

The Festival of All Saints
St. Matthew 5:1-12
November 1st, 2021
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

He Opened His Mouth and Taught Them

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

What our Lord + Jesus teaches on the mountain in the Gospel of the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew when He opened His mouth and taught them, St. John sees in the vision revealed to him by the Lord + Jesus in our Epistle reading for today. He sees a great multitude of the poor in spirit made rich in the grace of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. He sees those who were persecuted like the Prophets. They have come to their eternal reward. They have left behind all mourning, meekness, hunger, and thirst. Day and night they serve the Lord in His Temple. They are satisfied forever. St. John sees the saints of God purified and gathered about the Lamb Who has freed them by the outpouring of His Blood on the tree of the holy cross.

And notice this, my dear friends: St. John sees no movie or T.V. stars; he sees no celebrities. He does not even name the Apostles, martyrs, or Prophets, who we know from Scripture and are surely there in Heaven. He does not name kings or Reformers or any of the saints commemorated by the Church on her feasts and festival days. They are there, to be sure. But he does not point our individuals or name them. All he sees are saints; the holy ones of the Lord God who have made their robes white by washing them in the red Blood of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. All the saints are all loved and honored by the Lord God. It is not so much that they are nondescript. He does notice that they are from every tribe and nation, people and tongue. But his attention is firmly fixed not upon them but upon the Lamb of God. In this he is like the saints of Heaven. For he sees that all the saints and all the holy angels and the four living creatures all fell on their faces worshipping the Lamb of God.

Salvation belongs to the Lamb, to the Lord + Jesus Christ, and to Him alone. Yet He gives it away to men on account of their faith in Him and His works. These saints gathered around Him prostrating themselves before Him are saved through faith in perfect obedience to the Law of God and His suffering and death on the tree of the holy cross. This holy band joins together in singing the eternal song of praise, "Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever. Amen." These saints who have died in the faith will be His forever, and they will sing His praises forever.

All these saints lived their lives on Earth plagued by sin, death and the power of the devil. In this they were just like we are, filled with sin and corruption. Like us, they daily confessed their sins, and clung in faith to the Lord + Jesus for their salvation. On account of this faith, He has brought them out

of the great tribulation; out of the trials and tribulations of this world caused by sin. He has purified them and made them free from sin and the consequences of sin. They no longer suffer any more slander or false accusations. No one steals from them, betrays them, or hurts them. They are in eternal bliss.

They are free of gossip, jealousy, lust, anger, and fear. He has brought them all out of sin. No one sins against them and they themselves commit no sins. The latter is the greater, for we are more hurt by our own sins than by the sins of others. But they are free from sin, as we will be when we join them. He has made their robes as white as snow; washed in the Blood of the Lamb Who was slain for the sins of the whole world. He has cleansed their hearts and consciences. He has distilled them to their finest essence, to their truest selves. For in removing guilt and regret, shame and fear, He has made them truly men as He is truly a Man. He places palms of victory in their hands. They have overcome the evil one by the Blood of the Lamb. They reap the benefits, the plunder and the glory, of His sacrifice. They reap where they did not sow. They buy and eat without money or cost. He relieves them of all burdens and bestows His own inheritance and perfect love upon them. And of all their joys, here is the greatest: The Lord + Jesus, the Christ, "the Lamb of God Who takest away the sins of the world," is in their midst. He is with them. That is the very definition of "blessed:" to be with our Lord + Jesus. All the blessings that our Lord + Jesus taught His hearers on the mountain when He opened His mouth to teach them are ours when through faith, we are united to the Lord + Jesus. He gives us all these gifts to the faithful on account of His great love for us.

It was because of this love that this Lamb was slain for the sins of the whole world. This Lamb was slain, but He now lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Ghost, world without end. He did not love His life to death. Instead, He loved all of the ones who are called saints to the end; for He loves His heavenly Father, Who willed this once and for all time sacrifice for His beloved creation. This love He shows in perfect obedience to the will and Law of the Lord God. He does not ask, "Where is the Lamb?" as Isaac asked his father, for He is the Lamb. He looks for no scapegoat, no mercy, and no rescue.

He lays down His life willingly in perfect love in order to draw all men to Himself and show His love to creation, and grant salvation to all those who cling to Him in faith. On account of this His Father loves Him and for the sake of the Lamb, the heavenly Father loves all of the saints for whom He offered up His life as a ransom. He loves His saints who are washed in His Blood; who are drowned and raised again in the waters of Holy Baptism; who are fed with His Body and Blood given in bread and wine; who have been anointed with the outpouring of His own Holy Ghost through the means of grace. He has placed His Name upon them all, even as He has placed His Name upon us. And as He is holy so too are they are holy. They belong to Him. Salvation was won by Him on the tree of the cross, so salvation is given by Him to all the saints. He was given the Kingdom of Heaven for His sacrifice, so the Kingdom of Heaven also is theirs. Everyone in this Kingdom is dressed in the white robes of the Lord's righteousness. They have palms in their hands. Psalms of praise are on their lips. They are His. He is theirs. They were poor, mourning, hungry, and persecuted like us, but now no more do they suffer. They remain in Heaven just as they were on earth, just as we are on this Earth: All the saints of the Lord God are "blessed;" for the Lord + Jesus is ours and the Lord + Jesus is with dwells with us.

The only difference between them and us is that they have already passed through this life and death and we must still endure it. Our day will come. Our sins will end. Our sorrow will flee. But even now, like them, we are blessed: The Lord + Jesus, our Lamb, is in our midst. He is with us in His Word and Sacraments. The Kingdom of Heaven, the Kingdom that is theirs now, is promised to us, it is ours through faith. We are the temple of the Holy Ghost, in which our sins are daily atoned for by the sacrifice of our Lamb. For we have been washed and renewed through the waters of Holy Baptism with the Name of the Triune God. His Name was placed upon us: the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. We were raised out of those waters to a new and everlasting life. We are here today to receive again the forgiveness of our sins, to be absolved, to hear the Word of God, to pray and praise

and give thanks to our Lord God, and to join in the communion and fellowship of our Lord's Body and Blood given in bread and wine. In this meal He joins Himself to us, and we are joined to Him, even as the saints in Heaven enjoy this blessed communion for all eternity.

The great multitude that St. John saw was not simply those who had already come to Heaven while He was exiled on Patmos. For St. John saw the culmination of all creation dwelling in Heaven. He witnessed the great multitude after the resurrection on the Last Day. When he was transported to Heaven he was also transported out of time. So, he saw people who were not even born yet, like St. Augustine, the Blessed Martin Luther, and his own great-grandchildren. This means that he also saw all of us. What he describes in chapter 7 is not just about "them," the saints of God. It is about all of us, too. These are our people. We are there. St. John looked and saw all the nations and tribes, peoples and tongues not yet born in his time. He looked and saw them all, including us, in white robes, with palm branches in our hands, singing: "Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever. Amen." We are all a part of the great host of Heaven, arrayed in white.

This, my dear friends, is our future, preached by our Lord + Jesus on the mountain and seen by St. John in the revelation given to him by the Lord + Jesus. We are blessed with the Lord's gifts, and He will bring us to our eternal home. For ours is the Kingdom of Heaven. Ours is blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might. For ours is the Lord + Jesus Christ, Who will bring us out of this great tribulation to our eternal home in Heaven. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!