

## **“Saints, Guided By The Light of The Truth”**

Proper 26-A November 2, 2008

Psalm 43

### **Introduction:**

Today, this worship service is the meat between two slices of bread. Yesterday was “All Saints Day”, and tomorrow is commonly known as “All Souls Day”. On “All Saints Day” we remember those Christians who are still alive who have been instrumental in our becoming or growing in our own Christian faith. On “All Souls Day” we remember those Christians who have had just as important an impact in our lives but have died, and are now part of that “great cloud of witnesses who surround us” in the spiritual realm.

In both instances we are remembering and memorializing those saints of the Lord who have left their spiritual fingerprints on our lives. In this context we don't use the word “saint” to designate special people that the entire Church has set aside as an example of the best of the Christian life, i.e.- St. Teresa or St. Matthew. Instead, we use the term “saint” in the Biblical way of describing all true followers of Jesus Christ. Thus, you are also a saint; and, if you haven't yet lived your Christian life in a fashion that will cause someone to remember you and thank God you were alive, then I call you today to determine to finish your life as someone's saint.

The saints of the Lord are not just those who did

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something historic with their lives. Some of that depends upon circumstances beyond our control. All Christians live in times and places that make it difficult to maintain a strong and consistent witness for the supremacy of Jesus Christ in our daily lives. The ones we remember today may not have done historically great things but they were great in our lives. Amen?

What sets them apart from other citizens comes from a way of living described in today's Psalm, verse 3, *“send out your light and truth, that they may lead me.”*

### **Saints Are People Guided By The Light of Truth.**

The truth in daily life is fashioned by the choices we make. To assist us in making good choices God has given us light and truth. God's Holy Spirit is available to enlighten us with the same spirit and mind that was found in Jesus Christ. The Word of God – the Holy Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments – was put together under the influence of that same Holy Spirit.

If you accept that premise then you understand that God wants us to seek guidance in our daily decision-making through the light of the Holy Spirit operating directly in our minds and spirit in conjunction with the words of Holy Scripture. God's Spirit will never lead us into a 'truth' not confirmed in Holy Scripture; and Holy Scripture will never

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lead us to a decision that the Holy Spirit says is wrong, and not from God.

The Saints, who most influenced our lives, were those people who consistently sought guidance from God in their daily decisions. I'm thinking of parents and teachers and coaches and neighbors. They learned to listen to the quiet, still voice of God's Spirit as they sought inspiration from God's Word. As they sought guidance and heard from God they made choices that result in profound witness in our lives. Therefore, we remember them today and thank God for them.

In the Prayers to the People Deacon Betty will twice pause during the prayers: once to give us time to name those saints who are still alive, and a second time to give us opportunity to name those saints in our lives whose address has been moved to Heaven. Their saintliness is found not in their occupation. It is in their legacy within us.

Conversely Micah gives us a picture of how God treats people – the prophets who lead God's people astray. There are two darknesses God brings into their lives: one is illustrated by a physical manifestation, and the other spiritual. The physical illustration is that God says their lives will be like night – they won't have clear vision. They will never see life clearly. The spiritual is that there will be a

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darkness of revelation in their lives. Simply, they won't hear from God.

Fortunately, our saints heard from God and our lives are better for it. They left us with a legacy of listening to God and making good decisions. Growing up we may not have liked all the decisions being made that influenced our lives, but now we probably realize those decisions were better for us than the ones we wanted to make. Saints have the courage of their convictions.

Micah is indicating that when false proclamations are being made in God's name, or presumptuous faith is being taught, God will destroy that ministry. We are seeing such a dynamic being played out within the corporate Episcopal Church. There has been a generation of false proclamations and presumptuous teaching in Christ's name; and, now we are seeing the destruction. That is why, I believe, parishes and dioceses such as ours need to stay the course. After the destruction is finished God will rebuild with the faithful remnant. Check the history of Israel's relationship with God throughout the Old Testament. What God has done in the past is a strong indicator of what God will do in the future. Verse 6, in our Psalm today says: "*Put your trust in God; ...* ." The saints we honor today learned the value of putting their trust in God instead of leaning on

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their own understanding. Their relationship with God probably showed on their face: “If you’re happy and you know it, than your face will surely show it.”

It’s a lesson we learn from

**Our Gospel Lesson Today.** Jesus is instructing about the Pharisees and Scribes – men whose lives were suppose to be dedicated to keeping God’s law. Instead they practiced a self-righteous legality that made them the arbitrators of God’s grace. In response to the crushing religious burdens they placed on people Jesus warns the people to separate the teacher from the teaching. A person – whether a Pharisee of Jesus’ time, or an Episcopal Priest today – can be issuing forth correct teaching from God’s Word, yet not living it himself. We’re not talking about making a mistake. We’re describing being a hypocrite.

Contrasted to this is what God did in Jesus. Our Heavenly Father, through the Holy Spirit, modeled in Jesus Christ what our ultimate teacher looks like.

My job is to continue what the saints in your life began; namely, to walk-my-talk, to do my best to teach the truth and to connect you to God through a personal relationship with Jesus. I am to encourage you to learn to rely upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit, trusting in the power of God’s Holy Word. In some small way, I want to be a

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saint in your lives whom you might one day thank God for.

Also, I want each of you to be a saint who will be

remembered as such in someone else's life. Amen?