

All Saints Sunday
November 1, 2020

Grace and peace be with all of you saints from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Happy All Saints Day! It's pretty nice that it actually falls on a Sunday. This year All Saints Day is All Saints Sunday. It doesn't happen that often.

So, you will notice that today is liturgically a white day.

On white days, we celebrate Christ and the resurrection, and today, on All Saints Day, we celebrate how Holy Baptism unites us with Christ making us all saints.

So, today we have a heavy focus on Baptism. We gave thanks for it at the beginning of worship and after the sermon, we'll reaffirm our Baptismal Covenants.

For Lutherans and Episcopalians alike, Baptism is really important. It's not something we do once to get us out of hell and then forget all about. No. Baptism is something that we take with us out into the world every day – every single day.

Being baptized really means something.

It means that no matter what we face, no matter how horrible things may be, we are eternally bonded to hope – God's hope, which can never be destroyed, not even by death.

In Baptism, we are united to Jesus in his death and resurrection, and it's because of that that hope springs eternal. Through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, we know that nothing can separate us from God's love. Nothing.

So, in Revelation, we hear about those who have come through the great ordeal, those who have been martyred for their faith, killed because they refused to say that Jesus means nothing.

Their tears have been wiped away and they rejoice in God's presence. Their faith was not in vain.

Hope springs eternal.

In the Psalm, the psalmist proclaims the greatness of God. Wisdom is fearing the Lord, that is knowing that God alone is God, and therefore walking humbly with

God. When we trust God, when we have faith, God does not desert us. Repent and turn to God and God will be there, because God is always there.

God is for us, not against us.

Hope springs eternal.

In 1st John, John talks about our adoption. In Baptism, we say that we have been adopted by God. We are God's children. In Baptism, we become part of God's family, and once you are part of the family, you're always part of the family.

Child of God is a name that can never be taken away from us.

Hope springs eternal.

And, in the Gospel, Jesus talks about being blessed. Now, you may look at that list and think, "I don't see how suffering is a blessing," but the whole point of the beatitudes is hope.

Things may seem horrible and impossible right now, but we know that Jesus was killed and on the third day he rose again.

We may cry out for our loved ones who have died, but we know that Jesus was killed and on the third day he rose again.

We may be kicked and beaten by those who are more powerful than us, but we know that Jesus was killed and on the third day he rose again.

We may see horrible injustices and feel totally hopeless, but we know that Jesus was killed and on the third day he rose again.

People may tell us we are fools for forgiving those who sin against us, but we know that Jesus was killed and on the third day he rose again.

People may make fun of us for having hope in the face of despair, but we know that Jesus was killed and on the third day he rose again.

People may tell us that we have to choose a side and hate those on the other side, but we know that Jesus was killed and on the third day he rose again.

People may tell us that we are stupid to stand with the poor and marginalized, but we know that Jesus was killed and on the third day he rose again.

People may hate us, because we believe love is stronger than anything else on the face of this earth, but we know that that's what the Bible is all about, and we know that Jesus was killed and on the third day he rose again.

We are a death and resurrection people, and because of that, we are blessed. We are blessed, because we know that hard times are never the end of the story, because Jesus was risen from the dead, and in Holy Baptism, we are joined into Jesus' death and resurrection.

Hope springs eternal.

And this hope isn't just our hope. It is hope for the entire world, and because of the hope we have been given, we live differently in the world. We live not just for ourselves, but for others as well.

Hope empowers us to love others throughout all of the challenges of this world.

On Thursday, I was at the Walmart in Elizabeth. I was slightly annoyed with the old white guys who refused to wear masks, and then I saw these two young guys walk into the store without masks. After they got past the produce, the one lifted up his shirt to show his buddy his belt. It was a bunch of little confederate flags running all around it. He laughed as if he were getting away with something.

At first I was sad, because it seemed to me as if it was part of the white supremacy sin that is running rampant right now, and then "Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing" came into my mind.

And then I was listening to the radio on Friday and the DJs were talking about how when they were younger they swam with the dolphins in Mexico. At the time they thought it was great, but now they realize it wasn't a very good situation for the dolphins. With their confession I could hear the echo of, "Father forgive us for we did not know what we were doing."

As Jesus was killed on the cross, he prayed for those who were killing him, "Father forgiven them for they don't know what they are doing." And God does. God forgives us. God forgives us all of our sins. On the third day, Jesus was risen from the dead.

Hope springs eternal and we are baptized into that hope.

As we head into the future, the real truth is that most of the time we do not know what we are doing. Quite often we think we are doing the right thing and then in hind sight we realize it wasn't. But, God doesn't give up on us.

Hope springs eternal and we are baptized into that hope.

And when we are the ones who are being abused, God is right there with us, being crucified. And we know, that on the third day Jesus was risen from the dead. God will put an end to all suffering, and we ask in our baptisms to be a part of it.

Hope springs eternal and we are baptized into that hope.

And so no matter what happens, whether good or ill, let's always remember to mark the cross of Christ on our foreheads that was put there in Baptism and find comfort in knowing that God will never desert us. God will never give up on us. We are God's children eternally, and as children of hope, we are sent to bring hope to a hopeless world.

Jesus Christ is risen from the dead and our hope springs eternal.

Thanks be to God. Amen.