

NEW SERIES: SAINT AND SINNER PASTOR LEE

Feeling Near
-- or Far
From THE
Hdy Spirit

Peter Ex-
perienced
The Extremes!

Saints &
Sinners:

Peter AND US!

Baptism:
What it is...
&
What It Isn't

- God so loved the world that he gave his only Son....indeed, He sends Jesus! When Jesus leaves this world, He leaves with us His Holy Spirit! We live in this 'not-neutral' spiritual world.....so, there are times when we may feel far from the Holy Spirit....with doubts even to the core of our faith. This dynamic is not new....we see it through stories and events and real people in Scripture.
- Today and through a new Series, we will look at one such relatable, key bible figure whom we all know- -Peter. Just like us, he had the highs and the lows....at the 'penultimate high', he got to walk with Jesus (!).....but there were other times when he hit depths in life that we can also keenly appreciate.
- Ultimately and beyond ups and downs, he illustrates his incredible faith, humility and love of Jesus by submitting, with his fate cast, insistently and by his own volition, to a most gruesome (up-side-down) crucifixion.
- Much earlier and inspired by Jesus, he made the transition from fisherman /business operator to Apostle (whom Jesus would later describe as a "pillar of the Church").
- Again, showing his humanness, at it worst and its best....the extremes of his strength of faith.....he actually denied Jesus three times....yet....this identical man wrote two Books of the Bible!
- Such 'flip sides'!.....**THE SAME MAN WHO DENIES JESUS IS THE MAN WHO WILLINGLY AND HORRIFICALLY DIED FOR HIM.**
- So we can relate these different dimensions/elements of Peter to ourselves and our own lives/faith journeys. We believers are called saints (just like Peter) and yet, in our weaknesses, we separate ourselves from God and are weighed down in our sinfulness.
- Hence, our new Sermon Series: "Saint and Sinner"....in which we will come to better know Peter (and ourselves) in the course of these Messages.
- Relating to Pastor Lee's invitation to be baptized at this Service, he refers to 1Peter 3:21- - -

Baptism, which corresponds to this, NOW SAVES YOU, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- Baptism is an opportunity to affirm our faith but this verse/phrase above (ie. 'now saves you') can be confusing, even to theologians. ...and can even be misconstrued and counters our Church's teaching. So, this prompts the question: 'does Baptism save you? While not a simple, 'clean' answer and not withstanding some contradictory theologians' opinions, we say "NO". To name a few, here are some biblical examples of people who put their faith and trust in Jesus without or before baptism: (1) the 'guy on the cross' next to Jesus (Luke 23:39-43); (2) Cornelius, clearly trusting in Jesus BEFORE he was baptized (Acts 10:44-48).

We Are
Saved By
God's Grace
Through
Faith!!
... Not By
Works

All Jesus!
... Not Us.

Baptism's
Affirmation

Strength of
Resolve
Through
Holy Spirit

- So, despite any struggle with this notion, we need to look at context/the 'full scriptural picture'... Firstly, what does the reference to "saving" mean? It refers to saving you from the results of sin: death/final separation from God.
- In examining 'the whole of the Bible', it teaches that it's not 'works' that save us (ie. even baptism). Examples:

- **Titus 3:5: He saved us, not because of works done by using righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.**

(Good news!!!; Since we know, on our own accord, we are not 'good enough!')

- **Eph 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not you own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.**

(Put this one on your phone....memorize it!!!!!!!)

- So HE saves us....His Cross...His Resurrection.....all HIS DOING.

Romans 5:1: Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord, Jesus Christ.

(Through Jesus, not ourselves)

Mathew 28:19: Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

(1. an affirmation of their faith) ((2. An affirmation of Holy Trinity))

Acts 2:38: And Peter said to them, "Repentant be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- This is Peter speaking: 1. Repent....2. Be baptized. Repentance, in the human sense, is still subject to our own personal frailties and our inability to get there by ourselves. But the Holy Spirit starts to speak to us: "The wages of sin is death"! Even one sin separates us from God for eternity! But faith/ trust in Jesus saves you! And the corresponding gift of His Holy Spirit reenforces your repentive resolve to "sin no more".

CHRIST SAVES!!!! BAPTISM AFFIRMS!!! LIFE ANEW!!!