 60 times. We who know the Lord Jesus Christ are saints. "To them that are sanctified (that is set apart) in Christ Jesus, called saints, and they are not the only saints but all also that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord."

What does it mean to be a saint? What is involved in being a saint? Now there are three dimensions in this. Simple things, but they come in three dimensions and in three tenses: past, present and future. The benefits of being a saint cover all of the periods of a life: the past, the present and the future. In the past there's grace, for the present there are gifts and the future there are guarantees. What it boils down to is your past is forgiven, your present is taken care of and your future is guaranteed. That takes care of all the past mistakes, gives you all you need to live in the present, and secures absolutely your future. That's what Christianity offers. If you want all that, all that's necessary is for you to be a saint. You say how do I be a saint? By believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. This isn't believing the teaching of Christ. Many do that. It isn't believing about Christ. It is being "in Christ." And that is by committing myself to Him in total unity by faith. And once I am in Christ then the grace of God is mine.

The first benefit of being a saint is grace. It means mercy. It is undeserved, unmerited kindness or favor. And it cannot be paid back. Grace always in Scripture has to be a free gift, unearned. Paul says *"I thank God that you had received the grace of God. At a moment in time in the past it became yours."* And he refers, of course, to their salvation, the time when they received God's saving grace. This is the first, and most obvious benefit, of being a saint. It's what happened to you when you became a saint you were saved, you received salvation. Grace cannot coexist with human guilt. Grace must provide for the elimination of guilt. Grace must allow for sin. Grace can only operate if there's sin there. If there's no sin there's no grace, right? There's got to be something to forgive or grace isn't grace. And so what happened? God knowing that the penalty for sin had to be paid sent Christ to the cross. *Romans 6:23* states "*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord." And in Romans 3:25-26* it says, *"Christ died to take care of sin so that God might still be gracious."* God had to deal with His justice. God is a God of justice. He can't just say, "Well, forget the sin who cares." No, because of justice the sin had to be taken care of. Once sin was taken care of in Christ God could be gracious to sinners because the price had been paid.

So the cross pays the penalty for all sin. It frees God from the obligation of His justice and He says I will be gracious to you and He acts in grace. Now watch, once God acts in grace, grace will never be able to recognize guilt. So once you are forgiven and have received saving grace how much guilt do you have? None, because grace is that by definition, which over rules guilt. Grace reigns in your life.

Secondly grace can't coexist with human obligation. Grace is not something you have to pay back. You're not to say, "Well God was gracious to me and He saved me and now I've got to pay Him back." You can't do that. It was a gift. Can you pay a gift back? No. It's not a gift if you do. One of the wonderful things about salvation is God just gives it to you and you don't have to pay Him back. You will want to show Him your love, won't you? But it's one thing to want to, it's one thing to love Him, it is one thing to serve Him out of a heart of gratitude, it's something else to think that you've got to pay Him back because you owe Him something. You owe God nothing. God gave you salvation as grace.

Thirdly, grace cannot coexist with any recognition of human merit. *"God saved you by His grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago" (Eph. 2:8-10).*

God is gracious to us. There are three reasons for which God did this. Three motives. God saved us by His grace in order to produce good works. God saved us to do good works because good works benefit men.

Secondly, saving grace is to bring blessing to Christians. *"In order that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace and His kindness toward us (Eph. 2:7).* He saved us to pour blessing on us for our sake, to pour out His riches on us forever.

And lastly, and most importantly, saving grace is to glorify God. God saved us to be to the praise of His glory. He says if you let your light shine among men they'll glorify your Father who is in heaven. The Lord saved us, number one, to do good works for the sake of unsaved men, two, to pour out blessings on the sake of believers, three, to give glory to His name, because when we do what is right God is honored. And so He was gracious for our sake, for the world's sake, for His sake. You say, "That's a great gift. How did it become ours? How does it become ours?" You have the grace of God given you in Christ Jesus, when the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you. How is it that the gospel of Jesus Christ becomes confirmed in you? It is by faith. It is by believing.

The first benefit is past tense. You received grace. The second one is present tense, gifts. Saving grace continues in the present and it manifests blessings throughout the believer's life. Just think of what you have in being a believer. Does a Christian lack anything? No, according *to II Peter 1:3 you have all things that pertain to life and godliness.* Keep that in mind. In *Colossians 2:10* Paul says, *"You are complete in Him."* In *I Corinthians 3:21* Paul says, "*You have all things, and you are Christ's and Christ is God's."* You lack nothing. It means you have everything that you need. God has given you the capability and the capacity to speak the truth. To tell others about Jesus Christ and how He has affected your life, your perspective on life and that because of Him and the gospel message, which is, that He was God the Son, who came to this earth to die for our sins, and by accepting Him as your personal Savior, you have confidence that heaven is your eternal destination and they can have that same assurance by asking Jesus into their heart, repenting of their sins and asking for God's forgiveness, believing in their heart He has the power to change their eternal destiny. God has given you gifts so that you can speak the truth to the world that desperately needs to hear and so that you can minister to and encourage other believers. You have everything you need in this life.

