

“WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM”
NOVEMBER 1, 2020, ALL SAINTS SUNDAY, SUNDAY SERVICE & SERMON
(abbreviated COVID 19 service/50% seating capacity)
Pastor Tom Olson; Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church

PRELUDE: Ray Holmberg (Fuglebergs)

HYMN #164 “For All the Saints”

PRAYER

CHILDREN’S SERMON: Dress Up Box, 1 John 3

FIRST LESSON: *Revelation 7:9-17 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. 10 And they cried out in a loud voice:*

*"Salvation belongs to our God,
who sits on the throne,
and to the Lamb."*

11 All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying:

"Amen!

*Praise and glory
and wisdom and thanks and honor
and power and strength
be to our God for ever and ever.*

Amen!"

13 Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?"

14 I answered, "Sir, you know."

And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore,

"they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. 16 Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. 17 For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Confession of Faith: *I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible.*

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father, By whom all things were made; Who for us, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, And was made man; And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, He suffered and was buried; And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, And ascended into heaven, And is seated on the right hand of the Father, And He shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, The Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, Who spoke by the Prophets. And I believe one

holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the Resurrection of the dead, And the Life of the world to come. Amen

GLORIA PATRI: Ambassador Hymnal p. 4 (please put on screen) *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is not, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER FOR OFFERING

SPECIAL MUSIC: #8 Collingsworth CD “Light from Heaven”

**SERMON TITLE: “WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM”
1 John 3:1-3; Pastor Tom Olson; November 1, 2020**

PRIORITIES: I have the privilege of being with people as they prepare for death. As the body gets weak and moves toward death, our priorities and values can really change in focus. Things that were once so important like a fast car shiny car, a dream home, world travel and money to spend become very non-important. What is important is time with loved ones, a piece of good pie and coffee, happy memories, seeing grandchildren doing well, a comfortable sweater... And for the child of God the promises of Scripture are of utmost importance... forgiveness, eternal life in heaven, the presence of God with us as we get weak.

BLOSSOM: I have seen the beauty of the Lord blossom in some people in the last weeks and months of their lives. Sometimes our last few weeks can be a great opportunity to really let go of sin and self and see the Lord Jesus shine in our hearts. Sharon’s dad is nearing the time to depart this life and I can just see a radiance and peace growing on this face as he gets closer to seeing God face to face. It is a marvelous thing to observe and not really all that sad. On occasions, the door of heaven is opened, and the departing soul sees God and the heavenly home and a stunning radiance comes over them before they step out of the body into eternity. They become like Jesus just by seeing him! Hebrews 12 puts it this way: ***Hebrews 12:1-3 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. 2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.***

IMAGINE: Can you imagine what it will be like to wake up in heaven and see our Savior and all of God’s children in their radiance and perfection. And then to realize that not only are our aches and pains all gone, but all our sins, faults and shortcomings are left behind and we finally the perfect image of God is restored in us. John reminds us in today’s All Saints Epistle lesson that this transformation begins in this life. We Shall be Like Him, first:

I. TRANSFORMED BY OUR POSITION

1 John 3:1-3 How great is the 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.

ELEVATED: There is something about getting a new position that in and of itself elevates us. I am not perfected by my position here in the church, but I certainly am elevated by it. Knowing that I am called to be the pastor of Minnesota Valley Church makes me more serious about how I speak, act and prioritize my life than if I was unemployed. Having a position, representing an organization or family or company in and of itself

elevates us. One of the most elevating and transforming steps in our walk with God is to realize the position that we have in Christ.

a. CALLED: First, notice that we are CALLED CHILDREN OF GOD! In Hebrews 2:11 the writer is talking about Jesus and his relationship to his less than perfect children that he has called into the family of God, ***“...he is not ashamed to call them his brethren.”*** Sinful though we be, God is not ashamed of us. He understands and knows “we are but dust.” But He loves us, just as we are.

TREASURES: You know that I like to fix up old stuff...roto tillers, farm machinery, riding lawn mowers, engines and run-down farm buildings. I am not ashamed to show you my stuff all broken and rusty. I am proud to say, “I own this and wait till you see it when I am done with it!” That is God’s attitude toward us, even with all our shortcomings.

b. Second, notice that we are not just CALLED or NAMED the children of God, but he adds, ***“SUCH WE ARE.”*** A person could say, “I am a member of this church.” And that would be true. But then to go to the next step and say, “And I can really tell that the people there are happy to see me and want me to be involved. I am not just a name on a piece of paper, I am a real part of the family, the team, the cause. They want me to use my gifts and be on the team.” Through faith in Christ we are not just called Christians, we are adopted into the family of God, the Holy Spirit lives and works in us and we are heirs with Christ and have a home in heaven, with God, forever. That is a truth that transforms us when we grasp it.

