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St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Austin, MN 55912-1749  
Pastor Ted Barthels  
Sermon preached on  
November 14, 2021  
Saints Triumphant Sunday  
25<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture Lessons: Daniel 12:1-3, John 5:25-29

Hymns: 3; 606; 613:1-3; 613:4

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Hebrews 10:11-18

And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. <sup>12</sup> But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, <sup>13</sup> from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. <sup>14</sup> For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. <sup>15</sup> But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, <sup>16</sup> "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them," <sup>17</sup> *then He adds*, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." <sup>18</sup> Now where there is remission of these, *there is no longer an offering for sin.* (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, God our Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: Saints Triumphant

What a wonderful thought. But who are we talking about? As we address this Scriptural idea of saints triumphant, we will want it to

be in its correct context. The opening article in the November Lutheran Spokesman addresses this idea in regard to All Saints Day. The writer of that article wanted to dispel the idea that saints are a special class of believers who, first, are deceased and in heaven, and second, deserve some special recognition for all the good they did during their earthly sojourn. That article also pointed out the sad practice of misleading people to believe that they may somehow benefit from the good works that these other individuals have accumulated, or the merit or influence with God that they have attained because of their extraordinary life on earth. Good works don't make anyone a saint, not here on earth, or when they are in heaven.

It is faith in the merits of Christ Jesus alone that converts a lost sinner into a saint. It is faith in Christ Jesus worked in the heart by the powerful working of the Holy Spirit that effects this wonderful change so that God sees miserable sinners as holy and righteous before Him, and so these believers in Christ are called saints time and again by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Today is Saints Triumphant Sunday. At times we refer to believers that have gone before us into heaven as the Church Triumphant over against those of us remaining here on earth being the Church Militant, that we are continuing to be engaged in the battle against the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh, while those who are in haven no longer face those challenges.

In these last Sundays of the Church year as we think about the last times, we not only direct our attention to the Judgment coming on the Last Day, but also to the Triumph we possess that will find its full consummation in Jesus' second coming. May the Spirit fill our hearts with joy and gladness as we consider --

**THEME: Our Victory in Jesus' Sacrifice.**

### **I. Jesus Offered One Sacrifice for Sins Forever!**

We are the triumphant already now! We are victorious over sin and death. But we must realize every day that this victory is not of our making. How could it be when we still sin each and every day of our lives! How could it be when we see death around us,

including also those who are children of God, and even as we age into our senior years we see the ravages of sin's curse in our bodies, and know that the day of our departure from this earthly sojourn grows closer every day. The evidence would seem to be stacked against our assumption that we are among the saints triumphant.

The case for us possessing victory is found in Christ crucified. Even from the days of the early Church many people had difficulty realizing exactly how special Jesus' sacrifice for sin actually was. Many were familiar with all the sacrifices that were offered in the temple on their behalf day in and day out, year in and year out throughout the Old Testament era. Many were attracted to the ritual, and the outward show. It was indeed impressive and was something that one could see and remember. However, all those sacrifices actually accomplished nothing. They were merely ritual, repeated many hundreds of times to impress upon the people the need for a true and lasting sacrifice for sin, a sacrifice that actually did accomplish something.

Realistically, would one actually think that the blood of a bull or goat or lamb could make up for the death sentence sin brings upon each and every sinner in this world, each and every one of us?

The first lesson of our text regarding how and why we possess a victory touches on exactly how precious and special the sacrifice Jesus made upon the cross actually was. *"And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. <sup>12</sup> But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever ... For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified."* (v. 11-12, 14) The inspired writer makes the point we have already touched on, as impressive as it may have looked, animal sacrifices accomplished nothing, and the fact that they had to be repeated again and again and again proves they possessed no worth beyond the symbolism.

But what about the sacrifice Jesus made? He died once for sin, for all sin, for the sins of the entire world. He made an offering of His holy precious blood and His innocent sufferings and death, and by the infinite worth of His divine blood redeemed us all. One sacrifice for sins forever! Jesus takes our sins away! There is no

doubt about this. Jesus' one sacrifice paid for the sins of the world. He was the Lamb of God slain for all. This is the truth that undergirds our victory. It is our victory only because it has been credited to us by grace through faith. It was secured by Jesus.

God's response to Jesus' sacrifice further illustrates the wonder of the victory we enjoy in Jesus.

