

November 6, 2022, All Saints Sunday
Pastor Tom Olson
Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church

PRELUDE: Ruth Antal (Osthus Sing)

CALL TO WORSHIP: Psalm 149

PASTOR: Praise the LORD!

**ALL: Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise
in the assembly of the saints.**

50+ Let Israel rejoice in their Maker;

49- let the people of Zion be glad in their King.

50+ Let them praise his name with dancing

**49- and make music to him with tambourine
and harp.**

50+ For the LORD takes delight in his people;

49- he crowns the humble with salvation.

50+ Let the saints rejoice in this honor

49- and sing for joy on their beds.

PASTOR: This is the glory of all his saints.

ALL: Praise the LORD!

HYMN #164 "For All the Saints"

CONFESSION OF SIN: Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you. Amen

CHILDREN'S SERMON:

READER: Becky Kruse

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

GOSPEL LESSON: *Matthew 5:1-12 Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach 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 be shown mercy.*

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

*9 Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.*

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

*11 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute
you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you
because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great
is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they
persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

**READER: Here ends the reading of God's Word.
CONGREGATION SINGS: God be praised, for His
glad Tidings!**

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 now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER

PRAISE AND WORSHIP SONGS CHOSEN BY RUTH

SERMON: "A GLIMPSE OF GLORY"
Revelation 7:9-17 Pastor Tom Olson; 11/6/22
Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen

PRIVILEGE: I have the great privilege of being with families at the time of the death of a saved loved one. One of the most special moments is the conversation that takes place right after they die.

EXAMPLE: Let's just use me as an example. Let's say I got terminal illness and after six months of slow decline I died. I am a believer. My family knows that. Then they ask these questions a moment after I die, "I wonder what he is experiencing right now?" "I wonder who he is speaking with right now?" "I wonder what it is like to leave this pain and suffering and difficulty of life on earth and to awaken in the perfect peace, joy and beauty of heaven?" Some might even be so bold as to say, "In some ways I envy him."

TOPICS: These are the topics of "All Saints Sunday" and our amazing first lesson from Revelation 7 gives us a glimpse into the heavenly realm. If I were allowed to keep and read only ten chapters of the Bible, Revelation 7 would be one of them.

SONG: My mother sang at many Norwegian funerals and almost always sang a song in Norwegian that was based on Revelation 7, "Den Store Hvite Flokk" or "Behold a Host Arrayed in White." Let's pull back the

curtain and peak into heaven for a moment and take a GLIMPSE OF GLORY:

I. COUNTLESS WHITE-ROBED SAINTS

Revelation 7:9-10 *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."

NUMBER: Many folks have the idea that there are not many people in heaven because Jesus told us that there is a straight and narrow path to life and there are "*few that find it.*" And there is a broad path that leads to destruction and "*many find it.*" Now that statement may be more about the consequences of sin, than who is going to heaven. But even if it refers to heaven, the "*few*" over all human history are still "*a great multitude that no one could count.*" Heaven will not be a lonely place and I believe we will be pleasantly surprised to find people there that died clinging to the Savior, that we did not know would make it.

NATIONALITY: It is a diverse crowd, people from every tribe and nation. We moved to Alaska in 1998 to share the gospel with the folks up there. Some people have complained about the cost of mission work in Alaska due to the need for airplanes, heating oil and expensive food shipping. One Rochester, Minnesota business man, who had a brother who was a missionary up along the Yukon River, told me that he can get many more souls saved per dollar in a warmer climate. But I replied that God told us to go to the ends of the earth and he did not put a price tag on the value of a soul. I look forward to seeing souls from remote Alaskan villages in heaven some day!

CLOTHING: Notice also they are dressed in white robes. That is a sign of purity. There is a reason that we use clean white cloth in hospitals vs other colors. I dusted the other day and quickly grabbed a white tee shirt do it. The white revealed the dust and grime very quickly. Here the white robes are a symbol of the robe of righteousness that Jesus gives to all who enter heaven. His innocent red blood washes away our sinful stains and makes us white as snow. "My sin, not in part but the whole, is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more!" **1 John 1:7** "*...the blood of Jesus cleanses*

us from all sin." We celebrate this today in Holy Communion.

A GLIMPSE OF GLORY reveals COUNTLESS WHITE-ROBED SAINTS.