Third thing: God not only gave us grace in the past, and gifts for the present, but guarantees for the future. We're always looking and watching and waiting and hoping and Jesus is coming and that's part of it. We look forward to the Lord's coming. Our citizenship isn't here, *Philippians 3:20* says, *"Our citizenship is in heaven."* We're constantly feeling the tug of that world. We have people who have died and gone there and we sense that we want to be with them and the pull is from there as well. One of the benefits of being a Christian is hope. As Christians we don't care what happens to this world ultimately from the standpoint of what we believe, because we know God's going to take care of His own. Christians have hope, an expectation that Jesus is coming back. Why do we look for Jesus? Number one: it means the exultation of Christ and He deserves it. We have a guarantee that if we die before He comes back we will be with Him. *2 Cor. 5:8* states, "*We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.* Secondly, when Jesus comes, it means the defeat of Satan and he deserves it. When Jesus comes He's going to defeat Satan, He's going to bind him for a thousand years. At the end of the thousand years He's going to let him loose for a little while just to

get the last little bit out of his system, then He's going to chain him and throw him into the lake of fire and he deserves it. Thirdly, His coming back means justice for the martyrs and they deserve it. Listen there's coming a day when the martyrs are going to be granted vengeance. God says, "*Vengeance is mine, I will repay*." In *Revelation 6*, you have all those martyrs under the altar and they're praying, *"How long Lord until you avenge the blood of righteous people? "Fourth*, it means the death of Christ's rejecters and they deserve it. *II Thessalonians 1:7* says, *"Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels and flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ who should be punished with everlasting destruction."* He's coming and He's going to judge those who hate Him. And they deserve it.

Lastly, I look forward to the coming of Jesus because it means heaven for me and I don't deserve it but I'll take it. So will you - by grace, the grace of God.

Jesus said *"You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, fruit that will last… (Jn. 15:6).* We are also told we must be "born again" by hearing and accepting the gospel message. By accepting the gospel message we show that we have been chosen for salvation. To persevere and endure throughout our lives, trusting in the promises and faithfulness of Jesus Christ, we show our faith to be genuine saving faith. Out of all those who have lived on this earth, to be chosen for salvation by God your Creator should be the one thing you are most thankful for. And God gives you the privileged, through prayer, to thank Him directly.

The benefits of salvation, God's grace to us all, are having our sins forgiven, a totally transformed life, our guilt removed, washed clean with a clear conscience, with hope of heaven**,** *and* the mind of Christ which gives us the true perspective of this gift of life we have been given which includes all truth and the power of the Holy Spirit, as a compass to guide, teach and direct us throughout our lives. God says by the prophet in *(Isaiah 30:21) "And if you leave God's paths and go astray, you will hear a voice behind you say, "No, this is the way; walk here."*

Whether they believe it or not, as a non-believer a person is: In bondage to evil, the natural state of man (*Romans 3:10-12)*, under divine wrath *(Romans 1:8)*, spiritually dead *(Ephesians 4:17,18)*, and without hope *(Ephesians 2:12)*. At the time of salvation a dramatic change takes place. You become: A new creation in Christ *(2 Corinthians 5:17)*, spiritually alive in Him *(Ephesians 2:5)*, willingly controlled by Christ *(Romans 6:22),* and a recipient of God's divine grace *(Ephesians 2:8)*. You are delivered from the domain of darkness into the kingdom light of God's beloved Son *(Colossians 1:3)*, you then possess the righteousness of Christ *(2 Corinthians 5:21)* and will share in His eternal inheritance *(Romans 8:16,17).*

There is no entrance into heaven without the one and only proper qualification. It will be your answer to God's question *"What did you do with My son Jesus?"* There are many ways to say what you believe the gospel means. God knows the knowledge He has brought to you and He knows your heart. One type of acceptable answer would be, *"I accepted Jesus as my Savior after hearing and believing the gospel message - which is,* ***God sent Jesus to this earth to make God known to man and for the purpose of dying, in my place, for my sins, that is - my redemption. I believe by faith that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior, and God as the 2nd Person of the Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit), who came to this world in human flesh, the only sinless man, who died on the cross, shedding His blood for our sins and was resurrected from the dead to affirm who He was and to give us hope.*** *It is my responsibility to acknowledge and confess my sins and to repent, turning away from my sins and to ask for forgiveness. Salvation is wholly of God by grace, (unmerited, undeserved favor), on the basis of our* ***trust*** *in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood on the cross, and* ***not*** *on the basis of anything we can do.* ***More importantly, understanding that it is the resurrection of Jesus Christ***

that shows He conquered death and gives us the assurance that all He said is true. The redemption of man being accomplished by His death on the cross and three days later, the greatest event to ever take place on earth, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. *I believe by faith that I have heard the truth. Jesus I ask you to come into my life and begin your transforming work to make me the person you created me to be.*

Yes, the Resurrection. It is the reason we celebrate Easter and do so in the springtime. It is the beginning of new life. The beginning of our new life, (no matter how old we may be), when we acknowledge that He died in our place for our sins. All through our lives most of us live our lives doing what we feel we need to do for the welfare of our family; our children, spouses and/or our parents. It seems we are always doing for others. But your salvation and the assurance of heaven for *you* is the most important decision you will make on this earth *for yourself*. Make it a priority because though you may live a long time on this earth, eternity is much, much longer.

(Note: Main body of this message is based on a sermon by John MacArthur)