ALL THE SAINTS

❖ Opening remarks.
  ➢ Today we celebrate the saints of the church and all those who have gone on to their eternal reward before us.
  ➢ We are reminded both the gift we are given through Jesus and just how brief our lives really are.
  ➢ In today’s passage we read, “And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ…”
  ➢ Who are these saints?
  ➢ I have had conversations with so many people about life in Christ and been told, “I’m no saint!”
  ➢ Even more conversations have come with the reminder, “Well, you are no saint!”
    ▪ This is both a humbling and a beautiful remark to one who was born on All Saints Day that it is not a work of my own that leads to sainthood.
    ▪ It is way beyond me.

❖ Our understanding of saints.
  ➢ When you hear the word “saints” in today’s culture, what image does that conjure up for you?
  ➢ How do you understand it?
  ➢ I think most of us have come to understand saints in much the same way the dictionary describes them.
    ▪ Souls that have departed and gone to heaven.
    ▪ Those that have had miracles attested to them after their deaths.
    ▪ Those that lived nearly perfect lives.
    ▪ Those canonized by the Roman Catholic Church.
    ▪ They are prayed to as patrons over different areas of life.
    ▪ They lived lives that are basically unattainable by the rest of us.
    ▪ No wonder we hear the phrase, “I’m no saint” so frequently.

❖ A more ancient understanding
  ➢ If this is the biblical understanding of sainthood, then I am a little concerned by our brother, the Apostle Paul, who was canonized as a saint by the way.
I am not concerned by the verse we read today.

- I am okay with being given the same power all the saints have, aren’t you?
- I am more concerned with the beginning and ending of all his letters.
  - Paul invariably sends greetings to and from all the saints in one location to another.
    - Does that mean Paul was seeing or hearing from dead people?
    - Had the Pope already started canonizing some amazing people?
      - Of course, the answer to this is “no” because there was no Pope yet, and Paul had a different vision of saints in mind and not the spectral kind.

Paul understood sainthood as the domain of all of those saved by Christ.

Jesus told the disciples, “Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.”

The work of the Holy Spirit

- The transition.
  - Jesus broke the bonds of sin and death in His burial and resurrection.
  - He also provided eternal life.
  - In His life and ministry, He showed us the Father and taught us what the ideal plan for us is, how the Father loves us, how He wants us to be reconciled to Him.
  - When Jesus’ ministry was over here on Earth, He did not leave those who believe in Him alone but sent the Holy Spirit.
ALL THE SAINTS

➤ The coming of the Holy Spirit and His work in the believer’s life.
   ▪ What is it that the Holy Spirit does?
     • The Westminster Catechism tells us that the work of the Holy Spirit is to apply the work of Christ’s death and resurrection to the believer’s life.
     • This is called Sanctification.
     • A basic understanding of Sanctification is that the Holy Spirit is in the continual process of moving us toward holiness; He is making us holy.

❖ Back to sainthood.
   ➤ The word that we translate “Holy” in Holy Spirit is the Greek word “hagios.”
     ▪ Any time we talk about something holy in Scripture, this is the word that is used.
   ➤ Now here comes the fun part!
     ▪ The word that is translated “saints” in Ephesians 3:18 and in all the Apostle Paul’s letters where he sends greetings to and from all the saints is…you guessed it! Hagios!
   ➤ Hear this!
     ▪ The Hagios Spirit is sanctifying you and making you hagios!
     ▪ Let me translate that for you again.
       • The Holy Spirit is sanctifying you and making you holy!
       • The Holy Spirit is sanctifying you and making you a saint!

❖ Conclusion
   ➤ The next time someone tells you that you are not a saint, you have permission, through the work of the Spirit, to tell them they are wrong!
   ➤ All those who have given their lives over to Jesus Christ, repenting from their sins, claiming reconciliation with God through His blood, and living in anticipation of eternal life in communion with the Father, Son, and Spirit, are being made saints through the power of the Holy Spirit.
   ➤ You don’t have to be dead to be a saint!
     ▪ You have joined the communion of the saints and are welcome to all of the power to understand the love of God.
ALL THE SAINTS

- We remember those who have gone on before us as examples of Christ’s redeeming love and the Spirit’s sanctification.
- Nothing else is needed.
- It is not your work, but the work of God in your life.

➤ Welcome to sainthood!

❖ Closing Prayer.

➤ Father, we are far from perfect. We know we do not deserve Your mercy, but You chose to redeem us through the sacrifice of Your Son, Jesus. Through His resurrection, You have invited us into Your presence for all eternity. Thank you for Your Holy Spirit who breathed life into us and makes us holy. Help us to live as the holy ones You are making us. And all your saints say, Amen.