

Theology
THURSDAY



What is Theology Thursday?

- **open seminar, workshop;**
- **safe space to entertain real questions;**
(not necessarily to come to conclusions);
- **respectful, honest discussion**
(we are all learners with our own experiences).



What is the goal?

(RE)THINK & RESPECT

love God & love one another



CHURCH...

...is not what you think.



**This topic is difficult and confronting;
we need grace, patience,
love, and prayer.**



Building or People?



What is the church?

Greek word *ekklesia* = “assembly” or “called-out ones.”

Church = not a building, but people!

Romans 16:5 “Greet the church that is in their house.”



What is church?



Building or People?

Something to ponder & discuss:

What is your church experience like?

Do you come to a place, program, or to be with people?

How does that impact the rest of your week?

Sinners or Saints?



What is the identity of this people?



What is the identity of this people?

“...spiritual fellowship of sinners...?”

“...fellowship of forgiven sinners...?”

“... a hospital for sinners...?”

1Timothy 1:15

It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save **sinners**, among whom I am foremost of all.

James 4:7–8

Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you **sinners**; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

James 5:19–20

My brothers and sisters, if any among you strays from the truth, and one turns him back, let him know that ‘he who turns a **sinner** from the error of his way will save his soul from death,’ and will cover a multitude of sins.

1Timothy 1:15

It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save **sinners**, among whom I am foremost of all.

James 4:7

Submit to God. He will oppose the proud, but will bless the humble. The proud will flee from you.

Draw near to God

you **sinners**; and purify your hearts

All the times the New Testament refers to a believer as sinner!

James 5:19–20

My brothers and sisters, if any among you strays from the truth, and one turns him back, let him know that ‘he who turns a **sinner** from the error of his way will save his soul from death,’ and will cover a multitude of sins.

What is the identity of this people?

God's people are NOT defined by sin....

WE HAVE RECEIVED A HOLY & NEW IDENTITY

2 Corinthians 5:16–17

**Therefore from now on we recognise no man according to the flesh;
even though we have known Christ according to the flesh,
yet now we know Him thus no longer.**

**Therefore if any one is in Christ, that one is a new creature;
the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.**

**Nowhere in the New Testament is the church identified as a
“fellowship of forgiven sinners.”**

What is the identity of this people?

“called out” =
we are wanted (invitation) &
asked to step out (challenge)

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“saints” =
we have been &
are being made holy by Jesus

What is the identity of this people?

“SAINTS” (60x)

VS.

“SINNERS” (3x?)

Romans 1:7

[Paul...] to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as **saints**:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 16:2

... [please] receive her [sister Phoebe] in the Lord in a manner worthy of the **saints**, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well.

1Corinthians 1:2

[Paul...] 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...

2Corinthians 1:1

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth with all the **saints** who are throughout Achaia...

Ephesians 1:1–4

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the **saints** who are at Ephesus, and who are faithful in Christ Jesus (...) just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that **we should be holy** and blameless before Him...

Ephesians 2:19

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the **saints**, and are of God's household...

Ephesians 3:8 (cf. 1Timothy 1:15)

To me, **the very least of all saints**, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ...

Ephesians 4:11–12

And He [God] gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the **saints** for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

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:...

Philippians 4:22

All the **saints** greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.

Colossians 1:2

[Paul] to the **saints** and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ who are at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

Colossians 1:21–22

And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him **holy** and blameless and beyond reproach...

Colossians 3:12

And so, as those who have been chosen of God, **holy** and beloved,
put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;

Hebrews 3:1

Therefore, **holy** brothers and sisters, partakers of a heavenly calling,
consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.

Sinners or Saints?

Something to ponder & discuss:

**We can see ourselves as sinners or saints,
what difference does it make
for ourselves and for others?**

Fans or Family?





What is the identity of this people?

“called out” =
we are wanted (invitation) &
asked to step out (challenge)

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we have been &
are being made holy by Jesus

What is the identity of this people?

**MOST COMMON way of referring
to church members is:**

“brethren” [brothers & sisters] (230+)

“children (of God)” (25+)

What is the identity of this people?

John 20:17

**Jesus said to her [Mary],
“Stop clinging to Me,
for I have not yet ascended to the Father;
but go to My brethren, and say to them,
‘I ascend to My Father and your Father,
and My God and your God.’”**

What is the identity of this people?

1 John 3:1

See how great a love the **Father** has bestowed upon us,
that we should be called **children of God**;
and such we are.

For this reason the world does not know us,
because it did not know Him.

What is the identity of this people?

Romans 1:7

...to all who are **beloved** of God in Rome,
called as **saints**: Grace to you
and peace from God **our Father**
and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:2

...to the **saints** and faithful **brethren** in Christ who are at Colossae:
Grace to you and peace from God **our Father**.

What is the identity of this people?

