All Saints Sunday
Texts: Rev 7:9-17; 1 John 3:1-3; Matt 5:1-12
November 1, 2026

Presently Blessed

Today is supposed to be a joyous day, not just because it's Sunday and we *should* rejoice as we recall the resurrection of our Lord and our new life in Him; not just because God has blessed us with yet another opportunity to come into His holy presence and receive His good gifts. It's all absolutely true, of course. Today should be a joyous day for these reasons. But the reason I say today is supposed to be a joyous day is because today is All Saints Day. **We should be especially full of joy today!** And yet, if we're honest, today is the day that often winds up causing many Christians sadness. After all, today is the day that we're almost *forced* to remember those faithful loved ones who've been separated from us by death. We miss them, and no matter how much time may pass, the separation still hurts. We know they're in heaven, and this does give us joy… ***but still we hurt. Misery loves company.*** Maybe that's why so many Christians, in an attempt to "self-medicate," so often and so easily glom onto things that are not in Scripture; not real. Pain and grief and sorrow can make even the best Christians do/believe some rather foolish things.

For instance, how many good Christians speak as if their departed loved one is with them as some kind of spiritual guide? *"I can feel their presence with me. The lights flickered when I thought about him. I smell chocolate chip cookies, just like grandma used to make. I know she's here with me."* How many good Christians go out to the cemetery and talk to the grave, as if the deceased is listening to them? How many good Christians believe that their deceased loved one is "looking down from heaven" on them? (Do you notice how nobody ever says that they know their loved one is looking *up* at them? The death of a loved one, no matter how openly unfaithful they were in life, often leads us to believe [hope] that, like all dogs, everyone goes to heaven.) How many good Christians will speak of their departed loved one, ***not with Jesus, per se, but in heaven,*** where they're fishing or playing cards or partaking in whatever thing they enjoyed in their earthly life? Do you notice in all these instances how the bereaved tries to soothe their hurt and sorrow? Do you notice where they're looking for comfort? In fact, I'd say the bereaved are trying to ***manufacture*** their own comfort; their own notion of peace and assurance.

Why do I say this? Because Scripture speaks ***directly opposite*** to all these manufactured (and false) forms of self-comfort. In fact, what Scripture tells us about those who've fallen asleep in the faith is meant to and *should* give us great joy and comfort and peace. Consider what you heard in the Revelation text for this morning. All the departed faithful are gathered, not on the golf course or in the fishing boat, but around the throne of God in heaven, clad in the white robes of Christ's righteousness, the palm branch of victory and peace in their hand. It's here, gathered around the throne of the Lamb of God, that all their focus and

worship is ***singularly on Christ.*** They're with Jesus. They serve and worship and praise Him, day and night… ***constantly and eternally.*** No more tears. No more sorrows or sufferings. It's here in the heavenly presence of their God and Lord that He shelters them.

I want you to think about that, and think about it in terms of *"today you will be with Me in Paradise."* If your loved one could be with you now in the midst of this sinful warzone and dark valley of despair, could it rightly be said that they were in "paradise"? If your loved one could behold all your tears and sorrows, could it rightly be said that they were in "paradise"? **NO!** To be able to bear witness to all this, and unable to do anything about it would be hell! Just ask the anonymous rich man, as he beheld Lazarus reclined at the heavenly feast table and worried about his brothers… from hell… and could do nothing about it. Those who fall asleep in the faith are sheltered from all this. They can't see what's happening here and now. They aren't exposed to the scorching sorrows and tribulations that come with living in this fallen and sinful world. ***They are with Christ, sheltered in Christ.*** Here is our reason to rejoice! Here is our peace, our joy, our comfort and assurance… especially on a day like All Saints Day.

Okay… but what about us in the here-and-now? Remember: This is ***ALL*** Saints Day, not "Departed Saints Day." It's very easy for us on a day such as All Saints Day to get so focused on the past and so focused on the future that we wind up missing ***the joy of the present, not just the joy of their present reality in heaven, but the joy of our present reality.*** Some of you may struggle with that, and I'll admit that it's kind of difficult to be joyous in the midst of all the sorrow we call "daily life."

