

All Saints Day

11/7/21

J.V. Trautwein

Celebrate (Introduction)

“All Saints celebrates the baptized people of God, living and dead, who are the body of Christ. As November heralds the dying of the landscape in many northern regions, the readings and liturgy call us to remember all who have died in Christ and whose baptism is complete. At the Lord’s Table we gather with the faithful of every time and place, trusting that the promises of God will be fulfilled and that all tears will be wiped away in the new Jerusalem.”

We come together in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Opening Hymn: [“Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones”](#)

Psalm: Psalm 34:1-10, 22

I will bless the Lord at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
² My soul makes its boast in the Lord;
let the afflicted hear and be glad.
³ O magnify the Lord with me,
and let us exalt his name together!
⁴ I sought the Lord, and he answered me,
and delivered me from all my fears.
⁵ Look to him, and be radiant;
so your faces shall never be ashamed.
⁶ This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him,
and saved him out of all his troubles.
⁷ The angel of the Lord encamps
around those who fear him, and delivers them.
⁸ O taste and see that the Lord is good!
Happy is the man who takes refuge in him!
⁹ O fear the Lord, you his saints,
for those who fear him have no want!
¹⁰ The young lions suffer want and hunger;
but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.
22 The Lord redeems the life of his servants;
none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.

Hymn of Praise: [“You Servants of God”](#)

Prayer of the Day

“Almighty God, you knit your people together in one communion in the mystical body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant us grace to follow your blessed saints in lives of faith and commitment, to know the inexpressible joys you have prepared for those who love you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.”

1st Reading: [Isaiah 25:6-9](#)

2nd Reading: [Revelation 21:1-6](#)

The Gospel: [John 11:32-44](#)

Hymn of the Day: [“Oh Happy Day When We Shall Stand”](#)

The Message: ([Video Link](#))

Life over the past year and a half has been controlled to a large extent the Covid-19 worldwide pandemic which still is having its affects. Even with its tumultuous political and social events the pandemic has loomed large in our lives. During this time the reality of death has become an almost daily thought within our minds. For most of the time we may have been almost preoccupied in following the pandemics statistics especially the count of those who tragically lost their lives as a result of this deadly virus. Every day the news would remind us of the daily covid death count – to date around 3/4s of a million people. To add to this were what could be called normal deaths caused by other diseases, accidents, murders, and just age.

With this daily reminder of death it may have caused many to rethink or even think for the first time about the nature of life and death. Of course we are experiencing life with all of its wonders, joys, sorrows, trials, and its unpredictable nature. So life itself in many ways presents its mysteries and unknowns for us to fathom. But death presents and even greater challenge for us to fathom especially since the only real thing we know is that it is the end to life as we have experienced.

We may have studied philosophers such as Camus who said no problem when the individual dies that’s it they just are no more. There basically is nothing more to life than its physicality. In many ways Shakespeare’s words seem to at least in part describes this when he wrote. “Out, out brief candle! Life’s but a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and is heard no more. It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.” This fatalistic approach to life and death is perhaps more prevalent than we may wish to believe. Therefore, live life to its fullest without regards to anyone or anything else which leads to seeing the life of others as only having value when it benefits me.

In this thinking there is no recognition of the person having anything but a physical nature. We are blinded by limited thinking in not being able to recognize there is that unseen, immeasurable, spirit or soul within the body which gives life and meaning to its existence. It is

that which makes the person a person and not just a robot. The psychologist, Alison Godnik, in remarking about life having the nature of both physical and a soul stated this about her physical body, "This is my home in which I live." A very profound statement

During our physical lifetime we have difficulty in distinguishing the two, body and soul. They are seen as inseparable and as one in the same. Therefore, we live with the mystery of the inevitable, the partner of life and death. So the pandemic brings forth the reality that we not only have life but also cannot escape the inevitability of the death of our physical being. Of course, the average person, if there is such a being, will not personally face that inevitability for much longer time than 100 years ago. Today the life expectancy is almost double than at the beginning of the 20th century. We have far more time to live in this house that we call home, our body. But, death is no less inevitable, no less a part of life.

I realize that this may be getting a little morbid but stick with me. When death comes to our doorstep with the reality of taking away a spouse, a loved one, a family member, a friend, neighbor or associate, it leaves us with its calling card inviting us to mourn and grieve. We then are taken up by death's sting, for we no longer will be able to share life with the departed. We no longer can share conversations or experience their embrace or hold their hand or share together life's experiences. That void in our lives can hurt deeply, so deeply that it causes sleepless, tearful nights and listless days. It is like cutting off a member of our body leaving us less than whole since they had been such a vital part of our being.

It is said that the most painful part of growing old is living the loss of family, loved ones, and friends. There is perhaps no greater pain than to feel left alone. This is the pain of those who remain in this earthly existence. It is a natural part of life. At one time or another we all have gone through this or will do so.

