

# Faithfulness as your Witness

ALL SAINTS DAY

Isaiah 25:6-9    1 Thess 4:13-18    1 Peter 1:3-5    Luke 6:12-19

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Peter, James, and John;  
Andrew, Phillip, and Bartholomew;  
Matthew, Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus;  
Simon the Zealot, Jude, and Matthias.

You know these names as *the 12 Apostles*, the personally chosen, eye, ear, and hand witnesses to Jesus, His life, His death, and His resurrection. These are *the 12 witnesses* who have heard, seen, touched, and investigated in order to confirm that Jesus really is the Son of God who has risen from the dead. There is no greater group of men than these 12 in the history of the world! This is an elite group of men chosen by the Son of God Himself to be His official witnesses!

But yet of these 12, we know very little about most of them. You may have even had a hard time remembering all their names! We certainly know Peter, John, and Matthew, because they wrote books in the New Testament for us. But the other nine we know very little about, perhaps a story or two at the most.

*But that is good news for us.* It reminds us that in the Kingdom of God, the focus is on Christ and not on ourselves. The glory goes to the Lord and not to us. Anything that we do is because of His power at work in and through us. In the Christian faith and life, the glory is God's and the focus is on Christ! As John the Baptist put it: *He must increase and I must decrease!*

Can you imagine if the focus and emphasis was on us? If the Lord turned the spotlight on you, all of your sin, disobedience, rebellion, and immorality would be highlighted! It would be a shameful thing; we would all be scurrying under rocks and scrambling for cover in order not to be seen. Our sin is a terrible thing; it is not anything we are proud of nor do we want it publicly exposed! In fact, rather than boast, we renounce it! We repent of our sin, and thank God that He forgives us because of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thankfully, the Lord promises to never ever remember your sins again! Your sins have been forgiven, and they remain forgiven!

That is why the glory is God's and the focus is on Christ! The focus and glory is not on us, nor even *the 12 Apostles*. Jesus is the sinless one who lived a perfectly obedient life at all times and in all things. He has nothing shameful in His life; there is no disobedience nor rebellion in His Spirit; He was never tangled up in immorality. He never had a moment of weakness; He never intentionally sinned. Jesus is holy and righteous in all things at all times, and His holy and righteous life is given to you as a gift of salvation. Like a robe that covers over you, Jesus' righteous life covers over your shameful life. God the Father never sees your disobedience and rebellion, it is forgiven by the death of Jesus on the cross, and you are covered over by His perfectly obedient and holy life. God the Father in Heaven chooses to see the righteousness of Christ that covers you, and He promises not to look at nor remember your shameful sin.

*This is why the glory is God's  
and the focus is on Jesus!*

Neither the glory nor the focus is on us nor *the Apostles*.

Today we are celebrating “**All Saints Day**”! Today we remember those who have gone before us and have died in the faith. Today we thank God for their faith and life and that we got to know and love them. But, we are not here to herald the accomplishments of great people; and we certainly are not here to pray to the dead nor for the dead.

*All Saints Day is a time to thank God  
that He was gracious and merciful  
to poor, sinful people that we loved and cared about,  
and who have now died in Christ.*

Ironically, as we remember our loved ones who have gone before us, and once again, **the focus is really on Jesus** and not on them! We celebrate the eternal life that the Crucified and Risen Lord Jesus Christ freely gave to them!

The people of the world strive for a “legacy”; they dream of doing something grand that will “make a difference” and “change the world.” It's a prideful delusion that puffs them up as they try to cover their sin, appease their guilt, hide their shame, or find meaning to a life without Christ.

As Christians, we do not live our lives trying to leave a “legacy”; nor chasing after dreams of self-importance or delusions of grandeur. We live humble lives of faith; we live in Christ and give glory to God. We live simple lives trusting Christ; our lives are marked by **faithfulness** to God and His Word. That is where you will find true meaning in life and where you will make a difference in people's lives.

*In Christ, we live humble and simple lives of faithfulness...*

- ⇒ be faithful to your wife
- ⇒ be faithful to your husband
- ⇒ be faithful to your kids
- ⇒ be faithful in your work
- ⇒ be faithful to your friends
- ⇒ be faithful as a citizen
- ⇒ be faithful to your Church
- ⇒ be faithful to the Lord your God.

That is how we live as God's people. That is what we remember and celebrate in the lives of the “saints” that have gone before us --- and especially today, those that we remember and thank God for.

Faithfulness is how we remember *the 12 Apostles*; whether or not we can remember their names or know their life story.

Faithfulness is a fruit of the Holy Spirit at work in you; it is a gift given to you by Christ in Holy Baptism; it is how you glorify your Father in Heaven, and it is how you love your neighbor.

Be faithful: Trust God, and then do your duty, love your neighbor, and let your light shine for Christ. In that way, the Glory goes to God; and the emphasis is on Jesus, the Son of God and the Savior of the world!

Amen!