

LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING FORWARD

(Revelation 7:9-21)

Intro: On this All Saints Sunday.

-We celebrate all the baptized people of God.

#Living.

#Dead.

*But especially those who have died in the last year.

-It is an opportune time.

#Looking back.

#Looking forward.

I. Looking Back.

A. All The Saints Who Have Died.

1. We've had our share during the last 12 months.

a. David Dillon.

-Our previous organist.

b. Melvin Dake.

-My dad.

c. Dorothy Ingalls.

d. Ed Dreyer.

e. Bill Rasbold.

f. Ruth Rasbold.

g. C.J. Hubbard.

h. Zell Adams.

-Carroll Werling's mom.

i. Ruth Hicks.

-Mary Faulkner's mom.

2. How do we remember them?

a. Without also remembering the saints who preceded them.

-Parents.

-Grandparents.

-Great grandparents.

-Aunts.

-Uncles.

-Brothers.

-Sisters.

-Spouses.

-Children.

- b. All of the saints.
 - Who have already received their white robes.
 - #Washed white in the blood of the Lamb.
 - Great multitude.
 - #No one could count.
 - #From every:
 - *Nation.
 - *Tribe.
 - *Peoples.
 - *Languages.
 - #Gathered around the throne of the Lamb.

B. Saints Who Have Paved The Way For Us.

- 1. Our faith.
 - a. Baptizing us.
 - b. Teaching us.
 - c. Preaching to us.
 - d. Encouraging us.
 - e. Reading Scripture with us.
 - f. Modeling a life of faith for us.
- 2. This congregation.
 - a. Who knocked on doors in this part of town.
 - b. Who were charter members of this congregation.
 - c. Who purchased this property.
 - d. Who built these buildings.
 - e. Who furnished them.
 - Pews
 - Paraments.
 - Tables.
 - Chairs.
 - Hymn books.
 - Musical instruments.
 - Kitchen utensils.
 - Office equipment.
 - f. Who served.
 - Church councils.
 - Committees.
 - Altar guilds.
 - Choirs.
 - Sunday School.
 - Youth groups.
 - Soup suppers.
 - Pot luck dinners.
 - Service projects of one kind or another.

3. Who would we be?
 - a. Without the saints who have gone before us?
4. Where would we be?
 - a. Without those saints who had a vision for a life of faith.
 - Together.
 - In this place.
5. All Saints Day is an opportune time.
 - a. Remembering.
 - b. Looking back.

II. Looking Forward.

A. When We Will Get Our White Robes.

1. God's promise to all of his saints.
 - a. Made first in the waters of Holy Baptism.
 - b. Fulfilled on the day of our death.
2. How do we get from here to there?
 - a. Ed Dreyer and I were talking one day.
 - Challenges of traveling from Tulsa.
 - #St. Louis.
 - *I could get a direct flight.
 - +To almost anywhere in the country.
 - #Tulsa.
 - *You often need a connecting flight.
 - +To get a lot of places.
 - Ed said:
 - #"If you're going to heaven or you're going to hell."
 - #"From Tulsa you've got to go through Dallas."
 - b. We don't have to go through Dallas.
 - We do have to go through the cross.
3. Our robes are washed white in the blood of the Lamb.
 - a. What kind of blood cleanses?
 - Mine doesn't.
 - b. I decided to cut my hair short because of blood.
 - I knew I'd been getting pretty thin up there.
 - #For a long time.
 - When I would get down on the floor to play with my granddaughter.
 - #Sophia would run her fingers through my hair.
 - *Josh would take a picture.
 - *I would look in the mirror.
 - +There was more bald spot than hair.
 - #I hadn't decided what to do about it.

-One day I was doing laundry.
 #I had pulled out the little drawer on the washing machine.
 *Where you pour in:
 +Detergent.
 +Bleach.
 +Fabric softener.
 #I left it open.
 *When I bent down.
 +To get the fabric softener out of the drawer.
 =Underneath the washer.
 *When I stood up.
 +I hit my head on the corner of that little drawer.
 +I put a gash in the top of my head.
 =There was blood everywhere.
 *It was almost bedtime.
 +I didn't want blood on the pillow case.
 -I needed to put a bandage on the top of my head.
 #What little hair I had up there.
 *In the way.
 *Caked with blood.
 #So I got out the clipper.
 *Cut it all off the top.
 +So that I could put a bandage on my scalp.
 *But I left the sides.
 -Next day.
 #July 4.
 #Josh came over for:
 *Baseball.
 *Brats.
 #He said:
 *"What did you do to your hair?"
 #I said:
 *"I needed to cut off the top to put a bandage on there."
 *"But I don't really like the look."
 #He said:
 *"Why don't you just get a buzz cut?"
 #I said:
 *"The clipper is all charged up."
 *"Would you like to do the honors?"
 -So I went for:
 #Jerry Peterson look.
 #Bishop Bob look.
 *Because blood stains.

