

Simul Justus et Peccator

In today's Romans reading we heard the words of a tormented person.

Paul knows he is a "wretch" – a terrible failure.

Paul knows he is saved – destined for heaven – a saint.

This is not two people – it's Paul – the terrible failure – the sanctified saint.

Is it possible to be so divided - schizoid?

You mob have got it together – you're baptised – you're confirmed – I bet Paul was not confirmed.

But what about "the thoughts that surround you".

But where do you go to my lovely
When you're alone in your bed
Tell me the thoughts that surround you
I want to look inside your head
(by America – a horse with no name.)

How do you, the Christian, feel about your actions – when you're alone – when you're at the football, when you're with your neighbour?

I know for sure we identify with Paul - I don't do the good things I want to do. I keep on doing the evil things I don't want to do – who will save me?

There is a war inside us – 2 sides opposing each other all the time.

The text reminds us what the world sees in us.

Why is Christian behaviour not remarkably different from worldly behaviour?

Why do Christian people – ruled by the Holy Spirit – sin at all – the world must ask.

We see people running away from the church because of the scandals.

You see most people think that Christians should be good people – Christlike all the time.

This makes sense – doesn't it

But this not Paul's experience – it's not ours either.

Paul says the flesh (the sinful nature in us) is opposite to the Spirit (The Spiritual nature in us)

When things are hard to understand smart people like Luther – make up these Latin phrases just to let us know this is going to be difficult: "Simul Justus et peccator"

That going to help us!! We'll see.

"Simul.... Justus.... Et.... peccator" – when you say it slowly you can almost hear what it means.

Simul = simultaneously

Justus = justified

et = and

Peccator = sinfull

“Simultaneously justified and sinful” Does that help??

This is exactly what Paul says to the Galatians (5:16-17)

For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other.

We seem to be two persons at the same time.

- One lead by the flesh – condemned by God.
- One lead by the spirit – right with God.

“Simul Justus et peccator” – maybe a bit of Latin is not so bad after all.

Like the farmers saying: CORVUS OCULUM CORVI NON ERUIT

("a crow will not pull out the eye of another crow.")

Saint and sinner at the very same time??

Not all Christians believe this so let's listen carefully.

No matter how often you come to Church, how many times you receive Communion, how many times you've been absolved, you remain a poor, miserable sinner.

(as I said this is not easy)

Every move you make, every breath you take is sinful.

The sinful mind is always hostile to God.

“A bit rough”, I hear your saying.

But it's not me it's Paul "The good that I want to do, I don't do. And the evil I don't want to do is what I end up doing!"

It's not me it's Isaiah: (64:6)

All of us have become like one who is unclean,

and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;

we all shrivel up like a leaf,

and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

It's serious – we don't just slip in and out of sin - it's all the time.

Our very being is hostile to God (Paul).

God is the enemy (Paul).

We don't look to God for anything good (Paul)

This is how our sinful flesh always is and always will be.

No matter how hard you try to make it better, you can't.

No matter what you try to do to change it, you won't.

Even in church, during prayers, receiving Holy Communion, we have some of the most shameful thoughts.

That perfect person you want to be – the one who reads God's word every day and is nice to people – is always a step away from you.

It's no wonder guilt plagues us?

We are 100% of the time et peccator, a sinner, who deserves punishment now and forever.

Can you see why it's so easy for Satan and others to make you feel guilty?
All they have to do is scratch the surface and we bleed out greed, and lust, and pride, and hatred – all the deadly sins.

Luther was on to this – he called himself a miserable bag of dung, a pile of maggots. Paul - called himself "the least of all the apostles," "a wretched man," "the chief of sinners."

David - described himself as "a worm."

These men spoke the truth....But we also know they are believers, they are saints in heaven right now – Luther the bag of dung, the pile of maggots is in heaven right now??

Surely by now you are thinking “hang on I’m not that bad”.

Blow Paul, blow Isaiah, I do do some good for my community – and my family. It is true we do do good, but - our sinful nature ruins the best things we do.

So just when we are about to abandon all hope let’s go back to the phrase:

Simul justus et peccator.

While we’re 100% sinners and we are simultaneously 100% saints.

It doesn’t make sense.

Shouldn't it be 60/40, 30/70, or 50/50?

It’s not about maths – it’s about grace.

Sin must be dealt with if we are to be saints. It must 0/100

God deals with sin.

I would like to say at this moment, “God forgives our sin”

It seems too clichéd.

Rightly understood God does not forgive our sins – he deals with our sin.

We don’t rock up to God like a gun amnesty and he simply wipes away all sin.

That would dishonour Jesus.

God hates sin – he condemns sin – he judges every sin of every person – and the judgement is death.

God must judge sin or else what kind of a God is he – let sin slide out the back door.

The grace of God is that he allowed Jesus to take the judgement of sin for us. Jesus paid the ultimate price – death.

God does not forgive or delete, or write off our sins - Jesus suffered and died for our sin and we become forgiven people.

I think this is what we want to hear – at last.

There no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

100% sinner – with no condemnation because of Jesus – I think that makes us also 100% saints at the same time = Simul justus et peccator.

No matter what we do there is no condemnation for those in Christ.

Hear this carefully:

Believing in Jesus is relatively easy.

But believing there is no condemnation for what we do – that’s hard.

Let me tell you the truth – there is no condemnation for what we do – Jesus took that upon himself.

Most of us – believe in Jesus but we struggle to believe that there is no condemnation. I say this because most of what we do in the Kingdoms trying to make it up to God – trying to be that perfect person we would like to be.

I think it is the devil's trick to have want to be something other.
The triune God accepts us – and loves us fully the way we are.

Listen to Paul – the saint and sinner man.

Ephesians 1:3-6 “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to be heirs through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will – to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.”

Romans 15:7 Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

Jesus love us despite our selves – he makes us 100% saints.

We are God dear sons and daughters in Christ, and He loves everything we do.
Is everything we do perfect? Of course not

It's easy for us to see the sinner we are.
It's hard for us to see the saint we are.
We see mincemeat- a mixture.

In Hebrews God tells us that His Word is so sharp that it can get right in between the sinews and bones and divide.
God can distinguish between that which is at war with him and loves death and our God-given spirit that only loves Him and hates sin.

Let's forget the mince-meat we see – and hear what we are.
100% Sinner – but there's more. It's a 100% dead sinner – died on the cross with Jesus
100% Saint – free to do Good works of love and thanks.
IN Christ the smallest thing we do delights the Father - he accepts our imperfections as if they were perfect.
Doesn't it want to make you want to do all the good works he has prepared for us.
Just because we can't keep the law – this does not mean we are free to ignore the law - but we affirm Jesus is the only one who can fulfil all the law requires.
God implanted this truth into the world in Genesis.
Genesis 4:7 “If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.”
100% sinner and 100% saint – Ok

But let's not get stuck as the 100% Sinner – that's only what we are – not what we will be.

We are 100% saints – this is what we are and will always be. After all, when Christ returns will be no sinners. Only saints.

It is a tough one but seeing Paul started all this we should finish with Paul your "iniquities are forgiven," "sins are covered," "the Lord does not reckon sin against us." Romans 4:5-8 Amen.

Father we praise you for allowing Jesus to die for us – he took the judgement which was ours making us saints for ever. Amen.