

SERMON FOR ALL SAINTS DAY NOVEMBER 1, 2020

TEXT: REVELATION 7: 9-17

THEME: HONOR WALK

9 After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, **10** and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" **11** And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, **12** saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen." **13** Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" **14** I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." **15** "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. **16** They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. **17** 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."

In the name of Jesus:

Today is a day in which we honor the Lord and remember the saints that have gone before us. As human beings, we like to honor those who have gone before us. Military veterans for the past several years have been honored by others as they were a part of Honor Flight. Honor Flight is a program that honors veterans, starting with WWII veterans but also others

who have fought for our country. These veterans arrive at the local airport early in the morning, they are then flown to Washington DC to see the war memorials, to hear the praises of appreciation from a grateful nation, and then fly home, to be met by adoring family members and other members of the community, given a hero's welcome for the sacrifices they made for our freedom.

Similarly, there is now something called Honor Walk. Honor Walk takes place in hospitals. It is a new ritual where hospital staff, doctors, nurses, and family members of an organ donor honor and show their appreciation to the organ donor so that others might live. On the day of the Honor Walk, the organ donor is placed on a hospital bed and escorted by nurses and staff to the operating room where the various organs from the donor are to be taken or harvested. As the donor is taken down the hallway of the hospital leading to the operating room, doctors, nurses, technicians, hospital staff and family members line the hallway, applauding the organ donor who is about to give of themselves so that others might live. When you watch this on YouTube you can readily see what a moving event this is for all who participate.

In our text for today, all of the faithful, the believers, the saints, those who have gone before us, and those we who will join them, sing praises to the Lamb of God who was slain. John writes: "After this I looked, and behold, a

great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, **10** and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” All praise to Jesus, for He is the One who saves sinners!

Jesus described His mission in these words: “The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.” Christ came to save sinners! He came to those afflicted with sin. To you who are anxious and afraid, to you who doubt or are in despair. Christ came to be your ever present Help in your times of trouble. Jesus lived on earth to walk the walk that you walk, live the life that you are called to live, only Jesus did it perfectly. He loved the Lord His God with all of His heart, soul, mind and strength. He loved His neighbor as Himself. Jesus was sent from heaven to do the will of the Heavenly Father who sent Him to earth to save sinners.

Throughout His ministry Jesus was continually talking about what His mission was, in life and in death. “He taught His disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.” Jesus’ way was not the way of glory, it was the way of the cross on the road to glory.

The life of the redeemed, the life of the Christian, the life of the saints of God, is one which is marked by the cross. Jesus said as much when He told His disciples: "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. **25** For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. **26** For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? **27** For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done."

On this All Saints Day we give thanks to God for what Jesus has done for His saints! For His saints are in reality sinners, saved by the grace of God in Jesus Christ. All have sinned (and yes that includes saints) and fall short of the glory of God. All of our righteousness is like dirty clothes, there is no one good, not one. But in the waters of Baptism God places His mark on the saints. In Baptism you have been marked by the cross of Christ, both upon your forehead and your heart to mark you as one redeemed by Christ the crucified. In your Baptism God has given to you faith in Christ, washing away your sins, and giving you new clothes to wear, the robes of Christ's righteousness. God has placed His mark on you, and you belong to Him to live for Him now and forever.

But, as Jesus says, this life that we are called to live for Jesus is a walk marked by the cross. It is a walk of trial and tribulation. Jesus promised as much when He said that in this world you **will have trials and tribulations, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.** The saints of God in this life continue to trust in Jesus for forgiveness, continue to go to Jesus for strength, through the trials and tribulations of life. And then, remaining faithful to Christ in all things, even unto death, they receive the crown of everlasting life.

So what a wonderful picture this is that John paints for us in his vision of heaven in the book of Revelation. There John sees the saints of God, those who have believed in Jesus and are with Jesus now, and those of us who believe in Jesus and seek to live for Jesus today. John sees all of the hosts of heaven all of the saints in glory. It is such a magnificent sight that is explained by one of the elders who is speaking to John. Listen to what the elder says: “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.¹⁵” 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.¹⁶ They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat.¹⁷ 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.”

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ honored us in His life by living and dying and rising again that we might be saved. We honor Christ today as we seek to do His will on earth, living the life He calls us to live, sharing His love and spreading His Good News of salvation for everyone. And we look forward to that Day when all of the saints will hear the words every saint longs to hear: “Well done, good and faithful servant.” For the saints serve God, they trust in Jesus, and they live lives honoring Him who died and rose again. Yes, salvation belongs to our God, and on that Day we will rejoice, for Christ has gathered His saints from all times and from all places, to live with Him forever.

Amen