- c. Sin stains.
 - Not just:
 - #Clothes.
 - #Pillow cases.
 - #Carpeting.
 - Sin stains:
 - #Hearts.
 - #Souls.
 - *Of all us.
 - +Sinner saints.
 - *No amount of our blood can erase that.
 - +I donated blood again last week.
 - =I've been doing that regularly for over 40 years.
 - =I'm working on my 31st gallon.
 - +When I moved to Tulsa.
 - =I donated at the Red Cross facility.
 - 71st and Memorial.
 - #It was a convenient location.
 - =But I had too many bad experiences.
 - They put the rookie blood drawers in there.
 - #There was so much turnover in the staff.
 - I have so much scar tissue.
 - #From 243 donations.
 - *They'd miss the vein.
 - *They'd go through the vein.
 - *They'd be up against the wall of the vein.
 - #It would be a struggle to get a whole pint.
 - *Before I started to clot up.
 - #It was painful.
 - I was thinking about retiring this arm.
 - #Giving up donating altogether.
 - *Since my right arm doesn't work.
 - #Until someone suggested I should:
 - *Go to the Red Cross headquarters.
 - +11th Street and 169.
 - *Ask for their most experienced blood drawer.
 - Ann has become my personal blood drawer.
 - #Episcopalian saint.
 - *Member of St. Patrick's in Broken Arrow.
 - +Next to the nursing home.
 - =Where Doyle Hill lives.
 - *Active member of her Altar Guild.

- #But Ann is retiring next year.
 - *Last week she (and I) let someone else.
 - +Draw my blood.
 - +It went pretty well.
 - *I think I'll hang in there a while longer.
 - +See if I can make 250 pints.
- *But can all of that blood erase my sin?
 - +Or yours?
 - +Or that of the whole world?
 - =No way.
 - =Even our good works can leave a stain.
- Blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.
 - #1 John 1:7.
- Blood of the Lamb.
 - #Washes our robes.
 - #Makes them white.
- d. White is the color of victory.
 - World Series champions received:
 - #Parade down Market Street in St. Louis.
 - *Last Sunday afternoon.
 - #Rally inside of Busch Stadium.
 - We saints who remain faithful even unto death.
 - #Revelation 2:10.
 - #Will receive:
 - *Parade down the streets of heaven.
 - *Rally around the throne of God.
 - *Robes that have been washed white.
 - +In the blood of the Lamb.
 - #It's something to look forward to.

B. What Will Our Legacy Be Here On Earth?

1. Our legacy of faith.
 - a. Just as there were saints.
 - Who passed on the faith to us.
 - b. How are we passing on the faith to others?
 - Think about that.
2. Our legacy of ministry.
 - a. Just as there were saints.
 - Who built the church we have inherited.
 - b. What will we leave behind that others might inherit?
 - Think about that.

3. In case you were wondering.
 - a. How I was going to work stewardship.
 - Into All Saints Sunday.
 - b. Think about this.
 - By the grace of God.
 - #Some of you have accumulated a comfortable nest egg.
 - Some of you may need that nest egg.
 - #To care for yourselves.
 - *In your remaining years.
 - #To leave to your children or grandchildren.
 - *Who may need assistance.
 - +As they make their way in the world.
 - But others of you.
 - #May not have any children.
 - #Your children are perfectly capable.
 - *Making their own way in the world.
 - Have you ever thought about?
 - #Leaving some of your nest egg to the church.
 - *Now.
 - *At the time of your death.
 - #Leaving a legacy of ministry.
 - *Not only will we be able:
 - +To look back.
 - +To look forward.
 - =By grace.
 - =In faith.
 - *Saints who come after us will be able:
 - +To look back.
 - +To look forward.
 - =By grace.
 - =In faith.

Concl: Until the whole multitude of God's saints.

- From every:
 - #Nation.
 - #Tribe.
 - #Peoples.
 - #Languages.
- Has received their robes.
 - #Washed white in the blood of the Lamb.