

Ps 34; Rev 7:9-17; 1 Jn 3:1-3; Mt 5:1-10

All Saints Sunday 10-29-17

Imagine a physicist such as Albert Einstein trying to do science without mathematics. Or, imagine someone who is tone-deaf trying to be a music critic. In the same way, trying to learn about Jesus Christ cannot be done without spiritual discernment. Nature takes us only so far. We need the awareness and acknowledgement of the supernatural. To understand and share the Gospel – the good news – we may not assume that “God cannot become flesh or save humanity from sin.” (Tom Oden, *The Word of Life*, Harper, San Francisco, 1989, p 528) We must proceed from this premise: Jesus Christ, fully God, fully human. Otherwise, we are like a sculptor without clay or marble – or a mathematician without numbers. Theology is an ancient and honorable field of inquiry – it explores the history of salvation, that is the Life of God among God’s people.

Our Scriptures today help us center upon our Savior Jesus Christ – Where He is – His Character – and as much as we can, His Appearance (seeing Him as He is). “Faith comes by hearing and

hearing by the Word of God". (Ro 10:17) The Word is continually being proclaimed all through the cosmos. There is a divine call going forth to tune in to the things of God and seek shelter in Him – receive from Him spiritual food and drink – seek shade from the heat of the sun – follow this Shepherd who is the Lamb. Follow Him to springs of the water of Life.

Where is Jesus? Saint John of Patmos has given us this stunning scene around the throne of God. We hear, we read, that John was taken to heaven in a vision. He sees the Lamb of God in the center of the throne – The Throne. All around the throne are the saints – a multitude robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They are singing praise. The angels are there. The twenty-four elders are there. And, the four living creatures are there: the eagle, the man, the ox and the lion.

I do not know whether this place where Jesus is – is actually “up” or not. It may be in another dimension or another string or another sphere. But it is a place where Jesus, risen from death,

lives in the flesh – a human being who is God, resurrected to new, glorious life.

The Book of Hebrews tells us that priests cannot pray for us at all times because they are mortal and pass away. “But, Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. Therefore, He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.” (Heb 7:24-25) He is on the throne, and He is interceding continually for you and me – and all the saints.

We have witnesses. Scripture says Jesus is at the right hand of His Heavenly Father. John of Patmos saw it. Stephen, deacon of the Jerusalem church, saw it when he was being stoned to death. The Gospel writers know it. Paul and the other writers of the letters in the New Testament also bear witness that Jesus is at the right hand of God. John says that the Lamb, Jesus, the Word of God is “in the center of the throne.”

What is the character of Jesus Christ? We have today His take on the Law. In His divine authority He proclaims:
Poverty of spirit
Mourning (for the world)
Gentleness
Hunger and thirst for righteousness
Purity of heart
Peacemaking
Accepting persecution for holding to the right
 And for your faith in Christ

It would take weeks to unpack these mysterious virtues – and the wonderful blessings that come to those who seek to be like our Savior. The beatitudes reveal some of Jesus' character traits.

We have asked: Where is Jesus? What is Jesus' character? **Now, what does it mean to see Jesus Christ as He is?**

He came into the world about 5 or 4 BC, and lived to about 30 or 33 AD. Jesus is not described physically in the Bible. He was ethnically a Semite – a Jew – dark hair and skin, probably a

full beard. He wore traditional clothes: a robe over a garment like a tunic, and sandals. Isaiah prophesies that, "...he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him." (Is 53:2)

When John saw Jesus in a divine vision, he described Him this way:
"His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet *were* like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice *was* like the sound of many waters."
(Rev 1:14-15)

In his first letter to the churches, John comments on the day yet to come when each person and creature on the planet will see Jesus.

Eugene Peterson's version of our Epistle for today:
"What marvelous love the Father has extended to us! Just look at it—we're called children of God! That's who we really are. But that's also

why the world doesn't recognize us or take us seriously, because it has no idea who he is or what he's up to.

But friends, that's exactly who we are: children of God. And that's only the beginning. Who knows how we'll end up! What we know is that when Christ is openly revealed, we'll see him—and in seeing him, become like him. All of us who look forward to his Coming stay ready, with the glistening purity of Jesus' life as a model for our own.” (1 Jn 3:1-3 MSG)

When the Lord Jesus returns to our world, everybody will be able to see Him. A great resurrection will take place at His presence. His true followers will rise and go to meet Him. He will bring us with Him and establish His kingdom here forever. All the saints will be able to look into His face and see Him just as He is – world without end. Amen.