## **II. Jesus was exalted to the Right Hand of God.**

Think about the wondrous truth we celebrate on Ascension Day in late spring. Jesus ascending to heaven, going back to that place from which He came, going back with His mission of salvation accomplished. But here is an extremely important distinction that we need to remember between Jesus coming into this world at His birth and Jesus return to heaven at His ascension. Before the incarnation the Son of God was God, not true God and true man. After Jesus had secured our redemption with His death on the cross and the glory of our justification with His resurrection, it was time for the Son of God to return to His native land. The Son of God returned to heaven **also** according to His human nature. The Son of God is now and ever shall be Jesus, true God and true Man, who has been exalted also according to His human nature to the right hand of God. It is just as our text tells us. Jesus *“sat down at the right hand of God,<sup>13</sup> from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.* (v.12-13)

These verses are quoted from the Psalmist David speaking of the wonder of our salvation in the Christ who was to come into the world. Its significance for us as the Saints Triumphant is huge. Sitting at the right hand of any monarch is the position of power and authority. It tells us that God the Father was putting Jesus in charge of all things on earth. Jesus Himself taught us this. When He addressed His disciples before His ascension He told them, *“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”*

(Matthew 28:18)

Jesus is in charge! Even with all the wickedness we see in this world, Jesus is directing the course of human events to work for the advancement of the gospel for the salvation of souls. This gives us comfort and confidence as we go through this life in the midst

of so much sin and wickedness. The devil isn't winning. Jesus has won. He crushed Satan's head, destroyed the power of the old evil foe when Jesus redeemed us by His death on the cross. As His disciples, as His holy people we share in His victory, and benefit continuously from His rule over all the earth.

Can you be sure this is still the case? We may struggle with the image expressed by David in the Psalms and applied to Jesus regarding enemies becoming footstools. When kings of old won huge military victories over powerful enemies, it was a part of the act of surrender that the enemy king would be laid down on the floor before the victor, and the victorious king would set his foot on the neck of the vanquished enemy.

Jesus is at the right hand of God until each and every vanquished enemy has become Jesus' footstool. This will be completed at Jesus' second coming when He calls forth the dead from their graves. We read in 1 Corinthians 15: *Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.* <sup>25</sup> *For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.* <sup>26</sup> *The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.*" (1 Corinthians 15:24-26) At Jesus' return temporal death and the grave will be brought to an end, and then Jesus will deliver the kingdom to the Father. Our triumph as the saints of God will be brought to its consummation.

Until then we live with --

### **III. The Covenant of Our Salvation Secured.**

*"But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before,* <sup>16</sup> *"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,"* <sup>17</sup> *then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."* <sup>18</sup> *Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin."* (v.15-18)

"Here's the deal!" That is what our text is saying, "Here's the deal!". The Holy Spirit testifies to the conditions of the covenant (or contract) of salvation that God has established for our victory

over sin and death. There are three awesome points for us to treasure in our hearts.

The first is that we are renewed in the image of God that was lost in the Garden of Eden at the time of fall into sin. What we are talking about is not “looking like God.” or having a physical resemblance to Jesus. We are talking about being renewed spiritually to be like minded with Gd. Through faith, by the continued working of the Holy Spirit, we know the love of God. We have His law written in our hearts and minds, and the gospel leads us to love both God and our neighbor. Granted, as long as we are in this world we struggle with our sinful nature, but we rejoice in the Gospel and look for opportunities to glorify God and bless His holy name in our interactions with our fellow man. that is *“the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”* (Ephesians 4:24)

The second point in this covenant of our salvation is, *“Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”* Time and time again God spoke to the people of Israel and Judah calling them to repent, warning them of impending judgment because of their sins, and telling them again and again that He **remembered** their sins, each and every one of them. He remembered their unfaithfulness, and the wrongs they did against their neighbors. He remembered them and attributed guilt to the people. How scary is that? And yet the people of Israel and Judah scoffed and refused to return to the Lord.

With us it may be turned around. **We** remember our sins. There are sins that haunt us in the dark hours of the night. There are sins that afflict us with shame. These are the sins that we may be tempted to think God must still remember. But He doesn't! He doesn't because Jesus took our sins away. He doesn't remember our sins because there is a complete separation of sin from the sinner. You are among those who are being sanctified. Sanctified means made holy, being set apart from sin and from the world as the Lord's.

How is this possible? It is in the remission of sins. We use this phrase and I'm afraid we don't fully appreciate the wonder of grace and the magnitude of the good news found there. When doctors tell their cancer patients that their cancer is “in remission”

they jump up and down for joy, even though cancer might come back. With cancer we appreciate the word remission.

It's even better when remission is used with sin. With sin remission means that the sin is completely gone and will NOT come back. It is gone. It is gone so far and so absolutely that there is never again any need for a sacrifice for sin, not from you, and not from Jesus. His sacrifice for sin was once and for all. Your sins are forgiven. Your sin is in remission. You are among the saints of God. You are among Saints Triumphant!

***“Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ!”***

(2 Corinthians 2:14)

**AMEN.**

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Amen. (Romans 15:13)