

Sermon- All Saints Sunday- Our Saviors Lutheran Church- 11/3,4
Text – Matthew 5:1-12

How Can I Be A Saint?

Grace and Peace to you and from our Lord Jesus Christ. All Saints Day, a day to remember saints and those who were baptized. Certainly this day has a theme of eternal life, being a part of the family of the resurrected people.

A certain man died and went to heaven, and when he arrived, God asked him what his IQ was. "160" the man said, and God responded "Oh that's great. We'll get together and talk about Planks constant and quantum physics and black holes." A second man was asked the IQ question by God and he said his was 140. "Wonderful!" God replied. "We'll have great conversations about renaissance art and music." The third man was asked his IQ and he answered "75." God thought and thought and thought, and then finally said "How bout them Packers!"

Yes, today we focus on All Saints Day. We have very little difficulty conjuring up "Saints" that are listed throughout the history of the church. We have Saint Andrew, Saint Mary, Saint Matthew, or Saint John. And a ton of other ones. Our problem is when we think of Saints like Saint Dennis, or Saint Ken. You know, us! We just don't think we are good enough, Holy enough! We have too many flaws. We all walk with clay feet. How can we possibly think we are Saints?

We even sing about it.

Oh, when the saints go marching in,
Oh, when the saints go marching in,
Oh, Lord, I want to be in that number,
When the saints go marching in.

We, of course, want to be in that number. Part of the saints in the heavenly kingdom. There is another song that we don't sing in church that has a title that explains how! It's by Stevie Wonder and it's titled Signed, Sealed and Delivered. (Pastor sings first line).

That's what we need to focus on this All Saints Day. First we have been signed. When I was a few months old, I was signed at a Norwegian speaking church in Brooklyn. The pastor signed me with the mark of the cross on my forehead and

heart. He said Dennis, you are marked and signed with the power of Jesus. Christ is with you, you are a child of God. You also were signed at your Baptism. Some of you here at Our Saviors, others at various churches. We were signed and became a child of God.

And we were sealed with the power of the Holy Spirit. When the Pastor marked our forehead and said the words that we leave with, the power of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we were sealed with God's protective umbrella. We were put in God's witness protection program. Oh yes, stuff will happen to us, some of it not very good, but, nothing can ever separate us from the love of Jesus. We have been signed and sealed by the power of Jesus.

And we will be delivered just like the Saints here at Our Saviors who we will name in a few minutes. Has to do with John 3:16. (Congregation recites with Pastor). We will be delivered into the family of the resurrected people.

A story. Cathy and I were in the Big Apple visiting our son Hays, the lawyer working at the World Trade Center. During those years, as a part of our visit we would almost always eat at Hurley's restaurant. It was a three story restaurant tucked between huge buildings like Rockefeller Center. The owners refused to sell to the big money people. It was a great place. Once, as I sat at the bar, I was talking to John Chancellor, the big name of the newscast of the day. On this occasion, we were eating on the second floor and our waiter brought over a phone which he proceeded to plug into a floor connection. This was before the advent of cell phones. To this day, I have no idea how he knew who I was.

The person I began to talk with was the mother of Laura who I had been visiting for months at a hospital in Milwaukee. Laura had an aggressive form of cancer. Mom told me that Laura had died. After quite a long conversation, that included prayers and support and remembrances of Laura we tried to resume our nice dinner, but as you could imagine that was not possible. But, I remember looking at Cathy and saying, "Hon, Laura is at peace. She is now a part of the heavenly kingdom. We will see her one day". I knew that because of John 3:16.

I also knew that because at the other Our Saviors I had signed and sealed Laura when I baptized her at the font and marked her with the cross and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Not only do we sing, "Lord, I want to be in that number," the good news is, we are! For you and I have been signed, marked with the sign of the cross of Christ. We have been sealed with the Holy Spirit, who will protect and keep us until the end. And yes, we will be delivered, you and I will be numbered with the saints in glory. Hallelujah fellow saints of God.

Signed, Sealed and Delivered - you are His!
Amen. Let it be so.