

FAITHFUL SAINTS

“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus.” —EPHESIANS 1:1

There is a popular expression that says, “They are so heavenly minded, they are of no earthly use.” In other words, some people are so wrapped up in the spiritual world, so pious in nature, that they have lost touch with the realities of life, so we can’t expect them to be of any earthly value. However, the greater danger Christians face is that we can become so earthly minded that we are of no heavenly use. Our concerns can become so preoccupied by the demands of this life that we begin to think and act by the criteria of a material world.

As Christians, we are in this world by divine appointment with resources that are not material or physical, but that derive solely from Christ. In Paul’s salutation to the Ephesians, he writes, “To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus.” He is saying, “You live in two places with two identities in two different spheres; the physical, tangible world of Ephesus, and at the same time, you live in Christ.” This is their identity and also where they live. The big question is: How do we live with our feet planted in our own ‘Ephesus’ while, at the same time, live in union with Christ and fulfill the agenda of heaven on earth?

We first need to understand what is meant by the word ‘saint’. Many think it refers to people who were good, pious and lived back in history, but actually, the opposite is true. A saint is a person who recognizes that he or she has no virtue of their own, but has come humbly to Christ and been reconciled to God. It has nothing to do with merit or virtues, but everything to do with recognizing our failure and sin, and the cleansing

blood of Christ. A saint is a person set apart for the purposes of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In John 17:15 Jesus prayed for His disciples, saying, “My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.” We don’t live where we do by accident. A Christian is ‘sent’ in order to be set apart for God in whatever environment He has placed them. God’s purpose is not our withdrawal from society, but our participation in it, and in such a way that we are on the agenda of heaven. We are not called just to be saints, but the operative word is ‘faithful’ saints in Christ, which is to be productive on earth with a heavenly agenda.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, In this overwhelmingly secular world, I ask that You keep me firmly rooted in You, and that I live everyday seeking heaven’s agenda for my life.

TO REFLECT UPON: Have I experienced a purpose God has for me where I live and work?