Romans 8:15

For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again,
but you have received a spirit of **adoption** as sons
by which we cry out, “**Abba! Father!**”

Galatians 4:6

And because you are sons,
God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts,
crying, “**Abba! Father!**”

What is the identity of this people?

Romans 8:15

For you have been led to fear again,
but you are not sons

WE ARE NOT REJECTED
WE ARE NOT ORPHANS

Galatians 4:6

YOU ARE NOT JUST TOLERATED

God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts,
crying, “Abba! Father!”

Fans or Family?

Something to ponder & discuss:
How have you experienced
church as family (or not)?
How can we do it better?

Many or One?



Galatians 3:28

for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:28

**There is neither Jew nor Greek,
there is neither slave nor free man,
there is neither male nor female;
for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

Colossians 3:9–11

Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him — a renewal in which **there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.**

James 2

My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an **attitude of personal favoritism**. For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, “You sit here in a good place,” and you say to the poor man, “You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,” have you not made **distinctions** among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?(...) But if you show **partiality**, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

Galatians 3:28

**There is neither Jew nor Greek,
there is neither slave nor free man,
there is neither male nor female;
for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

“Pentecost Charter”

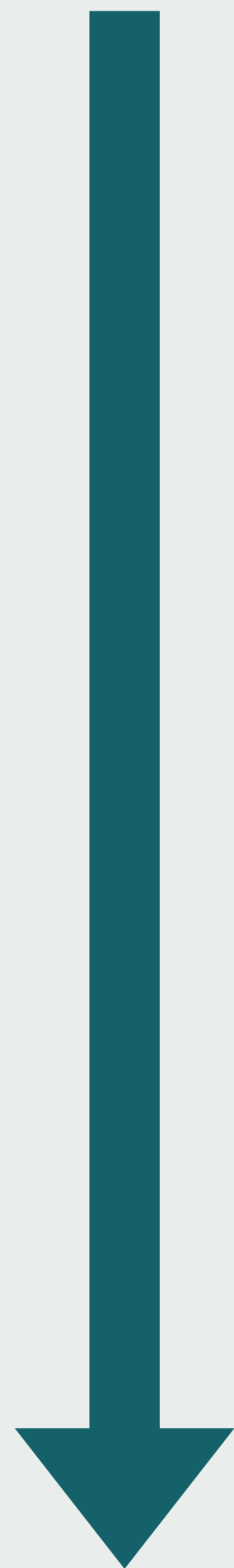
Joel 2:28–29 / Acts 2:17–18

- 28 “And it will come about after this
That I will pour out My Spirit on **all humankind**;
And your **sons and daughters** will prophesy,
Your old men will dream dreams,
Your young men will see visions.
- 29 “And even on the **male and female servants**
I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

Galatians 3:28

**There is neither Jew nor Greek,
there is neither slave nor free man,
there is neither male nor female;
for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

Social Hierarchy in the Ancient World



Male Free & Rich of your race

Female Free & Rich of your race

Male Free & Poor of your race

Female Free & Poor of your race

Male Free & Rich of another race

Female Free & Rich of another race

Male Free & Poor of another race

Female Free & Poor of another race

Male Slave

Female Slave

Celsus on Christianity

(ca. 175AD, quoted by Origen Contra Celsus 3:59)

[Christianity is followed by]

**“...only foolish and low individuals,
and persons devoid of perception,
and slaves, and women, and children....”**

**Early Christianity was known to attract women and slaves,
and it was mocked for it;
Early Christianity upset the cultural norms of their time.**

All Church Members are Equal

**In the church
there should be no place for
Discrimination,
Racism,
High-Low Status / Pride,
Sexism.**

Many or One?

Something to ponder & discuss:
**Who are we disregarding or devaluing
in our churches
(consciously or unconsciously)?**

Gifted: Few or All?



1 Corinthians 12

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be unaware. (...) Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things **in all persons**.

But **to each one** is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing **to each** one individually just as He wills.

1 Corinthians 14:26–33

When you assemble, **each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation.**

Let all things be done for edification. If anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and let one interpret; but if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God. And let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment. But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, let the first keep silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted; and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets; for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

Ephesians 4:4–13

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you too were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

But to **each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he captured captives; he gave gifts to men." (...) And he himself gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, to equip the **saints** for the work of ministry, that is, to build up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God—a mature person, attaining to the measure of Christ's full stature.**

Gifted: Few or All?

Something to ponder & discuss:
What is your gift to the body of Christ?

The Church is the People who are in Union with Him

**all people who participate in the holy life of God
(past, present, future) =**

**the people who abide/dwell in Jesus,
the people in whom Jesus abides/dwells;
the people who are made holy by Jesus;
the people who call on and know God as Father,
people who are related to God and each other as family.**

**This topic is difficult and confronting;
we need grace, patience,
love, and prayer.**



Now what...?

Next Week, 19 June 2025
19:00 @ Worldview

