

From the April 4, 2009 Issue

## **Sinner, Saint, or Both?**

In three words, and until we put off this corruptible flesh, distinctly – YES and NO!

I am sure that as you continue to embrace the Truth of Humanity's Adoption into the Life of the Trinity in Jesus Christ, you are being baptized in Jesus' assurance.

This assurance proclaims, like nothing else, that in the literal humanity of Christ, I am, YOU ARE, RIGHT NOW, holy and blameless before the Father in Jesus, as Ephesians 1:4 notes! Your soul is wired to know this truth like no other!

The exciting thing about this Truth is that I can look at Christ through the human mind he has renewed in the Spirit and begin experiencing NOW, an actual foretaste of that truth. And a foretaste is a REAL taste of what is yet to come in more fullness (my wife Donna can tell you how much of an expert I am in foretasting her delicious and REAL meals before they arrive by the plate full!)

It is on the basis of this Truth Revealed in Jesus Christ that we can all claim to be Saints! Jesus is THE Saint on behalf of all humanity. He stands in our place, in our stead, and vicariously in every part of what it means to be human!

He is the ONLY true Saint there is, but He is not selfish! Rather, He shares Who He is with me, for me, and in me (and YOU!) through the Holy Spirit Who has now been accustomed to live with us in our sinful flesh through Jesus!

Wow! You can't get much "Saintlier" than Who you are in Jesus Christ!

But if this is not only THE truth about my life, but the TRUEST thing about my life, as Paul says in **Colossians 3:1-4**, then isn't it true that I am, REALLY, no longer a sinner? Well, YES and, er, NO!

If there is one thing the pure Gospel of Jesus is helping me to appreciate, it is the paradox of our REAL Life in Jesus! And in the case of the question of this article, we can't help but notice this paradox if we take seriously (as the late Dr. Thomas Torrance said), "the ground and grammar" of God the Trinity as Revealed in Jesus.

To date, and because we, in our distinction, have not yet died, literally, in the flesh that Adam passed on to us (EXCEPT in Christ's distinct humanity!), we must live with the realization that as in Adam all die, so, and ONLY IN CHRIST, are we made alive.

Because you are created in the image of Jesus, you are not only in union with the Father in Him, but you are also distinct from Him within that union. In that distinction, the Holy Spirit of Christ communicates the Truth to you about your real life HIDDEN in Christ. It is in that truth that you can say without any fear of error that you are a Saint, pure and Whole - period!

That communication from the Holy Spirit of who you REALLY are in His Son Jesus also keeps revealing (in the Light of Jesus) how wrong and misplaced your sinful faith still is - **Mark 9:24!** "I believe, help my unbelief?" is still our state in this distinct union we have with the Triune God in Jesus, and anytime we can admit to misplaced faith of any type, we are saying loud and clear "I AM

A SINNER!”

As the Worldwide Church of God’s updated Statement of Beliefs indicates under the heading of ‘Sin’: “*Sin is anything that is not consistent with God’s will.*” As you signify, anytime you admit to repentance, you have to keep changing your mind to be consistent with the Father’s will!

You keep changing your mind, in the grace of Jesus’ shared mind, because you keep realizing your thoughts about God and who you are in Him still don’t always line up with the truth revealed in Jesus!

Wow! You certainly are a sinner! Your thoughts don’t always line up with the will of the Triune God, and you have to be repenting constantly in order to get in line with the mind of Christ!

The fact that we can see Jesus and agree so blatantly with the truth that as in Adam we are dead, still sin, and will still die, so we can see and agree with the Holy Spirit that in Christ we ARE, and will yet be, made alive!

Are you learning how to hold the paradox together by thinking Jesus’ thoughts after Him and looking first to the Trinitarian Life for guidance? When we see Who God is, and when we see Who Jesus is, we see that in Jesus Our union with God the Father and Spirit, Humanity and Creation is REAL!

At the same time, we can look at God the Father, Son and Spirit revealed in Jesus and see that our distinction is as real as the distinctions between Father, Son and Spirit. After all, we are created in the image of the Perichoretic Union of the Trinity!

It is in this paradoxical Truth that you and I can hold the diametric thoughts of Saint and Sinner together as one whole, in our real and distinct participation in that life of union! We are both Saints and Sinners, and it is all good! To be saints speaks of how good our adoption and salvation is in Jesus, and to be sinners is good because Jesus came to save only sinners! Check it out in **1 Tim 1:15-17!**

~ *Tim Brassell*