

Pastor Jon's Sermon for All Saints on Nov 6, 2022

Text: Luke 6:20-31 "The Sermon on the Plain"

"Who is to be honored in Jesus Kingdom?"

Welcome to All Saints Day in the church year. This is the day we honor all those who have died since last All Saints Day. We also have the great tradition of celebrating the newly baptized in our church. You will see this in the slideshow in a moment.

All the baptized are considered saints in the Lutheran church. Being a saint to Martin Luther wasn't based on how good you are or what good deeds or miracles you had documented. It is because you were named and claimed by God in Jesus Christ in the waters of baptism. But Luther also knew that we saints continue to struggle with the power of sin daily in our lives. Therefore, he said we are simultaneously saint and sinner. 100% saint and 100% sinner.

Which one to you identify with most? Saint or sinner? That's what I thought.

I know when I asked people in Bible study if you are feeling very saintly today, nobody raised their hands. We struggle with being called a saint. But it is by God's grace that we can be called saints.

In our Gospel from Luke, known as the Sermon on the Plain, as compared to the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus comes down to be among the people on the plain. He meets them where they were at.

Even though Jesus was teaching his disciples about his kingdom come, a diverse crowd was surrounding them. Many of whom came to Jesus for healing just before this in the Gospel. They came to Jesus with various illnesses, diseases, and unclean spirits. And Luke said, Jesus healed all of them.

What are you dealing with today? What sort of healing do you need in your life? Physical, emotional, relational, or spiritual healing? Maybe you are grieving the loss of a loved one today. I know I am thinking about my Dad on this day, who died of cancer this year. Maybe you are worried about a child that left home for college or the

military. Maybe you have your own health challenges looming. Maybe you are worried about your finances or job challenges. Maybe you have mental health struggles or addiction. Maybe you are worried about our country and the election on Tuesday.

Whether you are a newly minted 18 year old voter or someone in the sunset of your life, having the right and ability to vote is a gift. Please use it.

In Jesus' sermon on the plain, Jesus calls the poor, the hungry, the grieving, and the persecuted blessed. This word blessed in the original Greek can also mean how fortunate or happy. My New Testament professor, Jim Bailey, said, you can also translate this How Honored.

Who are the ones we typically consider blessed or honored in our world? Certainly not the poor, hungry, grieving, or persecuted. But people who are good looking, popular, powerful, and those without any family problems... yeah right.

In the kingdom that is breaking in as we speak, the poor are honored, the hungry are fed, and those who weep will be comforted and will laugh again. We know the kingdom is not fulfilled yet, but we are called to make Jesus' teachings a reality in our homes and on the streets. Jesus simultaneously proclaims hope now the promise of a glorious future ahead for the most unlikely.

In these blessings there is both a promise and a calling for the church. Who is supposed to honor the poor, feed the hungry, and comfort the grieving? We are. It's our job.

Then there are the woes, unique to Luke's Sermon on the Plain. The woes are warnings that we are not to live just for ourselves in the world, but to share our wealth, our food, and our clout, privilege, power to change unjust and corrupt systems. When we have wealth, we can insulate ourselves from those in need around us. We can isolate. And when we have so much, we get confused in thinking that we did this ourselves, and do not see the need to give thanks to God and to depend on God.

The good news for us today is that Jesus meets us where we are at. And if you are grieving, you are most to be honored in Jesus' kingdom. And you will laugh again. Even it is for a moment.

It might just be that being a saint means to recognize your own brokenness and vulnerability, and that you are not perfect. The famous Ted Talks shame researcher, Brene' Brown, says that when we try to numb or hide our feelings of sadness, grief, and vulnerability, we will also numb our ability to feel joy, satisfaction and happiness. She says that the happiest people on earth are those who aren't afraid to be vulnerable and share when we are hurting. I like to say, God gave us tear ducts for a reason... so we can cry.

So to all of you saints out there, Jesus comes down to meet you today with everything going on in your life, in the word and simple bread and wine, offering you love and grace and healing and a future with hope.

Amen