

ALL SAINTS            YEAR B  
ISAIAH 25:6-9  
REVELATION 21:1-6a  
JOHN 11:32-44  
NOVEMBER 3, 4, 2018

I like the thought of the Lord coming to dwell with us. So many of us strive to reach God. We go out in search of God. We search in many places but never make it to the point of finding God or at least experiencing the fullness of what God offers us. The thought of God coming to us says that the Lord was looking for me when I was lost or when I wandered away. It says that God has come to make God's home in our lives and in our hearts. Isaiah 25 tells us about the Lord making a feast of rich food and well-aged wines. Isaiah offers words of promise and hope as he says that God will personally wipe our tears away and remove disgraced from the earth. It is the promise of God coming to us in our struggles and in our wandering. It is the Lord making everything good.

Revelation 21 shares the image of a new heaven and a new earth coming to us and that God will make God's home with us. John in Revelation 21 also tells of death, crying and pain being gone and God dwelling with us. He says the Lord is with us. Then Lord provides us with new things and new lives. The words of Isaiah and the words of John in Revelation are trustworthy and true. They assure us that we do not need to go in search for God but that God comes to us where we are and in what we are doing. Jesus has come and we are set free to be children of God. Jesus has come and is God with us.

**John 11:32, 33** When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." <sup>33</sup>When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved.

At one time or another we may have thought similar thoughts as Mary. Mary and Martha each spoke these words to Jesus concerning their brother Lazarus. Each shared the words in her own way. Martha spoke to Jesus as one that has

wisdom and knowledge. They may have been words of instruction for Jesus but they were words of faith believing in the Lord's healing power. Mary spoke the words through her tears and in her sadness. Her faith said that Jesus was there and that he would care for her. Jesus was there and would provide what she needed. Martha and Mary each had faith in the Lord but each in her own way and expression. Each believed in the life giving power of God.

When we think or speak these words we also speak words of faith even if we wish things were different. We know that having Jesus in our midst makes all the difference in the world. We know that having a loving relationship with the Lord gives us hope and peace even when we are asked to endure the challenges of lives. We know that the love of God and the presence of the Savior through the Holy Spirit give us the ability to endure all kinds of problems. In the midst of our grieving, physical pain and spiritual pain comes the words of our Lord. We hear of God's presence as we hear the word of the Lord. We are asked to believe it. We believe it because the Lord cares for us and has been with us all the days of our lives. He promises to never leave us or forsake us. Jesus told Martha to believe these words. Because she believed the words of the Lord Martha needed to also take action on what she believed. If she believed Jesus she would need to trust that she would experience the glory of God.

Jesus also was filled with emotion as he met Mary and Martha. Jesus grieved for Lazarus and with Mary and Martha even though Jesus knew what he would do. Many of us grieve for our husbands, wives, children, siblings and parents. Even though we have the promise that God is with us we continue to be sad and we mourn our dead. We might even wonder when our tears will stop and we feel like living again. When will these words from Isaiah, Revelation and Jesus in John's gospel come to be?

We also wonder when the madness in our country will stop. When will people stop shooting other people who do not share their heritage, religion or way of

life? When will we stop the madness of calling each other names because we see things in our own individual political ways? When will those running for public office see the good in their opponent instead of finding dirt that may or may not be true? We wonder where the Lord is in all of this. I believe the Lord is here beside us crying tears of sadness and mourning. The Lord cries at the death of our loved ones. The Lord cries when we seek to destroy others with gun's, knives or words. The Lord cries when we fail to love the Lord our God and our neighbor as ourselves.

All Saints Day lifts the saints of God. It started early in the history of the church as a time to commemorate the martyrs who dared proclaim their faith even as they faced execution for their faith. It came to be a time to remember all people of God. A saint is a holy person. A holy person is someone set apart. A saint is someone who is special. A saint is someone different from other people. A saint is someone that seeks to serve God by serving others. A saint seeks to serve God in the way Jesus came to serve.

**John 11:39, 40 Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"**

The Lord went to where the tomb was and asked them to remove the stone. Martha argued with Jesus. It had already been too long. There would be an odor and there could be no chance for life for her brother. Martha believed in the resurrection at the end of time but could not believe that even Jesus could bring her brother back to life. Martha's thoughts and perhaps her grief prevented her from faith. She could not get past the thoughts of death. She would not believe there could be life even though Jesus was there. Yet Jesus reminded her to have faith. He reminded her of his words about believing in life. Jesus is love and he is life. Death never has the final word. Death cannot defeat life. Hatred cannot destroy love and Satan will never be victorious over

the Lord Jesus Christ. It may seem so for a while but God's love always prevails.

This past year six members of Our Savior's have died. **Helen Henderson, Clarence Domres, Clara Juett, Ivan Hardt, John Rademacher and Lois Thompson** died since last All Saints Day. It is quite likely that some are mourning the death of others that were not members of our congregation. It is good to remember the promise of life that comes through the Savior of the world. It is also good to remember that Jesus is Lord. Our Lord died on the cross and rose again that we would have life. The life our Lord gives is more than physical life. He gives us spiritual life. He provides eternal life. The life provided through the life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus is a special life and it is a holy life.

**John 11:44      The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."**

We don't wait until we die to become saints. We do not need to wait to see God. Jesus invites us to be set free by God's word. We let go of what binds us and keeps us from serving God. We are set free from what was and invited to cling to the Lord who has come to be with us and to minister to us. Jesus is Lord and he gives us life. The life he gives is not some time off in the future after we die from this life. Jesus offers life today. Receive the blessings of God today. Believe in the promises of God and experience the glory of God that comes through believing. AMEN