

Sermon for All Saints Day – November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
Pastor Russell Britton

Isaiah 25:6-9

*6On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples  
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines,  
of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.*

*7And he will destroy on this mountain  
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,  
the sheet that is spread over all nations;*

*8He will swallow up death forever.*

*Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces,  
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,  
for the Lord has spoken.*

*9It will be said on that day,*

*Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us.*

*This is the Lord for whom we have waited;*

*let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.*

Revelation 21:1-6a

*1I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,*

*“See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; 4He will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.”*

*5And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” 6aThen he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.”*

John 11:32-44

*32When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” 33When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. 34He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” 35Jesus began to weep. 36So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” 37But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”*

*38Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. 39Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.” 40Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” 41So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. 42I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” 43When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” 44The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”*

Children’s Perspective: What do you build? Legos – sand castles – love. Build with love.  
The people in your lives worth remembering *loved*.

Sing: Olam Chesed Yebineh *Music and Words by Rabbi Menechem Creditor*

2x Em D CMaj7 D Em

2x G D CMaj7 D Em

*I will build this world with love*

*And you must build this world with love*

*And if we built this world from love*

*Then God will build this world from love*

Where is Lazarus?

Right, he’s dead. But at one time, he was dead. THEN - “The dead man came out.”

The mystery of the Christian story, the wonder of the Christian story, and the *hope* of the Christian story is... that what was dead *can be alive*.

Unscripted reflection: Bible and pictures of Grandma and pastoral care book with notes of services.

Theologically we have got to note that this event in Jesus’ ministry is what leads the Pharisees and Caiaphas later in chapter 11 to state, “You know nothing at all! You do not understand that it is better for you to have one man die for the people than to have the whole nation destroyed.” (11:49-50) [Tyrannical leaders still at times function this way.]

Loss and bereavement expert Dr. Alan Wolfelt shares this quote on the hurt of death. “Death ends a life but not the relationship.” On this All Saints Day we recall those who though they are not with us *are very much with us*.

Need to speak here to the disappointing practice of some traditions which invoke a little verse from 1 Thessalonians 4:13 that says “let us not grieve *as those who have no hope*.” First, that’s Paul, not Jesus. We just heard Jesus wept, apparently Paul fancies himself needing to revise his own Lord’s grief strategy. Second, it doesn’t say don’t grieve at all, it says don’t lose sight of the hope found in Christ’s resurrection in the midst of loss. (If you’re looking for a better 4:13 check out Philippians which states I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength. – Like grieve.)

Some closing thoughts in rhyme:

*Pretending you have it more together than you  
actually do,  
don’t deceive yourself friends thinking that’s a  
virtue.*

*Jesus himself faces a friend in the grave,  
And sorrow overcomes him before he moves to  
save.*

*When in the dark of loss and sadness  
When your eyes see hurt, not gladness  
Know that the dark cannot go on,  
Eventually there comes the dawn.  
In Christ what weighs you down will not, cannot  
stay.  
As it is, as it was, as will be – God wins the day*

This All Saints Sunday may you reflect and give gratitude for the way saintly influences and relationships have woven and influenced you, guided and renewed you, chastened and enlivened you. Amen.