

All Saints' Day (Observed 2019)  
 Year of the Lord 2019

**“Holy Spirit, Light Divine, shine upon this heart of mine;  
 Chase the shades of night away; turn the darkness into day!”  
 “Let me see my Savior’s face; let me all HIS beauties trace!  
 Show those glorious truths to me which are only known to  
 Thee!”**

**Revelation 7:9–17** 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, <sup>10</sup>and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” <sup>11</sup>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, <sup>12</sup>saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

<sup>13</sup>Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?” <sup>14</sup>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.

<sup>15</sup>“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. <sup>16</sup>They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. <sup>17</sup>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.”

**1 John 3:1–3** See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. <sup>2</sup>Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. <sup>3</sup>And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

**Matthew 5:1–12** Seeing the crowds, [Jesus] went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

<sup>2</sup>And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

<sup>3</sup>“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

5“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

6“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

7“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

8“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

9“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

10“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

**11“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.**

**12Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”**

In the Name of Jesus:

THAT is the reason the saints in white are around the throne: The Lamb has a DIFFERENT AGENDA! From you; from me; from the devil—yes, yes... But The One Who sits on the Throne and the Lamb—SAME One, One God—

He has a to-do list that is DISTINCT from the only other to-do list that heaven respects. That OTHER agenda goes like this: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me; honor your father and your mother; Thou shalt not have a covetous heart!” In a word: Moses.

Moses is the reason YOU wish that YOU were NOT YOU—not exactly how you are and what you are. The Law is the reason you wish you were a better Christian!

Oh, and if you want to play silly games this morning: ‘No, pastor! I’m FINE with myself!’ I can dispose of THAT nonsense for you! You certainly DO WISH—with everything in you!—that OTHERS were NOT OTHERS—not how they are, what they do, the mean things they say.

The Man born in Bethlehem to the Virgin—praise the Lord!—HE has never been DISTRACTED by the fine distinctions you and I would make: ‘Is the problem ME? Or is the problem, more likely, YOU?!’

‘ON...MY...ACCOUNT!’ Jesus taught His disciples; teaches still. He teaches the source of those tears that God Himself will wipe away from all our eyes: persecution that comes with lies.

It is a LIE—of the devil, of the world, of your own precious INSIDES!!!—that says to you, when you rise from your bed: ‘YOU need to be something UTTERLY DIFFERENT from what YOU ARE NOW—what you HAVE BEEN!’

O.K. That’s NOT a lie—if all God ever spoke to us what through Moses. ‘Life if you obey; death if you will not!’

But you have been baptized at the authority of Christ the Son of God; God His Father; the Holy Spirit—Who USUALLY stays behind the scenes! But when Jesus was baptized with the sinners, even the Holy Ghost had to APPEAR! That’s not really His way. I guess that’s one reason He took on the form of the gentle and lowly dove.

Your washing at HIS authority says that you will not LISTEN to the lies said about you: ‘You need a bath!’ Nope! Oh, Holy Baptism isn’t not about substituting for bathtub and shower. So Art tells me that no matter how much or little he’s been working, he bathes the first day of every month!

The Master teaches His disciples about conscience: is God nothing but pure love and kindly favor toward me? Your white robes say that God is your dear Father! Pray to Him with all boldness and confidence! How did your robes turn white? The lessons today tell us: His blood, shed on the cross.

The world of lies, the devil of lies, lying men: for them, THIS is no King to follow. Instead, they must do away with Him; and

those who insist on being HIS!

‘The reason the world does not know us, is that it did not know Him!’

The last, worst temptation—finally, it’s the ONLY temptation—goes like this: How do I STAND OUT?! IF there is a God, what about ME makes a connection between us—a happy one?

This-is-why-you-must-never-stop-praying-for-your-miserable-pastor!

For I too am—weekly in my little Bible book report here, daily in my struggles—I read the Scriptures FIRST as the Old Adam, that is ready OUT OF THE GATE to distinguish me from others, group from group, better from worser.

