

# Sermon for All Saints' Day

**Date:** November 1, 2020

**Location:** St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

**Old Testament:** Revelation 7:1-4,9-17

**Epistle Reading:** 1 John 3:1-3

**Gospel Reading:** Matthew 5:1-12

**Sermon Text:** Revelation 7:2-17

**Sermon Title:** Beginnings



**Introit:** Psalm 31:1, 3, 5; antiphon: Revelation 7:14b

## Hymns:

LSB 837 – Lift High the Cross  
LSB 657 – A Mighty Fortress Is Our God  
LSB 725 – Children of the Heavenly Father  
LSB 601 – All Who Believe and Are Baptized

## Liturgy:

Divine Service I, P. 151

## Songs:

This is not Where I Belong  
Beulah Land  
Broken Things  
We Believe

## Liturgy:

Creative Worship



Pastor James Groleau  
St. John's Lutheran Church  
1200 13th Avenue NW  
Austin, MN 55912  
Office: (507) 433-2642  
Shepherd@JamesPlace.net  
StJohnsAustinLCMS.org  
Phone Streaming at: 518-906-1379  
KAUS 1480 AM Sun. 9:00am



**Text: Revelation 7:1–4, 9–17**

After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow on earth or sea or against any tree. 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:

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.”

**NOTE: Copyright** information.

Bible Translation: GOD’S WORD®, © 1995 God’s Word to the Nations. Some readings have been adapted to better reflect the original Greek or Hebrew.

© 2020 Pastor James Groleau.

Permission is granted to use these sermons for any non-profit purpose. I only ask that credit, as to their origination, be noted appropriately.

Grace, peace, and mercy be yours in the name of our risen Lord and Savior, Jesus the Holy Christ, the Lamb of God. Amen.

Today we celebrate All Saints' Day. It is that day when we ring a bell as we read the names of all those who have left this life, and are no longer here with us. It is often thought of as a day of endings. This is the last time these names will be mentioned in any formal works of the Church. It is for us a final farewell. We know that we will see them again. We know that salvation through Jesus the Holy Christ of God is sure and certain... but still it feels like an ending.

It is however really a day of beginnings. For those faithfully departed they have begun their life in a place where sin cannot touch them, and pain is, at its best, only a distant memory of something that will never be known again. The souls of the faithful are safe in God's good and gracious care. They wait, with us, for that final day, the Last Day, when our body's will be raised up, and we will live in a new heaven and new earth forever without end. Amen!

How did they earn that reward? What had they done to impress God that He would grace them with such a prize? Were they especially faithful, especially Christian, especially good? No. They were sinner. Just like you and me. Yet, on the day of their Baptism they, just like you and me, were mark as one redeemed by Christ.<sup>1</sup> Just like you, they were Baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup> Just like you they were Baptized into the death of Christ, and as such, as God's Word proclaims, they were also Baptized into His resurrection. A resurrection just like His.<sup>3</sup>

Death is the curse for sin. If you sin, you die. That has been, and will always be, the rule. With that rule in mind, Satan took great joy in bringing death to us. He used us to hurt God. Satan attacked us because he knew we were weak. He knew we could not resist his power. He was right, we can't. He is more powerful then you can imagine.



This is the beast that attacks you and drags you down to the pit with him.<sup>4</sup> He is a murderer and the father of lies.<sup>5</sup> He is too great, too powerful for us to fight. Satan's only goal is to destroy you and in doing so break the heart of God. What weapons and strength do we have to combat such a dreadful enemy?

Satan knows the rule, sin must bring death. Satan knows the rule, only those who are perfect can stand in the presence of God. Satan knows God would not, could not endure, loving something that is not perfect. What Satan did not know is how much God loves us.<sup>6</sup>

Lucifer may have been, at one time, the most beautiful, powerful, majestic thing God had created, but not the most important. You are the most important thing God has created. He loves

1 Ephesians 4:30

2 Matthew 28:19

3 Romans 6:3-5

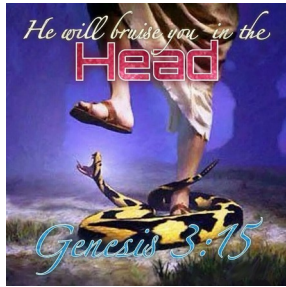
4 Matthew 25:41

5 John 8:44 – ... He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

6 John 3:16-17

the lowest and most corrupt human far more than He has ever concerned Himself with Satan. Because of that love God could not endure being separated from you forever.