Folks: You are saints—right now; present-tense. God Himself has declared you holy (that's what it means to be a saint), not because of anything you've done or not done to merit holiness, but solely because of what Christ did for you in His all-atoning death and resurrection. Saintly, repentant faith holds fast to this cruciform Good News; the Good News that Christ Himself victoriously proclaimed from that cross: *"It is finished!"* No matter how low a man may sink in life; no matter how bad or wicked a man's past, that sinful past has already been put to death in the blood of Christ. ***It is finished.*** No matter how bad things may seem right now, or how dark and uncertain the future may seem to be, ***it is finished in Christ and because of Christ.*** No matter how bad things may actually get, it is already finished in Christ. The faith of the saint holds fast to this… and finds joy and peace.

Look to this font. This is your saintly, present-tense reality. Your God and Lord has come to you and brought His blood-bought victory over sin, death, and the grave to you. He's washed away all your guilt in the font of His holy Baptism. He's declared you innocent—a saint—***and so you are.*** He's covered over your

sinful shame with His white robe of righteousness. ***Sound familiar?*** Being clad in Christ's righteousness isn't just a future-tense thing that awaits you! It's your present-tense reality. Here in the waters of Holy Baptism He's put His holy name on you; on your head and your heart, marking you as holy; as a beloved coheir of the Almighty. You bear His holy name ***right now***, and nothing and no one can ever take that away. The faith of the saint holds fast to this… and finds joy and peace.

You wanna talk present-tense joy? Look to this altar. Look to this rail. This same holy and almighty Lord comes to you—right here, right now—into your midst. The saints in heaven, as Revelation tells us, are forever gathered around Christ, right? Where Christ is, there is heaven. ***Folks: Here is Christ. Here is where heaven is meeting earth!*** The Lamb of God, the same Lamb of God who all those heavenly saints are gathered around right now in festal worship and praise, comes and dwells in your midst with you. This place is made holy, not because of us and what we do, but because of Christ and His holy presence. Standing in the presence of Christ, we are standing on holy ground. It is here that He calls you to the foot of His throne; to His feast table, where angels, archangels, and all the sainted company of heaven are gathered with Him and around Him. Remember: They are ***ALWAYS*** gathered around Christ. Well… here's Christ! Think about that when you come up here to the Lord's Table to be fed and nourished by Him with His very body and blood. Why do you seek the living among the dead? Why do you seek comfort in a graveyard when that comfort is right here—presently—at the feast table of the Lord?

It is here, in the present, that your Lord sets His feast of eternal life before you; ***a foretaste of the heavenly feast to come.*** He gives it [Himself] to you and bids you eat and drink, for the forgiveness of all your sin; for the joy and peace that surpasses all understanding. You don't get this from YouTube! There is no substitute. You're coming to this half of the table—the earthly half—where Christ Himself nourishes and comforts you and all the saints of the Church Militant; the Church on earth. The rest of the communion of saints—the angels, the archangels, and all the company of heaven—is gathered around in faithful worship at the heavenly half of the Lord's Table, communing with the ***same Almighty Lord and Savior at the same exact time,*** a true communion of all saints that transcends all time and space and human understanding. ***Kind of puts this in a different, joyous light, doesn't it? I hope so.***

So… All Saints Day and what it means for us, here and now, going forward? As saints in the present, we do no different than any of the faithful who've come and gone before us. We gather around and hold fast to Christ, who calls us blessed and declares us holy, clothing us in His righteousness. ***It's all about Him. The focus is all on Him. Always has been, is now, and always will be.*** We saints-in-the-present hold fast to Christ as He abides with us, even as we walk through this

fallen and sinful world by faith and not by sight, obediently—***yea, joyfully***—bearing our crosses and, just like St. Paul, ***rejoicing in the privilege*** to suffer for Christ's sake, trusting whole-heartedly that in the life to come we too will see Him face-to-face with our own eyes as He is, for we will be like Him and we will live forever with Him, sheltered by Him in His paradise without fear, darkness, shame, sin, death, pain, suffering or tears. This reality is—***right now***—the joy of the saints who have gone before us in death. This same reality, my friends, is the ***blessed hope and the sure and certain future*** of all the saints who walk this earth by faith alone in Christ alone. This is the sure and certain blessed reality of all who are called saints in Christ. I pray that this very present-tense blessedness of your very present Lord and Christ gives you joy and peace, today and into all eternity. Rejoice, my fellow saint, for yours ***IS*** the kingdom of heaven.

AMEN