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Luke 6:20-31  
Daniel 7:1-3,15-18  
Psalm 149  
Ephesians 1:11-23

November 3, 2019  
All Saints' Day

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Do you know those days when the one thing you desperately want to do is laugh? But, on the inside you just feel numb. In those moments you may find yourself looking around at other people...the ones who seem to have to together, the ones who don't look so sad, the ones who laugh...and you wonder why not me?

I read those words so many times this week in our Gospel, "Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh." It reminded me of the times that joy just isn't available. When you are just too deep in grief or sadness to get out of bed in morning. When you have given up on feeling good again. In those times, the promise of laughter seems impossible. And you wonder, how will things ever get better?

It would be easy to read those words from Luke with bitterness, as some trite assurance that whatever hurts will somehow just fade away. Blessed are you who are hungry, for you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you and exclude you. Really? It's like someone telling you everything is going to be OK when you are caught down deep in your grief or pain. (That's never helpful, is it?) So I kept asking myself...how do these verses help us truly overcome what hurts us?

And so, it kept nagging me...certainly, these verses must have some truth to them because there are those people who are filled, who do laugh, who somehow no matter what hardship or adversity has come their way are able to be the embodiment of these Gospel promises. They are the people who have inspired us and taught us, who have lived a life of contentment and resolve when things didn't go their way. Yet, they weren't looking through rose colored glasses. They seem to just be able to face life with peace and trust and hope. We look at them and wonder how do they do it, how do they keep joy at the center of who they are?

We might say these are the everyday saints in our lives. They aren't perfect. They make mistakes. They never claim to be anybody other than who they are. They have a strength about them...yet it's often a quite strength. You might describe these everyday saints as courageous, faithful, and humble. They trust the promises in the Gospel. Not only do they trust the Gospel, but it is an integral part of who they are.

They know what it means to reach out to others to show love and compassion when they see someone struggling because they know how it feels and they want to share their hope with you. And, if you know one of these people, you have certainly been the beneficiary of their love. They know what it means to be patient and resilient when things seem dire. They know what it means to find joy in the small things and hope out of times of grief or sadness. You might say they see the world through a holy, sacred lens.

So on All Saints Day, I wanted to ask...what makes an everyday saint? What can we learn from them when we find ourselves needing a little extra guidance in times of adversity?

I think the answer might be found in the simple fact that these people have allowed Jesus to take care of them. They have given their lives over so honestly and faithfully to Jesus that whatever they may have faced in life, they did so with a deep abiding trust that Jesus loves them. And it is that love that blessed them. Blessed them when they were hungry. Blessed them when they grieved. Blessed them when they were shut out. Christ's love blessed them. Now, how do you apply the lesson of these everyday saints to your own life when you are struggling to find blessing?

I want you to imagine this...when you feel defeated, when you feel grief-stricken or overcome with sadness or hopelessness, I want you to imagine Jesus laying his hands directly on you and saying....blessed are you who are poor. Blessed are you who are hungry. Blessed are you who weep and who are excluded and persecuted. Blessed are you. Imagine Jesus hands pressing down on your head. Imagine Jesus saying those words to you boldly and with conviction. Blessing you. Healing you. Protecting you.

Then, give yourself over to Jesus' love for you. Put all of your burdens right in his hands. That's the essential elements of the everyday saint. Someone who says, Jesus, here I am. All of me. Take me and transform me into your creation. I will trust in your love. I will trust in your will for me. Let your hands press down upon me and make me whole. Let the love of Jesus Christ bring laughter back into those dark places that you thought you had lost. Let the grace and mercy of Christ wash over you to make you a new creation. A blessed creation. A sacred creation. An everyday saint among us.

As one of my favorite poets, Steve Garnas-Holmes, writes:

*To be a saint is to be sanctified;*

*set apart for a sacred purpose.*

*That would be you.*

*Every breath of your life is for a sacred purpose:*

*to shed light, to radiate God's love.*

*You don't have to be influential,*

*or pious, virtuous or pure.*

*You have to be yourself.*

*The You of you is what God has made holy.*

*You are God's Beloved.*

*All you have to do is act like it.*

*Everything you do today is an opportunity*

*to embody God's love,*

*not by your effort or skill,*

*but by the love you embody.*

*The light of God is in you.*

Thanks be to God. Amen.