The Beatitudes—the Gospel lesson today—came from HIS open mouth. Therefore:  
THEY...CANNOT...BE...ABOUT...DISTINCTIONS!

Blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, those who are merciful. Because we are governed by a kingdom that must be evil and must pass away—the sooner the better!—we can only hear those words and start checking inside; or with the opinion of others; especially religious-y folk!

That’s not what HEAVEN does! Instead, the BLESSING comes BEFORE anyone distinguishes himself! IN SPITE of our distinguishing ourselves!

And we hear those words of blessing, when the tone ringing through them from beginning to end is just that: BLESSING! NO CURSE! God is NOT going to treat us-----as GOD HIMSELF DEMANDS!

My feelings doctor keeps telling me to feel the feelings I have, then to share them. It is embarrassing, how much I hide about myself, even from y'all, God's dear disciples. So let me share something I am not sure I have shared fully with you.

I have a grandson. His name is Samuel Paul. (Sorry about keeping that so quiet.)

Daily, grammy and grampa are allowed an audience with HIMSELF on the phone. It took a while for him to realize that there were people in that phone; and that he could not reach in a poke their eyes, or eat them.

And it was fun for a few months, when he would brighten up; at least with his grammy. But now, we've reached a new stage! A quick glance at the phone; same old folk; nothing new there; and then, he's off! Busy, busy busy. Piling one thing atop the next; knocking down; tasting each. Oh, and real food now! Don't get between that boy and his bowl! (I think he inherited that from my son-in-law's gene pool.)

There's a little bit of sadness in that; but far more joy! Most of the THINGS that boy plays with were bought by the tiny lady on the phone, from the other side of the world. And how much attention does she get? And, where did he come from in the first place?!

So, is the boy less loved? Less majestic? Less the object of the grandparents unceasing prayers? Laura cannot be like that. Not even your foul pastor.

And we gave him the toys to play with them and grow. And we will be love him when he learns to play well with others. And, dear Lord!, may we love him, if he ever appears LESS than perfection!

My dear ones: your MASTER is distinct; CHRIST is different; from all other agendas, demands, expectations. The first time He opens His mouth—of COURSE He speaks blessing! For

whom? For ALL!

Each man, woman, child, friend, enemy, you meet: he is poor; he is hungry; he has been lied to his whole life, told that the answer to the uneasiness between him and all others, between him and his unseen God—lies in HIM!

As often as you and I eat Christ's Body and drink His Blood, we show forth to anyone who sees us: if WE are counted BLESSED by heaven, then the blessing belongs to ALL!

You poor pastor was so happy to learn this during the week. Y'all ARE praying for me. It is not a lost cause! Please don't give up!

So, this morning, driving to church, I committed myself to shine forth this understanding of the Good News, all the way from home to church! Oh, and people sped by me like they were possessed; and I smiled, and prayed God's blessing on them.

And I stopped to get flowers; and one lane was open; and everyone got an extra hour's sleep; so they ALL decided to go to Albertson's, when usually it's me and the sweepers! 'The Lord will get me where I need to be on time!'

And then, at one of the last lights, what caught my eye was someone in a car near me; she was not looking up, at the road, hands on the wheel. She was looking down, working furiously at something. That makes for a danger when we all start to roll. So, your holy pastor's thought of blessing, when the light changed? 'Get off your cell phone?!'

The Law has its place. If I was a lawman, then it may have fallen to me to chastise. Watch yourselves, my dear ones. Pull out the Law, use the Law, insist on the Law, if and when YOU have been lawfully installed for such a thing.

But our Master teaches us what we'll be singing around the throne,

when Christ comes to be our Judge. And it's the other agenda; not the Law, but the Gospel. And you HAVE been installed, enthroned, baptized, inspired, to tell the world one word from heaven: Blessed are YOU in the Name of Jesus!