

## SERMON – All Saints (Matthew 5.1-12; Psalm 33.1-5)

*May the words of my mouth and the meditation of all our hearts be acceptable to you O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.*

On All Saints Day, we are drawn into a celebration that stretches across time and space. It's a celebration that is for the Church on earth, but also for the **whole communion of saints** —for those already in glory, those in struggle, and those just beginning the journey.

In Anglican tradition, we remember the great saints of the Church – Augustine, Julian of Norwich, Teresa of Avila, Thomas Cranmer – those who shaped our theology and deepened our prayer.

But All Saints' Day is also for the unnamed faithful – the grandparents who prayed quietly and lovingly for their family, the teachers who spoke words of grace, the friends who stayed through suffering, the neighbours who lived with generosity. They too are saints, not because they were perfect, but because they were marked as Christ's own, made holy by his His Spirit, and lived out their baptismal calling with faith, hope and love.

Today's gospel passage gives us the Beatitudes from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. He says: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven...Blessed are those who mourn...Blessed are the meek..."

The Beatitudes are not commands. Jesus is not saying "Become poor in spirit", or "Try to mourn a bit more." No, what he is saying is that the reality of the kingdom of God is **already present** in the midst of human struggle.

Jesus is saying: “Blessed are those who know their need for God. Blessed are those who grieve the brokenness of the world. Blessed are those who hunger for what is right. Blessed are the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers.

These are the signs of sainthood – not perfection but dependence on God, compassion for others, and a life shaped by the kingdom of heaven rather than the values of the world.

It is worthwhile to note that many of the beatitudes describe suffering – mourning, poverty of spirit, persecution. Yet the word that is repeated is “blessed.” Why? Because the blessing comes not from the condition itself, but from the presence and promise of God within it.

And this is echoed in today’s Psalm 33 which begins with the words “Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous. Praise befits the upright.” The saints are those who, even through trial, they continue to rejoice in the Lord. The Psalmist declares “the word of the LORD is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness. He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the **steadfast** love of the LORD.”

The Hebrew word *hesed* means steadfast love, loving-kindness, tenderness and consideration towards others. *Hesed* is at the heart of the saint’s life – not self-confidence, but God-confidence. Not fame or acclaim, but faith and trust in the One whose mercy endures forever.

All Saints' Day is not just a day for remembering. It's also a day for **reconnecting**. We affirm in the Creed that we believe in the communion of saints – the mystical, spiritual fellowship between all of us who are in Christ – past, present and future believers.

Each time we gather for the Eucharist, we don't come alone. We come surrounded by angels, archangels and "all the company of heaven", to quote the liturgy. Each time we gather at the Lord's Table, we join not only with one another but with the whole communion of saints. The table we approach is not only here in this church sanctuary – it's a heavenly banquet, stretching beyond what we can see, into the mystery of eternity.

Today, on All Saints' Day, we remember that we come with the martyrs and mystics, the prophets and the poets, the quiet faithful and the bold witnesses. We are one Body in Christ, bound together by his death and resurrection.

All Saints' Day is not just a backward-looking feast day. It is a reminder that **we** are all part of this story. We are called to live lives of holiness, lives that bear spiritual fruit. We don't need to be famous to be faithful. We don't need to be brilliant to be beloved by God. We are called in our poverty of spirit, in our mourning, in our hunger for justice, we are called to live a life that is blessed. When we fall short, as all saints have, it helps us to remember that God's love is steadfast. His mercy endures forever. His Spirit is with us.

So, today we give thanks for the saints we know by name and for the saints whose names are known only to God, and we give thanks for the promise that we too will be changed when Christ is revealed in glory. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Amen.