

pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel **Ephesians 6:19**

# Sinner or Saint

## Jared Hagan

### Store In My Heart

#### Acts 10:33

So I sent for you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. Now then, we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord.

These words from Cornelius to Peter contain a lesson in urgency and focus for us.

He needed to hear a message so he "immediately" sent for Peter. Are we urgent in seeking to hear God's Message? We ought to seek God's Word continually. Reading, Bible study, discussion and assembly are all ways we can hear God today.

He also shows that he is focused for hearing. "Present before God to hear" shows this. Am I focused on the message when the opportunity arises? Or am I distracted by other things in my life?

Urgency and focus are things we are need regarding the Message of God.

I have often heard Christians refer to themselves as sinners. We say it in casual conversation and also in sermons, invitations and Bible classes. The sentiment is understandable. The world accuses Christians of having a "holier than thou" attitude and we want to counter that by showing we have something in common with all of those in the world. We aren't so different. It is a statement of humility which is a good thing. After all, God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble (**James 4:6**). But, is it Biblical for Christians to call themselves sinners?

That's not an easy question to answer. It isn't as simple as yes or no. It also isn't the point I'm trying to make. This isn't about someone being sinful for calling themselves sinners. This is about reexamining whether our language and concepts match up with what is in the Bible.

Paul would refer to himself as a sinner. Most of the time, this is a description of a previous condition (**Romans 5:8**). But not always. In fact, he was the foremost sinner and that is stated in present tense (**1 Timothy 1:15**) so it would be hard to complain too much about calling ourselves sinners. It is also true that we must never claim to be without sin (**1 John 1:8,10**). However, at other times, there is a clear distinction between us and sinners. Paul said to Peter, "*We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles*" (**Galatians 2:15**). Was Paul claiming to be sinless? Had he forgotten what he had done? Or is there sometimes a distinction between having sinned and being a sinner?

Peter also made a distinction between Christians and sinners. While speaking about judgment starting with the "household of God", that is, with "us" as Christians (**1 Peter 4:17**), he observes the challenge this would present to the rest of the world. "*And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the*



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## For Our Information

Amy Simpson's Dad is scheduled for a heart cath on Monday.

Jim Soliday will have a heart cath. in early May.

Paula Laubach's Dr thinks her problem may be Pulmonary insufficiency

Bill Venable is visiting his daughter in Virginia this week.

**Our Meeting with Jared Hagan begins Today and continues thru Thursday evening**

Pray for our meeting. Flyers are available.

*godless man and the sinner?" (1Peter 4:18 quoting from Proverbs 11:31). In this, Peter is making a clear distinction between being righteous and being a sinner. It is not as though Peter had forgotten his sinful deeds, but he managed to see Christians as righteous and the world as sinners anyway. It's as though there is a difference between not being sinless and being a sinner. A person might sin without being a sinner.*

In such instances of distinction, being a sinner is a description not just of having sinned, but of having a broken relationship with God. The person is wicked and in rebellion. Is that how we want to describe ourselves?

Christians certainly can be sinners. James calls out his audience as sinners (**James 4:8**), but that is stated in rebuke. It is not a term or condition that we would want to embrace.

Note also **2Peter 1:9**. *"For he who lacks these qualities is blind or shortsighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins."* While we don't want to become arrogant and forget our sins, that is not what Peter warned against here. He warns against forgetting our purification. THAT is what concerns me. I hear Christians refer to themselves as sinners all of the time. I don't recall hearing them call themselves righteous or holy or chosen or pure. It is as though we are comfortable with embracing the term of sinner but fearful of embracing those other terms. Those other terms, by the way, are frequently used to describe Christians in the Bible. We are holy (**Colossians 3:12**). We are chosen (**1Peter 1:1**). We are saints (**Philippians 1:1**). Saints means "holy ones". That term is used of Christians over fifty times in the New Testament (more times than the New Testament even mentions "sinners").

I can't say that it is wrong to call us sinners. The humility is admirable. However, we should not fear calling ourselves righteous, holy, blameless, saints, etc. Those are not terms of arrogance as though we have earned such descriptions. They are acknowledgments of the powerful and loving work of Christ on us. He has sanctified us. He has chosen us. He deserves the glory and praise.

By shunning such terms, aren't we minimizing the work of God? Sure, we don't want to be arrogant or off-putting to the world. But Jesus has done something amazing. Let's not forget it. Let's not hide it.

Are you a sinner or are you a saint?

(This article does a good job of reminding us of the balance we need to have in our attitude toward our relationship with God. Too often I hear brethren using language to describe those who are saved from sin by the blood of Christ that makes them sound wicked in their actions. Though we have sinned we are not (or ought not be) seen by God as sinners but saints. DLH)



We seek only to serve God according to His Will!