

Feast of All Saints
November 4th, 2018
Luke 6:20-31
St. George's Episcopal Church
Fr. Chris

The Blessing of Baptism

“Do to others as you would have them do to you. Do to others as you would have them do to you.”

Saints are lovers. Christians are supposed to be lovers and aspire to Sainthood.

This passage from Luke's Gospel reveals the core of the Teaching about God that Jesus gave us when he walked the earth. It is clear. There is no wavering interpretation: Love your neighbor as yourself. And who is my neighbor? You are and you and you! Everyone is my neighbor. Treat others in this way, Do for others the way you would have them treat you. Love your neighbor as yourself. Do not cultivate enemies or be troubled by them, but instead, try to bridge the gap and turn the other cheek. You are even to love your enemies as you love yourself. When you hate others, you are doing the opposite of what God wants us to do.

Jesus sat on the mount and taught his disciples these lessons. For many, they were hard to hear. It is difficult to apply love when you feel hurt. It is difficult to love when you are afraid, especially to love those who make you afraid. That was no different 2,000 years ago then it is today. God's message to us is that in the end, love always wins. Love is the powerful medicine that heals the breach and love is the balm of Gilead.

And God is a loving and compassionate God. God wants to bless us. God wants us to love as God loves us and to bless others in the way we have been so blessed.

Listen to Jesus's words about those whom God desires to bless:

The Poor

The Hungry

The Sad and weeping

The Hated

In other words, those who are hurting in this life. God promises to reverse their

fortunes with God's blessings. There will come a day soon that their fortunes will be reversed.

Jesus has words for the contrarians of the law of love, for those who take advantage of others, who look at life as a self referential, self centered, self-aggrandizing pleasure party. These are they who never count the consequences of their actions upon others, upon the least of these our brothers and sisters whom we were called to love as much as we love ourselves. The famous woes in Luke's version of the Sermon on the Mount are very clear. Woe to:

- The Rich who have received their consolation here...
- Those whose bellies are full of food beyond their need and whose homes are bursting with stuff...
- To those who laugh and party while the Titanic sinks, not hearing the cries of distress of those who are perishing from the ills and injustices of our world...
- Those who seek earthly honors and praise...

Again, Jesus is very clear about how there will be a reversal of fortunes for those who allow his words to fall on deaf ears. This teaching is essential for your life and the life of everyone in our community. Be fearful when it is not heard, digested and lived out. Be careful to listen to the still small, quiet voice of God as it still speaks to us today amidst the din and noise of life seeking to drown it out. But it won't and can't be drowned out. It will be heard. It is heard today.

All of the Sermon on the Mount is about God's promises to us. Life, blessing, abundance, and not necessarily in the things of this world as is oft misinterpreted, but an abundance of the blessings we really need and which truly lead to a happy, satisfied and peaceful life here and in the life to come. God promises us life with God if we become the lovers he commands us to be. How can you not love God with all your heart, mind and soul, when God died on a cross for you? Never mind even that, how can you not love God who loves and blesses you every day of your life, and is always walking with you, close by your side, his rod and staff to guide you? This is a God whose heart burns for you, full of love for you, and not the impersonal you, but the personal you that you see in the mirror.

God has kept and keeps God's promises.

Today we witness together to the promises we make in response to God's love:
[from the book of Common Prayer Baptismal Covenant]

Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of

bread, and in the prayers ?

We promise to be a part of the Christian Community by being in a Church Family.

Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

We promise to resist evil and repent. God responds with mercy and forgiveness.

Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

We Promise to be Evangelists.

Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

There is that promise to love!

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

Justice, Peace, Dignity. Love your neighbor as yourself. Do unto others as you would have them do to you!

This is us. And with Brooklyn Grace and her family we celebrate these promises today, and we pray for the grace of God to will and to keep them. Baptism is truly a blessing from God! AMEN