

Morning Worship for All Saints Day November 1st

Preparation

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts:
the whole earth is full of his glory.

Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength;
ascribe to the Lord the honour due to his name.

The whole earth is full of his glory.

The Lord shall give strength to his people;
the Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace.

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts:
the whole earth is full of his glory.

Opening Prayer

Holy God,

faithful and unchanging:

**enlarge our minds with the knowledge of your truth,
and draw us more deeply into the mystery of your love,**

that we may truly worship you,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

Cast your burden upon the Lord:

And he will sustain you.

Create in us clean hearts O God:

And renew a right spirit within us.

Cast us not away from your presence:

And take not your Holy Spirit from us.

Give us the joy of your saving help:

And sustain us with your life-giving Spirit.

Blessed be the Lord day by day:

The God of our salvation who bears our burdens.

We confess our sins.

God the Father forgives us in Christ

and heals us by the Holy Spirit.

Let us therefore put away all anger and bitterness,

all slander and malice,

and confess our sins to God our redeemer.

(cf Ephesians 4.30,32)

Come, let us return to the Lord and say:

Lord our God,

in our sin we have avoided your call.

Our love for you is like a morning cloud,

like the dew that goes away early.

Have mercy on us;

deliver us from judgement;

bind up our wounds and revive us;

in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

May almighty God,

who sent his Son into the world to save sinners,

bring you his pardon and peace,

now and for ever. **Amen.**

Praise

O Lord, open our lips:

And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Let us worship the Lord:

All praise to his name.

Gloria in Excelsis

Glory to God in the highest,

and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King,

almighty God and Father,

we worship you, we give you thanks,

we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,

Lord God, Lamb of God,

you take away the sin of the world:

have mercy on us;

you are seated at the right hand of the Father:

receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One,

you alone are the Lord,

you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,

with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The word of God

A reading from the first letter of John.

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

This is the word of the Lord: **Thanks be to God** (1 John 3:1–3)

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew:

Glory to you, O Lord

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord: **Praise to you, O Christ** (Matthew 5:1–12)

A reflection by Gordon Gray

I think there is a danger that when we read the Beatitudes we are likely to see them as a kind of moral check list. The Beatitudes do indeed encourage some admirable behaviours – hungering and thirsting for righteousness, being merciful. But it makes less sense to urge other Beatitudes as actions – “Go and be meek!” – and ridiculous when it comes to others– “Go and be mournful!” So what is the message that Jesus is trying to give us?

I suspect that Jesus is inviting us to imagine what it's like to live in the kingdom of God and, by inviting that imagination, he draws a sharp contrast between the kingdoms of the world and the kingdom of God and challenges our often unconscious allegiance to the former. Notice that the people who Jesus is calling “blessed” are definitely *not* the people the

wider culture would view as being blessed. Those who are mourning rather than happy? Those who are meek rather than strong? Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness rather than for wealth? Absurd. And that holds for pretty much everything on Jesus' list.

So perhaps Jesus is playing for larger stakes than just an improved behavioural ethic. Perhaps he's challenging who we imagine being blessed in the first place. Who is worthy of God's attention? Who deserves our attention, our respect, our honour? And by doing that, he's also challenging our very understanding of blessedness itself and, by extension, challenging our culture's view of, well, pretty much everything: Blessing, power, success. the good life, righteousness, what is noble and admirable, what is worth striving for and sacrificing for. You name it; Jesus seems to invite us to call into question all the categories with which we structure our life, make our decisions, and judge those around us.

And this includes our view of those we have loved and lost. Indeed, the word 'lost' is somewhat inadequate in light of the kingdom that Jesus proclaims. We have not “lost” those who have died. Rather they live now in the nearer presence of God, beyond our immediate reach, yet connected to us through memory, faith, and love. Part of what we do when we celebrate 'All Saints' – and, indeed, at all memorial services – is to participate in the inversion of the kingdom of the world which believes that what we can see, hold, control, or buy is all there is. When we commend those we have loved to God's care, we proclaim that God's kingdom is not some distant thing or place but rather exists now, exerts its influence on us now, transforms our reality now. 'All Saints', along with all Christian funerals, is a repetition and rehearsal of the Easter promise that there is something more, something that transcends our immediate experience, and this proclamation is rooted in the confidence that God's love and life are more powerful and enduring than the hate, disappointment, and death that seems at times to surround us.

This week we gather around One who would have been considered, in almost every conceivable way, an absolute loser and tragic victim, rejected by the prominent, executed by the powerful. Yet Jesus the Christ, was raised from the dead, vindicating his claims and validating the reality of the life and love to which he witnessed.

So, this morning, I'm not going to suggest we should change our behavioural ethics in line with the Beatitudes. And, at a time when the government give us more rules almost every day, it's not more rules we

need, but a new heart, one created by God's own promise to continue to remind us of who is blessed, who is loved by God, and even though on this autumnal morning you may not feel particularly blessed, loved, or capable, yet Jesus is still calling you just those things. So, I invite those of you who have ears to hear to realise that God is not only blessing each of us but also calling each of us to be a blessing to others. The world needs us, we matter to God whatever our circumstances or situation, however the world may see us, however we may see ourselves. We are blessed and beloved of God, and linked in that way with all the saints who have gone before us.

Our faith

Let us declare our faith in God Father, Son and Holy Spirit

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession led by Catherine Wendeler

Surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses,
Let us make our prayer in the power of the Spirit,
Looking to Jesus the pioneer of our faith.

That with the noble fellowship of the prophets
We may discern the signs of your kingdom in our midst,
We pray to you, O lord: **Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

That with the glorious company of the apostles
We may proclaim your gospel throughout the world,
We pray to you, O Lord: **Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

That with the white-robed army of martyrs
We may be ready to suffer for the truth's sake,
We pray to you, O Lord: **Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

That with all who are anointed by your Spirit
We may bring good news to the poor and freedom to the oppressed,
We pray to you, O Lord: **Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

That with the saints in light
We may bind up the broken-hearted and comfort all who mourn,
We pray to you, O Lord: **Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

That within the whole company of Christ's pilgrim people
We may come to the inheritance of the saints in glory,
We pray to you, O Lord: **Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

In communion with all the saints,
Let us commend the world to the mercy and protection of God.

Let us offer open prayer in a few moments of silence.

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

A prayer for the coronavirus pandemic

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

We join together with Christians throughout the world in the prayer that Jesus taught us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Conclusion

The Collect for the day

Almighty God, you have knit together your elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of your Son Christ our Lord: grant us grace so to follow your blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living that we may come to those inexpressible joys that you have prepared for those who truly love you; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen

You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honour and power.

For you have created all things,
and by your will they have their being.

You are worthy, O Lamb, for you were slain,
and by your blood you ransomed us for God.

From every tribe and language and nation,
**you have made us to be a kingdom and priests
serving our God.**

To the One who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
**be blessing and honour and glory and might
for ever and ever. Amen. (Revelation 4.11;5.9b,10,11)**

We end with the words of the Grace, an ancient Christian prayer of fellowship, remembering that although we are not together in person, nothing can separate us from the love of God found in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen.

Please let us know if you want us to pray for you either individually or if you would like to be included on the Prayer Chain.

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Reverend Joy Cousans; Reverend Stephen Burge

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