

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
Aitkin, Minnesota
November 5, 2023
All Saints' Day (observed)
ONLINE ORDER OF WORSHIP

P In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

P Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C **who made heaven and earth.**

P I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,

C **and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.**

P O almighty God, merciful Father,

C **I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.**

P Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

Introit

Introit

These are the ones coming out of the great tribu-
| lation.*

They have washed their robes and made them white
in the blood | of the Lamb.

In you, O LORD, do I take refuge; let me never be | put
to shame; in your righteousness de- | liver me.

For you are my rock and my | fortress;*

and for your name's sake you lead me and guide me.

Into your hand I commit my | spirit;*

you have redeemed me, O LORD, | faithful God.

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*

and to the Holy | Spirit;

as it was in the be- | ginning,*

is now, and will be forever. | Amen.

These are the ones coming out of the great tribu- |
lation.*

They have washed their robes and made them white
in the blood | of the Lamb.

Collect of the Day

All Saints' Day

P Let us pray. Almighty and everlasting God, You knit
together Your faithful people of all times and places
into one holy communion, the mystical body of
Your Son, Jesus Christ. Grant us so to follow Your
blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living that,
together with them, we may come to the
unspeakable joys You have prepared for those who
love You; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives
and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God,
now and forever.

C **Amen.**

First Reading

Revelation 7:2–17

Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea, saying, “Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.” And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:

12,000 from the tribe of Judah were sealed,
12,000 from the tribe of Reuben,
12,000 from the tribe of Gad,
12,000 from the tribe of Asher,
12,000 from the tribe of Naphtali,
12,000 from the tribe of Manasseh,
12,000 from the tribe of Simeon,
12,000 from the tribe of Levi,
12,000 from the tribe of Issachar,
12,000 from the tribe of Zebulun,
12,000 from the tribe of Joseph,
12,000 from the tribe of Benjamin were sealed.

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, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” 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, saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?” 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.

“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.”

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Epistle

1 John 3:1–3

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.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Holy Gospel

Matthew 5:1–12

Seeing the crowds, [Jesus] went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

“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.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise be to Thee, O Christ.

Apostles' Creed

**C I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.**

He descended into hell.

The third day He rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven

**and sits at the right hand of God the Father
Almighty.**

**From thence He will come to judge the living
and the dead.**

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy Christian Church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting. Amen.

Sermon Text – Matthew 5:1-12

Theme – **SUCCESS ≠ BLESSED**

Nine times in our text Jesus uses the word: **“Blessed.”**

1 – **“Blessed are the poor in spirit.”**

2 – **“Blessed are those who mourn.”**

3 – **“Blessed are the meek.”**

4 – **“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.”**

5 – **“Blessed are the merciful.”**

6 – **“Blessed are the pure in heart.”**

7 – **“Blessed are the peacemakers.”**

8 – **“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.”**

9 – **“Blessed are you when others revile you.”**

As you can see, **“blessed”** is an important word in our text. So, I think it is good for us to consider, **“What does the word **“blessed”** mean, really? What does it mean to be **“blessed.”**”**

Some might want to think that having success makes one **“blessed.”** We all want success, whether that be in terms of money, career, or relationships. Seeking success is something that we often put our energy into. And, if we achieve it, we might say, **“We are blessed.”**

But I must tell you: equating having success to being blessed just won’t hack it when we look at our text and run down the list of some of those that Jesus says are blessed. Some of them are not type of people we normally think are blessed. **“Blessed are the poor in spirit?” “Blessed are those who mourn?” “Blessed are**

the meek?” “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness?” “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake?” “Blessed are you when others revile you?” Some might think that people who experience these things are cursed not blessed.

The thinking of the world is that a person is blessed if good things happen to that person on earth. But the things that Jesus connects to being blessed, many would consider to be bad things.

The problem with equating having success with being blessed is that success is something you and I do or achieve. Being blessed, on the other hand, is something that God does and gives. Success or failure most often is defined by the world’s standards. Being blessed or cursed is always defined by God’s standards.

