

All Saints' Day

Sermon Road Map
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Revelation 20:4-6
November 7, 2021

Saints, fix your eyes on the real reality of all saints.

- Huddled in hiding or down below the arena in prison, they heard the roar of the arena
 - ♦ another Christian beheaded, blood pouring on the sand
 - ♦ the ruler and people claiming victory for their gods
 - ♦ Hard to imagine: a Christian who told you about Jesus, encouraged you in Christ
 - ♦ Hard to imagine coming to claim the severed body and head for burial.
- Christians in Nigeria, Pakistan, China, India and elsewhere know the threats
- This world says, *Seeing is believing. What is seen is reality, period!*
- The Spirit and Christ, through this vision invites us to see the full picture of reality.
 - ♦ 3 verses that pull back the curtain for us to see the real reality - current and eternal

Saints, fix your eyes on the real reality of all saints.

- ❖ Fix your eyes on the martyrs in glory. They didn't lose! They are the real victors.
 - A lifeless, beaten, severed body looks defeated.
 - Look here. The souls of those who confessed Christ to the end - *they live!*
 - ♦ ***They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.***
 - ♦ NIV, CSB, NASB translate, *they came to life*. But that's not the Greek word
 - ♦ EHV, KJV, NET translate correctly: *they lived* - kept on living
 - ♦ The souls of those made alive through faith in Christ - never die.
 - The soul - new self - has eternal life that passes right through the door of death
 - In this life - with Christ and Christ with them. That continues uninterrupted.
 - This is true of all believers. Spoken here of the martyrs to encourage the mourners.
 - ♦ They do not **just** keep on living in glory, but ***reigned with Christ***.
 - No longer subjects of their oppressors. They are now in charge with Jesus.
 - How this works and what they do is hidden from us. But it is still real.
 - Clearly they are not defeated. They did not lose! They came out on top.
 - ♦ What about the 1000 years?
 - It's simple. $10 = \text{complete}$. $10^3 = \text{absolutely perfectly complete}$
 - God's perfectly complete New Testament era - the fullness of time
 - Sadly from these few verses the fanciful tale of the Millennium is spun
 - Nowhere in the Bible, not even here, does it say Jesus will reign from Jerusalem
 - That notion defies Jesus' words to Pilate, ***My kingdom is not of this world.***
 - ♦ Jesus' reign would never threatened a Herod, Pilate, Caesar, or any such.
 - You can't make a peaceable kingdom on this cursed creation of corrupted people.
 - ♦ Countless *religious experiments* have proven how right Scripture is.
 - Jesus was clear. The next time he returns it's Judgment Day not a Millennium!
 - Celebrating All Saints' Day - **fix your eyes on the real reality of all saints.**
 - ♦ Look at those who faced death for Christ.
 - Heaven was not a consolation prize for giving up their life. It was their goal!
 - Our heavenly goal is not a perfect Caribbean paradise - trouble free leisure.
 - ***Life*** is found in and with Christ. We taste it now. See it there in full!
 - Those who lived without Jesus, then come to know him, know the difference.

- ◆ The more we see what the saints have, the more it becomes our life purpose/goal
 - When Jesus is our joy, peace, glory, hope, life we'd die rather than forsake him
 - Fixing our focus on the martyred saints with Christ, we are moved to press on.
 - Their bloodied bodies, skeletons, and graves are not the whole picture of reality.
 - The real, full, and eternal reality is seen here. Pull back the curtain. Fix your eyes.
 - Let it renew and move you to run the race with purpose and perseverance.
- ❖ Fix your eyes on the real reality of all the saints - all who share in the *first resurrection*.
 - ***first resurrection*** - conversion, baptism, new life - eternal life. John 3-5, Romans 6
 - ***first death*** - death of the body - ***second death*** - eternally residing in hell
 - ***second resurrection*** - all raised, some to life, rest to eternal death - separation from God & every blessing, an eternity devoid of good, full of shame, pain, hopelessness
 - ***Blessed and holy is the one who has a share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them. Instead they will be priests of God and of Christ. And they will reign with him for a thousand years.***
 - ◆ Clearly this would apply to the martyrs and all in heaven. But also to us.
 - All raised to new life in baptism who continue to *share in the first resurrection*.
 - All those alive through faith, not having lost it by neglect and unbelief.
 - We are ***blessed*** - objects of God's blessings, his doing - not ours! (Matthew 5 & 25:34)
 - We are ***holy*** - declared righteous and clothed with Christ's righteousness
 - By faith we are counted among ***All Saints*** marvelously knit together, 1 Communion
 - Hell has no power over us - *the gates of hell will not overpower the Church*. Mt 16:18
 - We are ***priests of God and of Christ***
 - Mediators: Intercessors on behalf of others - Speaking God's word to people
 - ◆ This applies to those in glory. It seems likely they are praying for us!
 - Offering prayers of praise and thanksgiving.
 - Brought into Christ's kingdom - in mysterious ways we reign with Christ.
 - Exercising his kingdom's authority:
 - ◆ Not with laws of Christian morality or guns to advance his reign!
 - ◆ But with the word proclaimed, extending his reign, keeping God's people safe, advancing his gracious rule in the hearts and minds of God's people.
 - Paul spoke of our reign in Romans 16: ¹⁹ ***Your obedience has become known to everyone, so I am very joyful about you. But I want you to continue to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.*** ²⁰ ***The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.***
 - ◆ It is God and his kingdom that work this way. What a marvel we are part of it!
 - ◆ For you are included among All Saints.
 - ◆ At times your sight, intuition, feeling, and reason may not affirm this reality. That's when you turn to Revelation 20:4-6 for the Spirit to say,

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