Now the Law is clear, there can be no forgiveness without the shedding of blood.<sup>7</sup> To account for all sin, perfect blood must be shed. None of us could fill that role? All have sinned. All of us have fallen short of the perfection God commands and demands.<sup>8</sup> Still, God would not endure being separated from you forever. So He chose to fix the problem Himself.<sup>9</sup>



Go back to Genesis, the very first book in the Bible. In chapter three, in the same breath that God curses Satan, He speaks a promise.<sup>10</sup> A promise of One who would come to restore what Satan had destroyed. With that promise came comfort to Adam and Eve. Though the effect of sin was still on them, the fear subsided. For Satan however the fear had only just begun. That is another beginning we remember today. The beginning of Satan's full failure. The thrill of victory over destroying God's most loved was dashed on the rock of faith.<sup>11</sup>

Not only was he forever cast out of Heaven; not only would he be cast into the torment of Hell for eternity,<sup>12</sup> but he would have to live with the knowledge that he had failed forever. He failed because God promised to wash away the sin He hates.<sup>13</sup> God promised to restore us to the perfection He demands and commands. Where we could do nothing to get ourselves right with God, God could, and did, do everything, and did it perfectly as only God could do.<sup>14</sup>

So that brings us back here. To this day, in this place. Today, in this holy house, we celebrate a day called All Saints' Day. A day when we give glory to God for all those who have past through death to life in faith. We give praise and glory to God because we know that even though we miss those who are gone from us; even though we have wept for them, we know that we will not be separated from them forever. We will see them again because our faith is founded on Jesus Christ the Son of God.

The day will come when we will once again enjoy the pleasure of their company, in a place where sin is forbidden to ever touch us again. In a new Heaven and a new Earth, where the relationship Adam and Eve had with God will be restored for all of us.

In the book of Revelation we read today:

I [*John the disciple*] saw a large crowd from every nation, tribe, people, and language. No one was able to count how many people there were. They were standing in front of the throne and the Lamb. They were wearing white robes, holding palm branches in

7 Hebrews 9:22

8 Romans 3:23

9 Philippians 2:6-8

10 Genesis 3:15

11 Matthew 16:18

12 Matthew 25:41

13 John 1:29

14 Ephesians 2:8-9

their hands, and crying out in a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”<sup>15</sup>”

Who are these people? They are us here, and all those saved through faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>16</sup> Standing in that crowd are all those we will name today in our prayers. They are holding palm branches, the symbol freedom, and wearing white robes, because God has made them pure and holy.



Here in the Bible, we see that day when the great multitude will stand before the throne of God. They will be in the presence of the Most High. How can we sinful, sin-filled, people be there? Because God the Father, through Jesus Christ His Son, by the power of the Holy Spirit, has made you clean. He sustains you, through the faith you received in that cleansing flood of Holy Baptism. He feeds that faith on the body and blood in Holy Supper of our Lord.



This is the flood of love that started at your Baptism. This is the flood of love that poured from Jesus Body on that Friday we call Good. This is the flood of love that God pours out on us every day of our lives. This is the flood of love that those faithful, whom we love, have now realized fully, as they bask the the glory of God.



Remembering how God saved those faithful that have left this Earth before us, let us use them as an example. Not one of them was perfect. Not one of them claimed to be. The truth is those of you who knew them best could probably best attest to the truth, they were not perfect. Yet they died believing, and because they believed they are now pure and perfect. Waiting for you to join them. You do that through faith in Jesus Christ our Savior.

This is the wonder of the faith God has given to us. It will restore us. It will restore our relationship between us and God. It will also restore the relationship between us and those we love who have died in faith. Today we remember their beginning of life in Heaven. Today we remember our own life in faith. In a faith that saves us eternally.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.



<sup>15</sup> Revelation 7:6-7

<sup>16</sup> Revelation 7:14

**Proclaim God's Word,  
Encourage one another in faith,  
Witness to God's love and  
Serve all people**



### **As we Gather**

Christ calls His kingdom the Kingdom of Heaven, where He does not rule in a temporal way nor deals with the things of this life; but He founded and developed an eternal, imperishable kingdom, which begins on earth through faith, and in which we receive and possess eternal riches, forgiveness of sins, comfort, strength, renewal of the Holy Spirit, victory and triumph over the power of satan, death and hell, and finally eternal life of body and soul, that is, eternal fellowship and blessedness with God. (Church Postils, Trinity 20)

### **Children's Sermon**