

The Festival of All Saints
St. Matthew 5:1-12
November 1st, 2023
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.

Sermon Text:

“And seeing the multitudes, He went up into the mountain: and when He had sat down, His disciples came unto Him: and He opened His mouth and taught them.”

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.

My dear friends, today we celebrate the Festival of All Saints. On this day we rejoice with the saints of Heaven that they have received their eternal reward. They are truly blessed. These blessings will one day be ours if we remain steadfast in our faith. Our Lord + Jesus sits down with us today and He opens His mouth and teaches us from His Word about the blessings that the saints enjoy. He teaches us about the blessings that we will enjoy when He calls us out of this vale of tears to our eternal home in Heaven. Our Lord's opening to His Sermon on the Mount is a series of contrasting statements. The first part of each blessing is the state in which we currently reside. The last half of each blessing is what awaits us in the heavenly realms. These are the blessings which all the saints—all of our loved ones who have gone before us in the faith—now enjoy in Heaven.

Here on earth, in this life, we are poor in spirit. To be poor implies being humbled. For those who are poor are lowly and considered lowly. Our Lord tells us that it is blessed to be poor in spirit. This seems odd at first. Should we not want to be rich in spirit? Is not having the Spirit a good thing? But here our Lord is condemning the proud and haughty. Our Lord is praising those who come to Him in a humble spirit. What does it mean to have a humble spirit? This means that we do not come before our Lord bragging about our good works. We do not come offering Him our heart. The Lord does not want the terrible, sinful heart that we possess. He would have us instead yearn for His tender heart; for His perfect and sinless heart. Those who are blessed are those who come in a humble spirit, weighed down with their sins before the Lord + Jesus. Humbly confessing their sins to Him. For the Lord loves a broken and contrite heart. He forgives a broken and contrite heart that is poor in spirit.

Those who are poor in spirit will enjoy the Kingdom of Heaven. They will be exalted to be a member of the eternal Kingdom. No longer will they be poor in spirit. No longer will they be humbled by sin and death. They will enjoy the riches of Heaven. They will inherit the mansions that the Lord + Jesus has prepared for them. They will be gifted with the white robes of the eternal wedding feast; even as all of our loved ones enjoy these things now in Heaven. We will also receive these things when we are called out of this vale of tears to our home in Heaven.

But until we are called to our eternal home we must live in this vale of tears. Our Lord + Jesus opens His mouth and teaches us that those who mourn are blessed. In this life we indeed have many things over which we can mourn; many tears are shed in this life because of sickness, death, broken relationships, stress, anxiety, and financial woes. We mourn often because of these outward turmoils, but then there are also the tears shed because of the anguish and perplexity of our sins and trespasses. We are driven often to tears on account of our sinful thoughts, words, and deeds. We feel the sting of guilt at breaking the Law of God. We feel the sting of guilt that our sinfulness does to those who we have hurt by our sins. In this life we indeed mourn with many tears. This life is indeed a vale of tears.

Our Lord + Jesus, however, opens His mouth and teaches us that when He calls us out of the vale of tears to our home in Heaven we will be comforted. Indeed, we get a foretaste of that eternal comfort whenever we hear the Gospel of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Whenever we hear that because of His sacrifice for us we have forgiveness of our sins. We will find comfort in the eternal realms because there we will no longer be racked with sin and grief. We will no longer experience the guilt and shame that our sins bring. We will be comforted by the presence of our Lord + Jesus and will see the imprint of the nails in His hands and feet and see the place where the spear pierced His side, and we will know that He has won for us an eternal victory from sin, death, and the devil.

This victory leads us through faith to be meek. What is it to be meek? To be meek is to be gentle. Neither provoking evil, nor being provoked by evil. Because we know that the victory is assured, we do not let the arrows of the enemy that he shoots at us constantly day after day hurt nor harm us. We are not provoked by his evil assault. We meekly and gently take the abuse that he hurls at us non-stop. We patiently endure his accusations against us—his accusations that we are undeserving of the blessings of Heaven—because we know that our Lord + Jesus has sealed the victory with His own innocent suffering and death on the tree of the holy cross. We can cling in faith to the Lord and His sacrifice for us, and patiently endure the fiery arrows of the evil one, for we know that we will overcome and obtain the crown of life.

For our Lord + Jesus has ascended into Heaven to prepare a New Heaven and a New Earth. We will inherit this New Earth, and dwell in the eternal city of the New Jerusalem. The Church will endure forever for it will be blessed with the eternal inheritance of a new world without sin and shame. We will live, as the saints do now, in a world without the devil and his horde attacking us constantly. For they will be cast eternally into the fires of Hell, along with all unbelievers, who rejected the Christ, and relied on their own good works.