II. ANGELS, ELDERS AND LIVING CREATURES

Revelation 7:11-12 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!"*

SIGHTS: Heaven is not just a place for "ordinary folks" like you and me. It is also a place of ANGELS, ELDERS AND LIVING CREATURES. You remember Dorothy waking up in the land of Oz and saying, *"Toto, I don't think we are in Kansas anymore."* She was seeing sights and sounds and colors that were not at all like the farm in Kansas.

ANGELS: When we die and wake up in glory, we also will know we are in a different place. We will see angels. In this life, ANGELS seem to remain hidden most of the time. But in heaven, the myriads and myriads of angels will be visible, active and I would say utterly amazing to behold. Perhaps we will even see the stairway to earth where the Bible says they ascend and descend. Maybe several stairways and we will find out what it is they are bringing from and to the earth. Hebrews 1:14 says that angels are *"ministering spirits"* that love to serve us. One angel I want to meet is my "guardian angel" who had to put up with me and I want to apologize for all the extra work I required.

ELDERS: We see here there are elders. These are the rulers, the leaders, the judges, the guides. Our upcoming elections remind us how human and weak and often downright crooked our rulers can be in our world. Which politician do you really respect and admire? Not too many. But in heaven we will have good and wise rulers who will administrate various areas. Jesus tells us in the parable in Luke 19:17 that the *"good servant will rule over ten cities."* I don't doubt that some very unknown, behind the scenes people, like faithful workers and housewives, will in

heaven be given important assignments. The elders remind us of the good government of heaven.

LIVING CREATURES: And there are living creatures. Some of these creatures are described in the book of Revelation and other Biblical references. Some have several heads of different kinds. Some have various wings that cover their faces from the blinding glory of God. We have not yet discovered all the species of plant and animal life on earth yet and I would imagine heaven will be similar. The beautiful colored birds of the South Pacific are only a hint at what kind of creatures we will see in heaven.

BIOLOGIST: My dad was a biologist and nature observer. In heaven, such people will likely be able to discover and learn about plants and animals for all eternity what we only have a drop of in this world.

PETS: And I believe that our pets will be in heaven too. They have not sinned; they are under the man-made curse of death and according to Romans 8 they await the day of redemption. Also, Psalm 84:11 tells us that *"the Lord will withhold no good thing from those who walk uprightly."* This is the heart and character of God and I believe it extends from this life into eternity. And if your pet is a "good thing" I don't believe that God will withhold them from you in heaven. Heaven is a place of ANGELS, ELDERS AND LIVING CREATURES.

III. COMFORT AND SECURITY

Revelation 7:13-17 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."

TRIBULATION: This passage clearly states that these folks in white robes have come out of the great tribulation. It is obvious that they have suffered much difficulty, perhaps persecution, perhaps deprivation, perhaps martyrdom, in this life. Now they are comforted. They are so close to God that he "spreads his tent over them." That is kind of like telling

someone who is frightened to come and stay in your house and you will protect them.

RELIEF: There will be no more hunger, or parched tongues from burning sun, nor any other assault of hardship from this life.

Revelation 21:3-4 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

There is COMFORT AND SECURITY in heaven.

BEGINNING: When your REDEEMED loved one departs from this life, often with disease, pain, sorrow and loss, DON'T CRY FOR THEM. They are beginning the best part of the story of their eternal life. Instead, think about the glorious time they are having and remember that Jesus has gone to prepare a perfect place in heaven for you and me as well.

PRAYER: I hope that "A GLIMPSE OF GLORY" has given you a desire to go there after you die. If you have never looked to the Lord in faith, perhaps today is the day to see him dying on the cross for your sins. Express your faith with this prayer: ***"O come to my heart Lord Jesus, there is room in my heart for you...Thank you Lord for saving my soul, thank you Lord for making me whole, thank you Lord for giving to me, Thy great salvation so rich and FREE."***

ASSURANCE: Come to the Lord's table and strengthen the assurance that your sins are forgiven and that you are a child of God. Amen

Now may the peace of God that surpasses all human comprehension, guard your hearts and your minds through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen

HYMN #626 "Saved by Grace"

HOLY COMMUNION

CHORAL BENEDICTION: Tune "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: Ruth Antal