

Thought for the Day Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Good morning, or whatever greeting is appropriate at the time of day you are reading this or viewing the video.

I hope that you have enjoyed our recent journey through "Women of the Bible" and feel you have got to know these people a little bit better. Many thanks to all the contributors for their time, energy and commitment.

On Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> November, Clare Pickering is leading worship at Central and the other week she declared that the theme might be obvious as it will be "All Saints Day" in the Christian calendar. This then led the local preachers to adopt this theme for the Thought for the Day pieces over the next few weeks till we start our Advent thoughts on 30<sup>th</sup> November. So another journey together begins and I'm looking forward to it.

I thought I could bring a short introduction to the theme today to "kick us off".

On looking in a concordance I found that "saints" is a word St! Paul uses on a number of occasions in his letters to the various churches he helped to set up during what's known as his "missionary journeys". If you look at the beginning of 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon you will find the word "saints" within the first few verses and also in Romans which we will hear now. It strikes me that these verses help us to understand Paul's definition of a saint - it is any and all who are "righteous in God by faith". It also strikes a chord right now as so many of us are still prevented from meeting together.

So the making of a saint is not good works, noble deeds etc. although these may well be in evidence, it is God's amazing grace at work in us, saving us, transforming us and leading us to serve God and one another.

Romans 1:7-17

"To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. God, whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you.

I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong - that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that I planned many times to come to

you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other *Gentiles*.

I am bound both to *Greeks* and non-*Greeks*, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome.

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the *Gentile*. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

Let's pray:

We never worship you alone, Lord God. Even when we are on our own we are still surrounded by your faithful people from the past, in the present, and of the future.

Women and men have been prepared to die to serve you, Lord God.

Your love has had such an amazing effect on them.

Ordinary people, like us, have done extraordinary things, Lord God.

Your spirit has transformed them.

We have been given hope that there is a purpose for life, Lord God.

You have met us in Jesus.

So, with all your people of every age, we come to praise and adore you.

Amen.