



All Saints Sunday, Year A

Pastor Nathan Krause, Northeastern Ohio Synod

Assistant to the Bishop for Congregational Vitality & Director for Evangelical Mission

Gospel Text – Matthew 5:1-12

Matthew 5:1-12

¹ When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² And he began to speak and taught them, saying:

³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵ "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶ "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷ "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸ "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹ "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰ "Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

SERMON TEXT:

Who is blessed? It isn't who we normally think of as blessed...

We are in the midst of the three days traditionally referred to as Hallowmas:

All Hallows' Eve on October 31,
All Saints' Day on November 1 (for the "*holy*" ones, the *hagios*, the *saints of God*),
and **All Souls' Day on November 2** (for everyone else who has passed away).

Protestants tend to conflate All Saints and All Souls because we believe that all are saints. All are made holy because of Jesus Christ.

An important part of our faith is our hope for eternal life and the hope of seeing our loved ones again. But really, there is also something important about knowing, even in this life, that they are still with us, regardless of how "thin the veil" might be.

So let's take a look at saints and sinners.

Some people see saints as the super holy people, while sinners are the rest of us. We aren't particularly bad, perhaps, but we aren't really "good," as it were. Saints are seen as those who have lived an especially good life, while sinners are "rotten to the core."

Others see saints as the people who obey God's will while sinners do not. The marks of the saints are that they do holy stuff for God.

We might say, "She's a saint," or, "He's evil or unholy," based upon the choices they make.

But both of these understandings see saints as people who live a certain kind of life. It is a point of view based on our actions and our choices. But the problem is this: if we were able to live a holy life, why did Jesus need to come in the first place? If we can be saints of our own accord, then "Why Jesus?"

Luther says that even believing we can attain any sort of righteousness of our own accord is sinful because it dismisses the power of the cross. Basically, it means that we are all sinners because we cannot attain righteousness, or sainthood, on our own.

The point of the cross is that we cannot live a holy life on our own. Holiness, righteousness, justification, can come only through the cross. That means there are no saints without Jesus. Jesus is what makes a saint. The forgiveness given to us by the cross makes us holy by the power of the Spirit.

We say that God the Father creates us, God the Son redeems us, and God the Spirit makes us holy. That means *you*, as a redeemed sinner, washed clean in the blood of the Lamb, are a holy saint of God. And there is nothing that you can do to make yourself a saint. It is a gift of Christ through the cross.

"But Pastor, I am not holy like St. Francis or St. Clare of Assisi."
Well, in God's eyes, you are. There is no difference between you and them. And doesn't that free you to wonder what God might do through you?

Those saints, and all our ancestors in the faith, male and female, inspire us to live into the lives Christ has freed us to live.

The world says that only certain extraordinary, holy people can be saints. Therefore, you don't stand a chance, so why even try? But Christ says, "You are saints because I have claimed you as my own. I see you. I know you. I love you." Therefore, don't disregard the things the world disregards.

The world says that only successful, powerful, prosperous people are blessed. But Jesus looks at the mourners, the meek, the persecuted, and those hungering for righteousness and says, "Blessed are you."

You don't become a saint by looking saintly. Christ makes you a saint.

You don't become blessed by looking blessed. Christ declares you blessed.

Understand that our faith isn't perfect, but even the poor in spirit are blessed. Mourning doesn't disqualify you from grace. The meek are not forgotten. Those craving justice are heard. Mercy is not weakness. The pure in heart will see God. And the peacemakers are called children of God.

And because of this, we will be persecuted by a world that doesn't understand God's grace and love. And so they may hate us for it.

Better to be hated for loving than loved for hating.

But these aren't conditions we fulfill so that God will bless us. They are people upon whom Jesus pronounces God's blessing. And because Christ has already called us blessed, we are freed to become merciful, to make peace, to hunger for justice, and to love our neighbors.

The blessed saints who came before us, those who now rest with God until the last trumpet, know these things now.

And one day, with all the saints of God, so shall we.

Amen.

Copyright © 2026 *The Sermon Supply*

This work is the intellectual property of clergy from the synods of Region 6 of the ELCA. It is provided for use by congregations within these synods for worship, study, and other ministry purposes.

This project is licensed under a **Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)**.

This means:

- Congregations may use and share this material for **non-commercial purposes**, provided proper attribution is given to the *The Sermon Supply* and its contributors.
- The material **may not be modified or adapted** without explicit permission.
- Use beyond congregational purposes requires permission from the contributors.

For permissions beyond this license, please contact rwissler@neos-elca.org

License Details: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.