

## Chapter 2

# *Do You Know You Are a Greatly Beloved Saint?*

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundations of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.”*

*Ephesians 1:3–6*

**F**or our very first, more complete conversation, I have a very simple message for you from the Lord. It’s a one-word message. I can say it in one scripture verse. In fact, when I’m finished, I think you’ll say, “Why didn’t you just say so?”

Because, if I did it that way, you wouldn’t believe me. It’s as simple as that. So let’s take a longer journey and explore the Scriptures along the way. Let’s see where we end up and whether you’ll believe me or not.

Open up your Bible there beside you (you do have it, don’t you?) and turn to Ephesians 1:1. Read the greeting (aloud, if you like) that Paul writes to the Ephesians. “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus, and who are faithful in Christ Jesus ...” Did you see that? This letter is written to the saints *and* to the faithful.

Here’s a little lesson in Greek that I learned just the other day. The Greek word *kai* is trans-

lated into English as “and.” But it doesn’t always mean “and also” as in, When I went to the beach, I took a book and an umbrella and a beach ball. In this example sentence, the “and” means “and also.” When I went to the beach, I took a book *and also* an umbrella *and also* a beach ball.

In Greek, *kai* frequently means “therefore” or as we would say in English, “in other words” or “that is.”

So let’s read Ephesians 1:1 again with our new understanding. “To the saints who are at Ephesus—in *other words*—who are faithful in Christ Jesus.”

Now look at the first two verses of Colossians (in your ever-present Bible), and read the greeting using our new translation skills. “... to the saints—in *other words*—the faithful brethren in Christ who are at Colossae ...” From these two greetings we learn that the word “saint” is defined as those who are faithful.

Now let’s read Philippians 1:1. “Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons ...” It would seem that the saints in Philippi include some very holy people, the elders and the deacons.

That’s what the word “saint” means. It comes from the same root word as sanctuary and sanctify. It means holy, set apart for God’s special purpose. Yes, the elders and deacons are set apart—we call it ordained—by God through His church for God’s special purpose.

Who are these saints to whom Paul is addressing his letters? Ephesians says that the saints include the faithful. Philippians says that the saints include holy people.

Oh, yes, let’s not forget the Corinthians. Flip over to 1 Corinthians 1:1, 2: “Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in

every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours ...” And we discover again that saints are sanctified—set apart. Paul says that they are “saints by calling.”

The words we’ve discovered so far that are used to describe these various people to whom Paul is writing include: faithful, holy, sanctified, called to be saints.

Let’s look at one more scripture, Colossians 3:12–15. “And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against any one; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.” Here is a description of the “chosen of God,” the saints to whom Paul has been addressing all of his letters.

Wait a minute. You and I read one of our greetings from 1 Corinthians, didn’t we? Aren’t those the church members who were sleeping with their fathers’ wives, taking each other to court, carousing in the local temples with the temple prostitutes, and fighting over the bread at communion?

The saints that you know—in the church where you grew up or in the church where you worship now—do they sound more like those described in Colossae or do they sound more like the Corinthians? Did Paul really address the Corinthians as saints?

**H**ave you ever been in love?  
Yes, me too.

When my wife and I were married, we wrote our own wedding vows from the depths of our love. All of those emotionally charged words that you read in Song of Solomon, we said to each other. A lot of those sentiments made it into the wedding vows.