It is not wrong to want to be successful; it is not wrong to be successful. But the thing we must remember is that being successful is not the same thing as being blessed. Another thing to remember is that some people have been cursed by having success as it has caused them to fall away from the faith.

The way God defines being blessed means that we can be blessed even when we may not feel as though we are blessed. Again, true blessedness is not something we do or achieve. True blessedness is something that God does and gives through Jesus.

Think about Jesus. He was not successful by worldly standards. He was arrested, convicted, and put to death as a criminal. He was hung on a cross and even the Bible says about that: **“Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole”** (Galatians 3:14).

It was all for you and me. He bore the curse we deserve. That way we can be blessed with His blessedness. Through Jesus, we sinners, not only can be called “blessed,” we can also be called “saints.” Through Jesus we are blessed with forgiveness and the curse we deserve for our sin is taken away.

To be a saint is not about what we do or achieve. Being a saint is not about being successful in the eyes of the world. Being a saint is all about what Jesus has done for us and given to us. Jesus blesses us for the long haul. Success, on the other hand, tends to be a day-to-day thing.

As we observe All Saints’ Day, it is a day to look at the **“great cloud of witnesses”** (Hebrews 12:1) who were truly blessed even though the world would not have considered them blessed. They may have been persecuted for their faith, nevertheless, they were blessed and they were a blessing to those around them and they are still a blessing to us.

Like them we can look to the future blessings that God wants to give us. Jesus points to that when He says in our text, **“Rejoice and be glad for your reward is great in heaven”** (Matthew 5:12).

We truly are blessed, not just as we wait for the hereafter; we are blessed as we live here and now. We are blessed as God works and strengthens our faith. There are times when we may feel **“poor in spirit”** but in those times we can remember that the Kingdom of heaven is ours. There are times when we **“mourn,”** but as we hear God’s Word we are comforted. When we

hunger and thirst for righteousness, we can look to Jesus to satisfy us as His righteousness is our righteousness.

God is at work through His Word and Sacraments.
God is at work to truly bless us. AMEN

P The peace of God, which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

C **Amen.**

Prayer of the Church

O Lord, faithful God, we commend ourselves, our bodies and souls, and all things into Your keeping. Deliver us in Your righteousness from all that would harm the body or assault the soul.

Almighty God, send Your Spirit to the ministers of the Church who bring the Good News of Christ's death and resurrection, that they may work through the preaching of this Gospel to gather the lost, kindle faith in those who do not yet believe and sustain us all to the day of Christ's coming

Gentle Lord, visit the homes of Your people, that they may be places where faith is nurtured and where we learn to live our new lives in holiness and righteousness.

Blessed are You, O God, and blessed are the persecuted, who suffer for Your sake and whose witness calls all to faithfulness. Bring peace to the nations; make our leaders wise, just and honorable; and deliver us from terror, violence and oppression.

Heavenly Father, comfort us by Your abiding presence and satisfy all who call on You in need [*especially* _____]. Grant them patience in the

midst of suffering and, according to Your will, release them from their afflictions

O Lord, be with Your Church and all her members who belong to You by Baptism and faith. At the bidding of the Lamb, our Shepherd, give us ears to hear Your Word and faith to receive Him in His blessed Sacrament.

Heavenly Father, grant that we may be brought to everlasting life with the faithful who have gone before us who now rest from their labors

Almighty Father, we give You thanks that You have washed us in the blood of the Lamb, written our names in the Book of Life, and made us a royal priesthood and heirs of an eternal inheritance. Though we are unworthy of Your saving grace, we pray You to hear us in the name of Jesus Christ, in whom, with whom and through whom all honor and glory is Yours, heavenly Father, with the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

**C Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For Thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.**

Benediction

LSB 202

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine upon you and be
gracious unto you.

The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give
you peace.

C Amen.

Acknowledgments

Divine Service, Setting Three from Lutheran Service Book

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