

“Living Forever as God’s Child!”

11-03-13

This is All Saints Sunday. This was an important celebration even in 1517. November 1st is All Saints Day and everyone went to Church to honor and celebrate those who have left us and now are celebrating in God’s presence. This is why Martin Luther on October 31st wrote his 95 theses or statements for debate and hung them on the Castle Church door in Wittenburg, Germany. The Church door was the bulletin board for the town. Luther knew everyone would be going to Church and have the opportunity to read them.

Open to 1 John 3. John gives us a picture of the love God has for us and the gifts we have as His people. **Look closely at verses 1-3**, *“See what great love the Father has lavished on 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. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.”*

Right now, **He gives us present gifts.** One of our present gifts is God’s love. This version gives us a glimpse of how much love we receive. God has *lavished* it on us! He’s filled us to overflowing with it!

Along with His love, God gifts us with His presence. One of the things we learned as we went through our study on *“You’ll Get Through This”* is that God is always there right at our side! His presence gives us confidence and peace.

In the waters of Baptism, He calls us. As we take Christ’s body and blood at the Table He says, “Take and eat, drink this cup often.” It’s God calling us. He gives us exactly what we need, He’s calling us to come to Him and He will provide.

This is all wonderful, but we have **a present problem**. One of the famous statements of Luther, which has special meaning as we celebrate All Saints Sunday, is that we are, at the same time, both sinners and saints. Luther realized that being faithful disciples of Christ is always the goal for every Christian as long as we live in this world. We are in the world but not of the world.

Open to Romans 8. If there is any celebration in remembering the saints, and remembering those who have gone before us into the Church Triumphant, it’s not in our recognition of their sainthood because of what they had done, but in the sainthood they received through their faith in the crucified and risen Jesus Christ.

Look at verses 15-17, *“The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”*

As God’s children and heirs, we are God’s ambassadors. He’s called us to go out into the world and give our testimony on how He’s changed us in a big way! But as He’s changed us and called us His ambassadors, that puts us at odds to what the world says is important. As we share our faith and what He’s done for us, we make those around us

uncomfortable! People don't want to hear they're going the wrong way and aren't following the true God! But if we just had problems, where would be our hope?

We have a Present and Future Glory! As we live for God alone, we have hope. We know that no matter what troubles the world gives us, we know He has something better! Because of what Jesus did for us as He suffered and died for us on the cross in our place, we are free from sin, and free to serve!

Open to Philippians 3. As we remain faithful and rely on the Holy Spirit to fill us, we're made new. As we walk with Him, we will be like Him, we will be transformed now and for eternity! Christ's blood makes us perfect, holy! **Look at verses 20-21,** *"But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body."*

When we speak of "saints" today, we're speaking of all those who have been caught up in an urgent longing, seeking God's glorious presence in heaven! That includes you! As John says, *"Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."* We will see Him in glory!

So today, rejoice! Memorize these verses from 1 John, at least the first. *"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!* Believe it to be true. Imagine what it will be like in heaven someday! Work at becoming more like Him every day of your life!