REJECTION: Then notice, that this causes problems in the world for us, ***“The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.”*** One of the painful parts of becoming a believer in Christ is that people who used to like us won’t like us anymore because they don’t like Jesus. They will sense that we have left their world and entered a new realm and that will make some of them very uncomfortable. It can’t be helped. No matter how much we try to be nice to them, they will not like us anymore. But those in the world who are seeking the Lord will be drawn to us. And that is the positive side of it. **WE ARE TRANSFORMED BY OUR POSITION.**

II. TRANSFORMED BY HIS PRESENCE

1 John 3:2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM, for we shall see him as he is.

HEAVEN: Sometimes I like to kind of joke with people and say, “When you get to heaven you will see how extremely handsome your husband is without the effects of sin and the curse from “the fall.” You will see how nice your wife was meant to be, without the stresses and strains of life in this sinful world.

MYSTERY: God’s Spirit tells us here that what we will be ***“HAS NOT YET BEEN MADE KNOWN.”*** I often say that if we knew how wonderful it is in heaven, we could not stand to live another day here below. God has purposefully left the details of what we shall be like in the “UNKNOWN” category. But we do get two very special insights here about it.

a. WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM. We know here that we and all who get to heaven by God’s grace, “shall be like Him.” If we read the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, we get a glimpse into what we shall be like. ***Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.*** What was Jesus like? He was totally at peace with himself, he was wise, he had an intimate relationship with God the Father, he was not a part of the world system of greed for money, grasping for power, stepping on other. He notices the lowly and downtrodden. He did the Father’s will. Instead

of taking revenge on sinners, He willingly went to die on the cross for his enemies. And he never stops loving us, forgiving us and calling us to draw closer to the presence of God. We will be like that in heaven. One day you will find out that your husband or wife or child or neighbor was a much greater person than you realized when they let go of the baggage that currently plagues them and radiate the true beauty of the Lord through their God's given personality and gifts.

b. **WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS.** How is this accomplished? It is merely the result of seeing Jesus face to face. One song puts it this way, "One glimpse of His dear face, all darkness will erase, so bravely run the race, till we see Christ." To the extent that we draw into intimacy with the Lord now, this can begin even in this life. A good prayer I once read was this:

*Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me,
All His wonderful passion and purity.
May His Spirit divine all my being refine
Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me.*

*When your burden is heavy and hard to bear
When your neighbors refuse all your load to share
When you're feeling so blue, Don't know just what to do
Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in you.*

This happens, not when we try to make it happen, but when the warmth of Christ in us flows out to the harsh, cold world.

III. TRANSFORMED BY HIS INVITATION

3 Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

DESIRE: When we are saved by God's grace and draw close to Him in the Word and prayer, then a desire wells up in us to live the "higher life." We start to want to be pure and Christlike in our earthly life. But it isn't the threats of hell or pulpit pounding that produce this desire. It is drawing closer to Christ's love and purity that makes us want to be like him. Good friends who elevate us have an impact on our behavior but intimacy with Christ works in us the hunger to be like Christ. I don't know of any music that describes this better than the hymns of Charles Wesley and in his hymn, "Love Divine, All Love Excelling" he puts it this way in the last verse:

*Finish, then, Thy new creation,
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation,
Perfectly restored in Thee,
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heav'n we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love and praise.*

IMPROVED: I liked my parents and grandparents very much like they were. But I know that it will be amazing to meet them in heaven, saved by God's grace, and see what they are like in a state free from sin. On this All Saints Sunday we lovingly remember our those who have passed on and we longingly look forward to seeing them in heavenly perfection...transformed by the experience of seeing Christ, face to face. Amen

HYMN #623 *Face to Face with Christ My Savior*

HOLY COMMUNION

BENEDICTION (9 AM): The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you, the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and grant you peace. Amen

DOXOLOGY: (10:30 AM-To the tune of Edelweiss) *May the Lord, Mighty Lord, Bless and keep you forever-- Grant you peace, Perfect peace, Strength in every endeavor. Lift up your eyes and see His face, Feel His grace forever. May the Lord, Mighty Lord, Bless and keep you forever.*

POSTLUDE: Ray Holmberg