

Service - In November we Especially Remember

All from Songs of Fellowship

Intro:

We remember those people from our early years, our parents, our teachers and those special people who made a difference to us personally.

Let's spend a little time reflecting on what they meant to us ...
Just as in the Remembrance Service - at the going down of the sun and every day, we will remember them.....

BUT, ABOVE ALL THOSE, we must remember Jesus! At Christmas we remember His birthday. Then the major events in His life, like the visit of the 3 Kings... In Lent we remember the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness, At Easter time we remember how Jesus suffered and died for our sins, and on Easter Day we remember that He arose from the dead! Do not forget Pentecost when Jesus sent His Holy Spirit to be with us always!

1030

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.
He makes me lie in pastures green.
He leads me by the still, still waters,
His goodness restores my soul.

*And I will trust in You alone.
And I will trust in You alone,
For Your endless mercy follows me,
Your goodness will lead me home.*

(Descant)
I will trust, I will trust in You.

*I will trust, I will trust in You.
Endless mercy follows me,
Goodness will lead me home.*

He guides my ways in righteousness,
And He anoints my head with oil,
And my cup, it overflows with joy,
I feast on His pure delights.

And though I walk the darkest path,
I will not fear the evil one,
For You are with me, and Your rod and staff
Are the comfort I need to know.

Prayers

Jesus, Jesus is the most important person in our lives, so let's invite Him into all our lives by singing:

2

ABIDE WITH ME, fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens, Lord, with me abide;
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.

I need Thy presence every passing hour;

What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me.

I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

Reveal Thyself before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies,
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

1st Reading – Psalm 15

LORD, who may dwell in your sacred tent?
Who may live on your holy mountain?
² The one whose walk is blameless,
who does what is righteous,
who speaks the truth from their heart;
³ whose tongue utters no slander,
who does no wrong to a neighbour,
and casts no slur on others;
⁴ who despises a vile person
but honours those who fear the LORD;
who keeps an oath even when it hurts,
and does not change their mind;
⁵ who lends money to the poor without interest;
who does not accept a bribe against the innocent.

1346 - In Christ Alone

IN CHRIST ALONE my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This Cornerstone, this solid Ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All,
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone! - who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save:
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied -
For every sin on Him was laid;
Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain;
Then bursting forth in glorious Day
Up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
For I am His and He is mine -
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home,
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand!

2nd Reading - Philippians 1:1-11

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,
To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:

² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

⁷ It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. ⁸ God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

⁹ And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

The Message

I found the greater part of our Message today on the internet and the source is: <https://hopechurchfamily.org/sermons/saints-philippians-1.1-11/>

Imagine your life as a book. A novel. I don't know what sort of novel it would be. Maybe a Thriller, or a Mills and Boon Romance, hopefully it's not a murder mystery.

Now I dare say in your book of your life, there's loads of good things, fantastic holidays, happy memories, and wonderful things you've done. But there's also some pages in there, that you'd be ashamed of. There are pages in there you'd like to rip out and destroy forever. I know in my story there are pages I wish had never been written. And it's these pages that are the problem on the day God judges us.

There's even a prayer that tells us that.

We do not presume to come to this thy table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness...."

When we pray that prayer, we're admitting we can't get to God by being good. We're admitting our sin makes us unworthy of God.

So how can we know him?

Well let's think back to our Bible reading from Philippians, And how it began:

*Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, **To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi.***" I should add here that some translations state "To all God's holy people..." Holy people are living saints!

And the key phrase is: **"SAINTS IN CHRIST JESUS WHO ARE".**

So, what's a saint? Now you might think that a saint is *someone the church has declared really special and really good*

Let's take St Barbara as an example, she lived in the third century, and was murdered by her parents for becoming a Christian. And after her execution, her dad was struck by lightning and died. Apparently, she's the patron saint of fireworks! But not for 400 years – It was 400 years later before the church declared her a saint!

However, that's not what the Bible means by the word Saint. It's a word used 67 times in the New Testament, and each of those 67 times, "saint" means living breathing, common or garden Christians, just ordinary folk who have put their trust in Jesus Christ.

The Saints in Christ Jesus in Philippi" was Paul's way of referring to the church in Philippi. If he wrote to us, he'd say:

"The Saints in Christ Jesus in wherever this Message is preached."

And he'd be referring to anyone here who has made a decision to follow Jesus Christ. So, look around the room – everyone who is a Christian here, is a saint. **If you have put your trust in Jesus then You are a Saint.** That's how your loving Heavenly Father sees you, when he looks at you, he sees not a miserable sinner, nor a useless failure, but a saint. Someone holy, special and set apart.

