Paul opens up with a powerful statement to the church at Ephesus. **Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:**

- Saints is Greek Hagios taken from root word Hagio which means Holy. Holy is what God is. The Strong's Greek dictionary says it means “an awful thing” as in a terrifying or awesome thing.
- In the middle of the day the clouds turn black and the wind starts howling and the lightning flashing and a torrential rain comes down and the lightning strikes near-by and explodes and you are caught outside in all of this. You have never seen such a storm as this before and it terrifies you and rightfully so. You are as nothing before it and it can sweep you away as the nothing you are.

And this is God, He is Hagio – Holy. There is nothing like Him. There is nothing that can stand in His way. Everyone and everything is as nothing before Him.

God hates sin, He abhors it and He will deal with it with severity. Every sinner has to stand before this Terrifying Holy God and give an account to Him for every sin they committed. (Rev. 20)

And unfortunately we are born as sinners. We cherish sin. We run to sin. We cling to it as if our very lives depended on it. In the midst of this we try to offer up to God some deeds of kindness or goodness from our hearts and God says that all our righteous deeds are filthy rags to Him. We are filthy sinners and everything we do is filthy ... everything. The very core of the essence of who we are, our soul and spirit is a vile black.

This black vest represents that.

I cannot draw near to God, I cannot please God with my life. I cannot have fellowship with God. The very purpose for which Adam and Eve were created was and is destroyed by sin.

But this Holy God who hates sin is also a God that Is Love. Not is loving but at the very core of who He is - is that He is Love. 1 John 4:16

- Everything He does is based on Love. Every decision He makes is based on Love.

As a matter of fact, that is exactly why we were created in His Image.

- Nothing else was created in God’s image.
- The closest is Angels who were created before man.
  Angels worship God, Angels obey God, Angels are eternal beings. They talk they think, they sing. So why wouldn’t they be considered in God’s Image?
- Because nowhere in Scriptures does it say that God loves Angels or that angels love God. Nowhere in Scriptures does it say that Angels love one another or are even expected to love one another.
- Therefore, since God Is Love, to be created in God’s Image we would have to be created with an ability to experience a God type of Love.
- Why? Because God is Love and Love must have reciprocation. We are created in God’s image so that we can love. It is at the core of God’s expectation for our very lives.
“you shall love the Lord your God with all you heart and mind and soul and your neighbor as yourself”. Matt 22:37

Now let’s come back to our thinking about God.
Because God Abhors sin, and Because God is absolute Love, Know This:
Everything about God is only Good, so much so that it can be said that God’s very essence is that He is Total Good.

What do you think of when you think of the Glory of God?

- Glowing bright essence of God that cannot be looked upon
- Maybe that blinding light that knocked Paul from his donkey and blinded him?

Moses thought that to see God’s Glory would be the epitome of knowing God. But what composes that bright glory?

- Exodus 16:10 10 Now it came to pass, as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud.
- Exodus 33: 17 So the Lord said to Moses, “I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name.” 18 And Moses said, “Please, show me Your glory.” 19 Then God said, “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” 20 But He said, “You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.” 21 And the Lord said, “Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. 22 So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. 23 Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen.”
- So the Glory of God, the very essence of who He is, is that God Is Good. God is Only Good, God is totally Good! That is why every day of creation ended with … and it was Good. It could only be Good.

Jehovah God, this Good, Loving God who abhors sin created us to Love Him but we cannot Love Him because of our sin which separates us from our Creator. I was born with a black sinful core.

- Why didn’t God just keep us from sinning?
- Because God is Love He must be loved back and true love cannot be coerced. You cannot demand love or force love, it has to be freely given.

We cannot love God but that does not diminish God’s love for us!
God abhors sin, and God holds sins accountable but He still loves us!
There is only one answer for this dilemma. Only God Himself could pay for the sins of a sinner and the cost is very very high.

- But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8
- Jesus life for my life, the sinless one for the sinning one.
And that sacrifice by Jesus was driven by Love.

Matt 13:45-46 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

We are the Pearl of Great Price and God so deeply loved us that He sold everything to purchase us.

2 Cor. 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

We became the “purchased possession”!

The penalty of our sin was paid by the precious blood of Jesus and now watch what God does.

- He washes us Rev. 1:5 To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,
- We have been immersed into Christ. Galatians 3:27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
- How was that done? By being immersed by the Holy Spirit. Matt. 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.
- Fire refines, it burns out the dross, the sins we bore for so long. And now God can righteously recreate us as a sinless being. And so He does just that.
- 2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.
- PUT ON THE WHITE VEST

Now I (the real me inside my body) am a Saint – Hagios –

- I am a holy vessel that not only does God love but I can now love Him back.
- I am able now to be faithful to God because I stand in the Faithfulness of Christ.
- My position now before God is no more a sinner but a Faithful, Holy vessel newly created to glorify Him.

John says it clearly - 1 John 3:9 Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

Paul says it clearly – He talks about not doing what he wants to do and doing sinful things he doesn’t want to do. Then he continues with this: Romans 7 17 But now, it is no longer I who do it (this sinning), but sin that dwells in me.

How can Paul say that? It is because the real you that lives eternally is in Christ and will always be Faithful. (Eph. 1:1) Even now God sees us as sitting with Christ in heaven.

Look at the next Chapter in Ephesians, Chapter 2

2 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.
But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

Think of it this way.

- You are a Purchased Possession – you will never become unpurchased.
- You are placed into Christ, you are His Body – you will never be cast out or misplaced or dropped. You are held firm by Christ, not by you or anyone else.

Jude 24 puts it this way: Now to Him who is able (dynamai = dynamite) to keep you from falling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.

If you are truly a purchased possession by God (and you are if you have received Christ as your personal savior) how is this accomplished. How is it that you can be assured of Heaven?

OK, here is God’s methodology.

Ephesians 1:11 In Him also we have obtained (unique to Greek writings, something is future but so assured they put it in the present tense) an inheritance, being predestined (the inheritance) according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. (to the praise of God’s glory because it is all of God and nothing of myself)

That sounds like I can go out and do all the sinning I want and still go to heaven. That would be correct but you better understand one more thing.

- No born again man or woman wants to sin, they will sin but they don’t want to sin.
- Go back to Paul who did what he didn’t want to do and said it was sin doing this and not himself. Listen to what he said next: Romans 7 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.
- If you are thinking “yippee, I am free to sin and still go to heaven” then you have not become a new creation, old things are not passing away, you do not have the mind of Christ.

God created you to Love Him and Christ made that very thing possible. Loving God and feeling free to sin cannot coexist. One is the antithesis of the other.

If you have been truly saved then your salvation is secure, your glorification (heaven) is assured but your life in between, the right here and right now has one purpose - to glorify God with your life, and guess what, you can do that! Look at Eph. 3:20-21, God’s power is at work in you! Read and meditate Ephesians chapter 1 over and over asking God for wisdom to understand it.