

Sermon Draft

Text: Matthew 5:1–12

Sermon: All Saints' Day 2018

The Beatitudes in a way reveal how things work in the reign of God that has come into the world in Jesus. The Beatitudes reveal that God's blessing in Christ is now the possession of Jesus' disciples, though they deserve none of that blessing. The Beatitudes reveal that God's final blessings in Christ will one day be the full property of the whole Church—both the Church now still militant and the Church that is at rest and still waiting with us for the Last Day.

Who receives God's salvation and God's blessing? Us, people who have nothing to offer God, people who have repented and believed that, in Jesus, God is making his reign known on the earth. Today is All Saints' Day.

All Saints' Day can be, in a way, a confusing experience in the church. Some people wonder who the "saints" are. As Lutherans, we know that, in the most important sense, all people who are baptized and confess that Jesus is Lord are holy in God's sight; all of us Christians

are “saints.”

Sometimes, there’s confusion about what it means to be “blessed.” Aren’t capable, successful people the ones who are really blessed? When we think, as we often do today, about beloved fellow Christians who have died, are they somehow more “blessed” than we are? If they are, why do we mourn, and why does the Bible teach us that death is a final enemy that Christ will only fully overcome on the Last Day when he returns in glory and reverses death (“I believe in the resurrection of the body”)?

Jesus offers us an amazing teaching today. To be sure, the Beatitudes, Matthew 5:1–12, do not answer all of the questions that we might have about the saints and our eternity. But Jesus does have some very, very good news for us on All Saints’ Day, and for every day that we live as God’s saints, God’s holy people.

It’s good news that sadly many people will reject. But it is the Good News we need to hear from Jesus. Certainly, on this All Saints’ Day, we need to hear this Good News from Jesus our King.

Never forget that we all, everyone of us need to hear the Good News!
We never reach a time our age that we can stop hearing the Good
News. Never reach a time that we can set God's Word aside.

Jesus has not come to be our helper or our life coach or our
cheerleader. Jesus has come to be our King, to reign over the world and
us, because we cannot and must not try to reign over ourselves or our
world.

When we try to be little kings, we become tyrants. When we try to be
little kings, we really are acting as "puppets" in the hand of Satan, the
prince of this fallen world. We need a king because we are unable. We
need a king because we are not capable of governing our lives in ways
that do anything but defy the living God and earn for us his judgment.

We call Jesus many things, as the Bible rightly teaches us. But today,
we will especially call him "King." How does King Jesus want us to
think of ourselves, in the most important ways, to prepare ourselves for

his blessing?

Poor in spirit—having no resources sufficient of ourselves.

Mourning—because even now, our lives and the world are still so broken. Meek—that is, “powerless,” lowly. Longing for things to be right and unable to fulfill that longing—only God can do it!

This Good News is not something that we naturally want. We want to be capable, to be powerful, to be in control. Jesus will have none of that. He says, “Repent! You need a king who can bring Good News that you need to hear.” And here is that Good News.

Jesus’ Good News answers the needs of all his saints! We have nothing? Jesus knows it—and he will give us everything. He healed the sick. He cast out demons. He forgave sin. He took on the world’s evil, taking it into his own body to save you and me, dying on the cross. He rose from the dead to defeat the devil and take the ultimate sting of death away already even now. He will come again—and put all things

right. Now he gives us every blessing. Then he will make everything right. Forgiveness. A new identity. The Holy Spirit to sustain us and keep us in the faith. A new king, King Jesus.

We have no purpose? King Jesus will give one to us! His mercy comes and fills us, and, even though it's hard and we have to practice, we can turn and show mercy to others.

Our heart is cleansed—and will be clean on the Last Day. Here, in the place where we listen to the Good News that we all need to hear, we can find peace and share it with one another. This is the original meaning of the “Passing of the Peace.” Jesus by his reconciling death on the cross has made peace between us and God. Now, you and I become willing for there to be peace between us. Even when opposition comes and Jesus and his ways are hated and rejected, still we are blessed because God’s gifts still belong to us. ***“Yours is the reign of heaven.”*** Yes, ***“the Kingdom ours remaineth!”***

We mourn the loss of dear fellow Christians? On this All Saints’ Day,

we will remember them in our prayers. It is certainly right and holy and Christian to mourn in the face of death. Our mourning, however, is filled with hope—because of the promise of Christ’s return and the resurrection of the body.

The hymn, “For All the Saints,” expresses this so well: Verse 4: **“Oh, blest communion, fellowship divine! We feebly struggle, they in glory shine; yet all are one in Thee, for all are Thine.” All saints! One Church! “Alleluia!”**

Verse 7: **“But, lo, there breaks a yet more glorious day: The saints, triumphant, rise in bright array; The King of glory”—the King, Jesus—“passes on his way. Alleluia!”** (emphasis added).

On All Saints’ Day, every day, for you, me and for all the saints, this is the Good News we need to hear from King Jesus.

Amen