**Matthew 5:1-12**

Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. **2** And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: **3**  “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. **4** “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. **5** “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. **6** “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. **7** “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. **8** “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. **9** “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. **10**  “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. **11**  “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. **12**  Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

**“A Future Not So Far Off”**

 Grace to you and peace from Him, “who is and who was and who is to come” Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Since paper mail is becoming outdated, you would have hoped it to be the death of junk mail. Unfortunately, it has found a way to hop right over into your “inbox” online. Those kind of emails I typically delete, which is about the same as throwing it into the trash. However, one email did catch my attention last week having the title, “The Saint is here.” Whoever came up with this marketing pitch was thinking. The promo was for a new saint gun series by Springfield Armory. The date for its release just happened to fall on Nov. 1st. Mistake? I think not. Even the catchy slogan says it all, “Defend Your Legacy.”

 Now, no saint has ever kept his or her salvation secure by a weapon of man. Matter a fact, All Saints Day for the earliest Christians was actually, “All Martyrs Day.” This would be for those who laid down their lives in the confession of Christ. Centuries later, it became more inclusive to be for all the saints who rest from their labors. When times became ripe for Luther to post his 95-Theses against church abuses, Oct. 31st was no random date. It was All Hallows Eve or the day before All Saints. In other words, the troubles at his moment in time were before a larger cloud of witnesses, an eternal church of all times and places. You see, celebrating all the saints is only the other side of that blessing we already have before Jesus.

1. **The blessed status of being saints has never been about achievement.**
2. When Jesus sat down before the crowd and his disciples, He made sinners into saints.
* To become a saint is not about earning the title or something that happens after death.
* Since saint means, “holy” it is outside the reach of sinners, but not for the holy one Jesus Christ.
* The crowd before Jesus were no superheroes, but those in need, emptyhanded, having nothing to offer.
* His opening words call them His saints saying, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”
1. How does Jesus make sinners into saints?
* Since none is sufficient on their own, Jesus has made his claim that each of you are saints by baptism**.**
* St. John says it this way, “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.”
* To be a saint is a gift of holiness, which God gives to those who are weak, helpless, and at last sinners.
* Baptism is the refuge for the saints, which is to count on this promise from God in Christ: the forgiveness of our sins.
1. **The blessed life of any saint never felt entirely blessed on earth.**
2. Jesus puts this fact right out in front about those in His kingdom.
* This blessedness contradicts what the world promotes or wants to boast over.
* Poverty goes the way like King David not over lack of riches, but his ability to repent over sin.
* Mourning does not try to turn death into a celebration of life, but lets Jesus speak as He did to Martha saying, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live…” (John 11:25-26a)
* Mercy means extending love to those who most likely deserve just the opposite.
* Meekness gets you nowhere when it is so natural to use power to get what you want.
1. This life in Christ is a blessing, but the saints before us bear witness to how foreign it is in the world.
* No saint is greater than another for they all share the same justifying grace in Christ alone.
* Yet, there are exceptional ways God has used certain saints throughout all times and places.
* It can start with those that we have known in our life.
* Of course, the personal broadens to those in the whole church like the blessed apostles, great missionaries, reformers, musicians, and artists.
* As the saying goes, “We stand on the shoulders of giants” and yet they would have never considered it “giant” who made such sacrifices to God.
1. **The blessed goal is for all the saints finally to glory in the Lord.**
2. To those called “blessed” Jesus offers an eternal weight surpassing whatever is at the present.
* His promise begins and ends for those poor in spirit and persecuted by the world that “theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”
* Those filled with sorrow have an unending comfort because Christ has risen from the dead never to die again.
* The pure in heart will see God for His faithfulness by the cross endures to save any in a sinful world.
* All that Jesus promises the Saints He fulfills so all their blessedness remains fixed upon His love.
1. We wait upon that goal so many has reached before us, but our glory remains in the Lord.
* To enter into the Divine Service every Sunday is to join the eternal praises already being sung by those in heaven, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”
* God’s presence draws near with His righteous in the sacrament so hungry and thirsty saints on earth share a taste with the heavenly saints who are satisfied.
* We depart into a world where the saints before us have already suffered and served in the name of Christ.
* Rejoice and be glad for death is not even a boundary for us, since we died with Christ to live and those that died now live in Christ.

 Some might consider All Saints Day a “pie in the sky” kind of celebration. Yet, that misses how we are saints on earth even while being very much sinners. Luther looked to this comfort in his changing times and the same is for us. President Harrison noted while visiting Germany about our western world,

 “We are now fully on the way to assuming the reality of living as Christians in a manner much more akin to the church of the first three centuries after Christ. It will increasingly include ridicule, discrimination, removal from power and power structures, and exclusion from full participation in society. This means that we must hold to the Bible ever more firmly and not compromise. And that is what we shall do, God help us, amen.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

Maybe it will soon be time to go back to All Martyrs Day. But not today, you still have the right to be good Christian citizens. It is better to vote and be in the mess this week than not vote at all. Consider that neighbor who is to benefit from your voting. The saints on earth were always in a not so picture perfect world, but we celebrate today with all the saints who rest in the peace of God. Besides, they are only on the other side of that blessing we already have before Jesus. Amen. Now the peace of Christ that passes all understanding be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.

1. http://blogs.lcms.org/2016/great-truths [↑](#footnote-ref-1)