

## **Blest To Be a Blessing**

Sermon notes for the sermon  
Given by Rev. Dr. Gregory B. Young  
On Sunday, November 6, 2011

This past Tuesday was All Saints' Day and today our worship focuses on this celebration of the Church. Today we remember those who through faithful living have left their mark on us and on the life of the Church. We call them saints not because their lives were without fault but because through them we were afforded a glimpse of God. Their faith has touched us, inspired us, deepened our walk with God and with God's people, and made us better disciples of Jesus Christ.

Professor of New Testament, Neill Hamilton, has said, "When we get to heaven we will be in for a few big surprises not the least of which will be those saints who are seated at the heavenly banquet right next to Jesus. We will not recognize those saints because they were the quiet ones; the ones who followed Jesus so closely that we could not see them, only Jesus. They will be the unknown faithful and if we are smart we will count ourselves blessed to even be in the same room with them."

Last Tuesday and today as the church recalls with thanksgiving the lives of saintly women and men, it reads the beatitudes – the list of those named by our savior as "the blessed." I am sure that each of us has experienced the feeling of being blessed. We usually think of the word blessed as we do the word lucky: I was blessed to escape that accident without injury; thank God I passed that test; I

feel blessed that God has seen me through that ordeal. Sometimes it is as though the state of blessedness is like a good luck charm that we wear around our neck or carry in our pocket. As long as I have it all will go well but the minute something happens to us that is anything but a blessing we begin to question why God has abandoned us.

To be blessed is to live in the presence of God each and every moment of our lives. It is not having the "most favored status" with God that insulates and protects us from the trials of life. It is living in God's presence in such a way as to be able to endure the sufferings, trials and temptations of life while never letting them come between us and God. Blessed are the poor in spirit; the ones who have nothing but God to sustain them. Blessed are those who mourn; the ones who have lost all hope except the hope of the resurrection. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness; the ones who have learned, some the hard way, not to trust in all that glitters but to trust solely in God. The blest are those whose lives are firmly grounded in God and have been drawn so close to Jesus that all you can see is God's kingdom of justice and peace.

Today we are grateful for those in our lives who have shared their blessing with us.

Recently I was asked, "If you won the lottery would you share your wealth with me?" My first response was that I will never win the lottery because I do not play it. Then I said, if I were wealthy, it would be my joy to share with you.

Those whom we have met along life's way that we count as saints in our lives are those who have generously shared with us the blessedness of their

relationship with God. I invite you to take a few moments to consider and write down on the bulletin insert the names of those who you count among your saints. Perhaps you have new names to add to your list this year and I would encourage you to remember the names you have previously shared but write the new names that are added to your list this year.

The saints show us that we are blessed to be a blessing to others. The state of blessedness is not just for the individual. Just like every other gift from God the state of blessedness is for the good of the community of faith and for all of humanity. Think for a moment how different your life would be if those who you consider saints had kept their state of blessedness all to themselves. The transforming love of God in Jesus Christ that was offered to them was offered to us through them. We are blessed to be a blessing for others.

Who is it that is waiting for the blessing that you have to pass on? Perhaps a family member or a close friend; maybe a stranger on the street or someone in need; we are blest so that we in turn might share the blessing with others. It is in the sharing that Jesus Christ transforms the lost; the forgotten; the broken in body, mind, and spirit; the destitute; the impoverished into the saints of the kingdom. John Newton has captured it ever so simply when he wrote in 1779 "Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found; was blind but now I see." The Lord is glorious in all the saints and we praise God this day for those saints who have touched us and inspired us with God's love.