But how can that be possible? I mean I know we all scrub up well for church, we're good at looking respectable, but deep down, when we're honest with ourselves, we know we have flaws and failings. So how can God call me a saint, knowing all that I know about myself? Did he not see what I did yesterday? Well yes. He did see it.

So let's think back to what the Bible verse said...It called us, *Saints in Christ Jesus*"

The point is, we aren't saints because we're good people, we are saints because we are in Christ Jesus.

Think of it this way: I was never much good at Rugby. I was never good enough. Even for the school team. But just suppose instead of me trying to win a Rugby game on my own, you put me in a team with Johnny Wilkinson, Jona Lomu in his prime, Brian O'Driscoll, Gareth Edwards, and let's throw in David Campese for good measure. Even a terrible Rugby player like me, could be on the winning side **in** a team like that. And that's what "Saint in Christ Jesus" means. It means that as flawed as we all are, if we're on Jesus' team, we're on the winning team.

The language the Bible uses to describe this is the idea of being *"United with Christ"*. And if you're united with Christ you're a Saint, because Jesus is spotless. You're holy, because he is holy. And you're heavenward bound, because he has risen from the grave,

We can never earn that title "saint", we can never on our own live up to it. Instead it is God's gift to us. It's what the Bible calls God's grace, a gift that costs us nothing, but cost God everything – the life of his Son. Here's the problem though: When I explain Saint in Christ Jesus to people, they often wonder, *how can they possibly live up to that title of Saint?* Well, the rest of our Bible passage tries to answer that, by

challenging us to try to live up to it the title saint, by committing the future of our lives to loving and serving others. That's why Paul prays in verse 9:

And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight."

He's praying that Christians would use their skills and gifts to be better at loving people, both in the church family, and the world outside it. Why not set yourself a challenge for this week: to consciously do something new to care for someone?

The thing is, for all our good intentions, we still mess up don't we? We aren't as loving as we could be. We struggle with persistent problems that can leave us wondering if maybe, that title "Saint in Christ Jesus" really is just wishful thinking and nonsense. How could I ever live up to it?

Well if that's you, there's a wonderful promise for you from God, in v6, that
the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.."

It's saying that when you become a Christian, no matter how things feel on a day-by-day basis, God is slowly and surely changing you to make you more and more like Jesus. Day by day we won't even notice him doing it, but he's promised he will be doing it. And God never breaks his promises.

So don't despair over day-by-day failure. There's an old saying,
We overestimate what we can achieve in a year, and underestimate what we can achieve in five years."

And when we take a long-term view, of how God has transformed us over a period of years, there's always so much to celebrate.

So don't despair over the daily mistakes, say sorry for them, work hard to overcome them, but trust God to deal with the big picture, of getting the book of your life ready to read.
He who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Christ.."

I'm going to stop there... Except to suggest that tomorrow, when you're looking in the bathroom mirror, say to yourself, ***I'm a saint in Christ Jesus"***

And then take a moment to thank God for that, and ask for His help so you can live like it. (*This message was preached by: Barry Unwin, in Upton, Welland, Hanley Swan, Hanley Castle and Ripple, June-Aug 2017).*

Now, taking the thought onwards that we are all saints, as we are saints then it stands to reason that those Christian friends and members of our church who are no longer with us were and still are saints! We

especially remember our own loved ones, but also remember all who have died in our lifetimes like our parents, our teachers and those special people who made a great difference in our lives..... today we remember all those we have known over the years.....

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

Written by Laurence Binyon.

Our last hymn is:
109

FOR ALL THE SAINTS, who from their labours rest,
Who Thee by faith before the world confessed,
Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Thou wast their Rock, their fortress, and their might;
Thou, Lord, their Captain in the well-fought fight;
Thou in the darkness drear their one true light.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

O may Thy soldiers, faithful, true and bold,
Fight as the saints who nobly fought of old,
And win, with them, the victor's crown of gold!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

O blest communion, fellowship divine!
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;
Yet all are one in Thee, for all are Thine.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long,
Steals on the ear the distant triumph song,
And hearts are brave again, and arms are strong.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

The golden evening brightens in the west;
Soon, soon to faithful warriors cometh rest;
Sweet is the calm of paradise the blest.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

But lo! there breaks a yet more glorious day;
The saints triumphant rise in bright array;
The King of glory passes on His way.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,
Through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,
Singing to Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Let's pray: heavenly Father, we thank You that we are all saints and we remember our Saints who have already come to your loving care, Amen.

THE GRACE

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all for ever more, Amen.

This Service has been prepared by: Christopher Stirling of West End Congregational Church, Haverhill, UK.
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