Jesus experienced this human grief upon the death of Lazarus. When He saw the grief in the voice and tears of Mary and the weeping of those around Him, He too became deeply moved and began to weep. He too felt the human pain of mourning the death of a friend. It was His compassion which defied death, "Lazarus, come out!" and life was restored in the body of Lazarus. Oh how we wish to do the same when a loved one dies. The restoration of life in Lazarus was only temporary though for he too would eventually die to this world. Jesus, in this instance only brought temporary relief to the human condition.

This act was a sign of God's love which does not see death but only life. God did not create life to be consumed by death. Just the opposite, life ultimately consumes death. This is why Jesus; this is why the cross; this is why the resurrection. He gave this assurance to us, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die." This is the Good News which Isaiah foretold, "Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces...This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation." Or, the writer of the book of Revelation, "Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away."

Some would say we live to die. Maybe, but this death is only the destruction of the house we live in. There is far more to us than this physical form which cannot be destroyed by death. It is what we call the soul, the essence of our being. Death is only the shedding of the physical limitations of our being. It is like breaking out of jail and finding ultimate freedom – opening the door to the great outdoors. This is our ultimate freedom; this is the unrestricted life of the love of God: this is the Good News which God revealed through Jesus. Life and death take on a whole new meaning for we do not live to die but in fact die to live. We are only temporarily housed within our bodies. Our true selves will find meaning when death's door opens and we discover real life in eternal love. We no longer have the up-keep of the demands of our physical home which enslaved us. This is the Good News.

Today we observe All Saints Day, a time to remember all those who have experienced death's door into eternity. Rather than being a day of mourning and tears it is a time to cherish that part of their lives which lives on within us. Their lives not only continue in and through us but live on with all the saints, with all of God's children who have gone through the door of life which we call death. We celebrate the joy of their lives for they have found the freedom of new life. We celebrate and remember them for all the shared times which helped make us who we are. We remember their lives with thanksgiving.

In all of this we are assured that we too, through God's grace will one day join life with all the saints who have gone before. As the words of one of my favorite hymns states:

“For all the saints who from their labors rest,
All who by faith before the world confessed,
Your name, O Jesus, be forever blest.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

You were their rock, their fortress, and their might;
You, Lord, their captain in the well-fought fight;
You, in the darkness drear, their one true light.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Oh, may your soldiers, faithful, true, and bold,
Fight as the saints who nobly fought of old
And win with them the victor's crown of gold.
Alleluia! Alleluia!”

Let us light a candle of remembrance of our departed loved ones and may its light renew our lives in the joy of the Good News of God's eternal love.

Anthem: [“Blest Are They”](#)

Offering*: ([On-Line Giving Link](#))

We give thee but thine own, what-e'er the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.

The Prayer

Comforting Father, on this All Saints day we celebrate and give thanks for all those who have been your witnesses in the past and present. We give thanks for all our loved ones who entered your loving eternal kingdom this past year. We also remember and give thanks for all those of our extended family who are now resting in your eternal peace. During this time of remembrance and celebration of life may it also be a time that we renew our commitment to be devoted witnesses of your ever present love.

We pray for all who need your comforting and healing presence especially Bob and Pat Allen, Heidi Brackbill, Parker Brennan, the Cronin family, the Elshafei family, the Fultz family, Kraig Greff, the Johnson Family, Robert Karner, Charles Larsen, Donna Mayhew, Wendy Neumann, Elise Oliver, Peter Olsen, David Otto, Dottie Reitz, Robert Reitz, Linda Rigby, Colin Shea, Jerry Shea, Jack Smith, the Spiegler family,, Della, Yongyin Sun, Esther and Buck Trautwein, Linda Williamson, Wyatt Lee Wolf, Pastor Jack,
We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

The Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make His face shine upon you;
The Lord lift up His presence upon you and give you peace. Amen

And now my brothers and sisters
Live on knowing God's love,
The joy of living this life of love,
And the peace which only comes through the power of His presence within you.
So live on in Love, Joy, Peace, and Power.

Closing Hymn: ["For All the Saints"](#)

Announcements

Sunday services will now be indoors with required face masks and social distancing in the sanctuary.

Next Sunday is World Hunger Sunday which begins our hunger appeal and the Angel Tree Sunday November 21 is Appreciation Sunday and the Congregational Meeting.

*Offering to be sent to:
Bob Brackbill
10274 Raleigh Tavern Lane

Ellicott City, MD 21042

Epiphany Lutheran Church

9122 Sybert Drive

Columbia Hills

Ellicott City, MD 21043

<https://www.epiphanylutherancolumbia.org>

Please note that you now have the opportunity of online giving with the link found after the offering designation or here: https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291