

WILL THE REAL SAINT PLEASE STAND UP?

Bennett Ellison | Ephesians 1:15-23 & Matthew 5:1-12

Will the Real Saint Please Stand Up?
All Saints' Sunday November 3, 2024
Ephesians 1:15-23, Matthew 5:1-12

Thoughts to ponder:

All Saints day is a day where the Church remembers and celebrates those who have fought the good fight and finished the race with faithfulness in Christ. At the local level, we take time to remember our brothers and sisters in Christ who have died over the past year and now see our Lord face-to-face. It's a day that brings many mixed emotions. We grieve the loss of our loved ones and the faithful saints in the Church, while also remembering the sure hope of the resurrection. From this weekend's sermon, here are a few areas to reflect on:

1. When asked 'who are the saints', what picture comes to your mind? Perhaps a parent, a grandparent, someone that the universal Church has honored, maybe even St. Patrick's day! But do you think of yourself as a saint? Look into Paul's opening verses of Romans, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians. (*Note* some translations might choose the term 'God's holy ones', or 'his own holy people' rather than 'saints' but they are all the same word in the original Greek)
 - a. Who is Paul giving this title of sainthood to?
 - b. How might that change your current understanding of what a saint is/who the saints are?
2. What can be said about the life of the saints? Though the lectionary text is Ephesians 1:15-23, I would encourage you to read verses 1-14. These verses describe the spiritual blessings and inheritance given to all those who have faith in Christ, i.e. the saints. Verse 15 highlights 'faith in Jesus' and 'love toward all the saints.' Bennett made the point that the saints need both faith and love, and that love is the outward expression of one's faith.
 - a. Reflect on why love is important in the life of a saint.

- b. Can you recall someone in your life who you would consider to be a great saint? What did their love look like?

3. The gospel lesson comes from the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:1-12. Read through these slowly. Bennett made the point that several of these beatitudes are ways in which the saints grow in grace. They can serve as markers of how the saints live.
 - a. Try to pick one beatitude that you can be intentional to grow in.

4. Go back to Ephesians 1 and look at verse 16. Paul offers his thanksgiving unto God for the lives of the saints. Take some time for honest reflection and...
 - a. ponder what areas of your life as a saint would cause others to thank God.
 - b. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal what areas need growth in order to reach mature sainthood, ultimately leading to thanksgiving unto God.
 - c. Lastly, think of someone who has been a saint in your life. Offer up your thanksgiving to God for their faithfulness and expressed love in your life.

