

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Jesus speaks about the blessings of being one of his saints here now and what we will be forever with him and all of his saints in the new creation. The beatitudes teach you who Christ is for you. Being blessed by God is not defined by worldly things but eternal truths and eternal blessings. A telling thing for you is how often you want to do the opposite, however, and lose sight of what is eternal even if you should package it up in a religious way.

Jesus orients you to see your lives hidden in him because he has covered you with himself in the waters of your baptism. You've died with Christ and have risen with him in those waters which made you his saints and you see who you are when you look to him who is your head. That gives you meaning, then, to hear these words of Jesus as he opened his mouth and taught the disciples and teaches you in the Sermon on the Mount. Blessing and being blessed have new meaning for the saints of God who have been called out of the darkness of sin, death, and the kingdom of the devil.

That's part of what it means as well to be a saint. It's to be different and set apart from the world around you. You don't think, live, and believe like the world which is dying and seeking after false gods. You are child of God and listen to what your Father says even if you should suffer for it. So, listen again to these words of Jesus, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

The words of Jesus call you to pause and consider what he says. Anyone can say he is "blessed" in this life. An unbeliever might even use that word and count his blessings on a daily basis. A Christian, however, a saint finds blessings every day and even hidden in suffering because he knows the Lord reveals himself not in health, wealth, and prosperity but in suffering, persecution, and death. And through these things, life emerges victoriously because God's work is accomplished by your Lord who was crucified and risen. He is the one who gives you the true and lasting victory, the true and lasting blessing which only he can give.

This who God has made you to be as you are poor in spirit, looking outside of yourself to Christ who is your treasure. This is what God calls you too be as you mourn your sin and find comfort in the saving words of Jesus, "I forgive you" and show this same mercy to others. You are pure in heart when you fix your eyes solely on Jesus and do not get caught up in the lies of the devil, the world, and your fallen flesh which defile the soul. You hunger and thirst now in this life for Christ and his gifts, his righteousness; word and sacraments which looks forward to that day when you will no longer hunger and thirst as the you are with the one from whose side flow streams of living water. The place where eternal righteousness is found. You speak the word of peace, the word of forgiveness for peace is found only in the blood of Christ shed for sinners. And in all of this you suffer gladly for the sake of Christ from wherever and from whomever it may come because you know you belong to the Lord who was spit upon, mocked, tortured, and crucified so that you stand blameless and glorious before the holy throne of God.

Your life is the life of a saint because you belong to Jesus who has made you his own. God says to you in those words from 1 John: "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure."

Dear saints of God on this side of the grave rejoice in Christ. There is a list of names read off this year and that is something to grieve and mourn. Commemorating those who have departed this life is something that exists only on this side of the grave in this fallen world. Death hurts and stings, each one of them you mourn their loss in this world. Yet as you hear of these words of Jesus today and what he gives you and speaks that word of blessing to you, see amid all this loss shines forth the Light of the World who gives you life. Jesus has conquered death by his death and is raised to life. This is what you have, what those who have gone before you in the faith have, and who you are all together as the Church on this side of the grave and on the other side in glory. The Lord has knit you together into his body and you are his saints who are either suffering and mourning now or now rest from their labors. The Lord is the same as you are the same church and look to the same Lamb on the throne who was slain but has been raised. God's saints are blessed. You are blessed because Jesus is crucified and risen for you.

Jesus speaks all of this to you and calls you to hear his word. Examine your life. Listen to the Lord. Take God's word seriously in your life. Repent of your sin because sin leads to death. Come back to church if you've been away because your faith will die, and you will be outside of salvation; stop making excuses and rationalizing your sin. All of this stuff Jesus says and all of what the Scriptures teach are true and it matters. God's saints are those who hear his word and keep it and outside of Christ there is no salvation. Repent and look to Jesus.

Today is All Saints Day. White is the color of the day because this is the color of righteousness, salvation, forgiveness, and life even as a white funeral pall has adorned so many caskets in this place the past year. The Lord's faithfulness and mercy though has endured through it all and continues to do so now and in the years to come. Jesus is risen and the victory has been won. Death has been defeated and as God's saints this salvation, this eternal life, is yours. Fix your eyes on Jesus this day and cling to him. See that vision from the first reading, the Revelation to St. John and see yourself in that image for St. John saw a vision of the Last Day when God raises up in his saints in their bodies. Know that because of Christ, this is for you, what those who have died in the Christian faith have, and what awaits you for you are clothed in Christ, who has made you white by his blood. You will rise just as Jesus is risen. You are his saints and he is your Redeemer. "Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." What a blessed sight that is to behold and look forward to as God's saints now and forever.

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