These will be condemned because they did not hunger and thirst after righteousness. What does it mean to hunger and thirst after righteousness? It means to crave it; to want it more than anything else. When we are hungry, we crave something to eat. When we are thirsty, we crave something to drink. When we are unrighteous, trapped in our sins, we crave the righteousness that is found only in our Lord and Savior + Jesus, the Christ.

Our Lord + Jesus promises us that our hunger and thirst will find satisfaction. We will be filled. The saints in Heaven are filled with righteousness. They have put on the white robes of the Lord's righteousness. Even as we wear these robes hidden under our sinful acts. We have been baptized into the death of the Lord + Jesus, we have been washed in His blood. If someone was to observe us on a daily basis, they would probably not see much evidence of the righteousness with which we are clothed. Our sins are too manifest. But we have indeed been baptized, we have been blessed with the robes of righteousness. The saints of Heaven form a heavenly host arrayed in white. Thousands upon thousands and ten thousand upon ten thousand of those who hungered and thirsted after righteousness and are now filled with the righteousness of the Lamb of God.

For the Lamb of God was merciful to us. He did not treat us the way we deserved to be treated.

He did not condemn us all instantly to the fires of Hell on account of our sin and rebellion. But rather He came down from His throne in Heaven, and took upon Himself our flesh, and fulfilled the Law of God for us, and offered up His life as a ransom for ours. He showed us mercy, which we did not deserve. Having received this mercy, we also show mercy to each other. We look past one another's sins. We do not hold each other's sins against one another. For we have been bought at a great price. We have been bought with the death of the Lord God in the flesh. He has shown us what true mercy is, and we learn from Him to be merciful to one another.

On account of this mercy which we have obtained, and share with one another, we are also pure in heart. This too we have learned from the purity of our Lord's heart. The pure in heart see the Lord God. Our Lord God sees our hearts as pure because He sees the faith that exists in our hearts, the faith that clings to the purity of the Lord + Jesus. The saints in Heaven are now blessed with the true purity of heart. They see the Lord God night and day. They see Him on the throne with the Lamb of God, and the Holy Ghost. They worship and bow down and sing, "Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb."

They are at peace with the Lord God. They are called the Sons of God. For they are the makers of peace. They taught and preached and believed in the reconciliation of God and man. The peacemakers are those who preach and teach justification. The ones who teach and preach that there is peace with the Lord God through the suffering and death of the Lord + Jesus, the Christ. We are called Sons of God, because we preach and teach that we are justified by faith. We bring peace to this world and each other by giving them the true source of peace—our Lord + Jesus. The saints of Heaven are now blessed in the eternal realms for they enjoy true and eternal peace with the Lord + Jesus and the heavenly Father.

For this they knew only persecution from this world. The world does not want to hear about a righteousness that only exists in the Lord + Jesus. They want to claim a righteousness from their own works and doing. The Church is persecuted for preaching and teaching that righteousness—salvation—is only found in the works of the Lord + Jesus. The saints believed and taught this and were persecuted for righteousness' sake. Now, like the poor in spirit, with which our Lord began His Sermon on the Mount in which He opened His mouth and taught them, the saints of Heaven also have inherited the Kingdom of Heaven. Those who were persecuted for righteousness' sake enjoy the eternal Kingdom of Heaven.

This is what we endure in this life right now. We endure persecution, shame, reproach, all manner of evil from the world and the powers of the devil. We endure false accusations about our sinfulness and our teachings. We endure grief and shame on account of our own sins. We are racked with guilt and sadness. This life is indeed a vale of tears. For this world is filled with sin and death. This world is ruled by the devil.

But, my dear friends, our Lord + Jesus opened His mouth and taught us in the Sermon on the Mount that we should rejoice in spite of this evil world. For there awaits us an eternal home that is free from sin, free from death, free from the evils of this world. Great is our reward in Heaven! And great is the reward which all the saints now enjoy in Heaven. We can rejoice with those who have gone before us in the faith, for they are now without pain, sorrow, and woe. We can rejoice with that glorious, white-robed host of Heaven, for we will one day be called out of this vale of tears to join them in Heaven. On that day we will rejoice forever with our fellow saints in Heaven, even as we rejoice this day that our life in Heaven will soon be here. Take heart, my dear friends! This world is passing away, and we will be called before the throne of the Lamb of God and sing for all eternity about the joyous good things our Lord + Jesus has done for us and all the saints. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

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

Soli Deo Gloria!