

November 4, 2018  
**All Saints and Our Saints**  
1 Corinthians 15:50-58  
Rev. Dr. Charles Yoon

Today is All Saint's Day - a feast day that has been celebrated for hundreds of years within the church, particularly within the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican churches. But in our Methodist tradition arising out of the Protestant Reformation, often not much is said about the Saints and All Saints Day.

When we think of the saints, we often think of people like Paul, or John or James, and the other apostles. Or we think of people like St. Francis, St. Teresa, St. Catherine, or St. Ignatius of Loyola. In short, we think of those people that the church has long declared to be saints and those people whose faith and vision and moral integrity has been thoroughly examined and widely known.

The word 'Saint' derives from the word '*sanctus*' - which we translate as the word 'holy.' In the Bible, especially in all of Paul's letters, the word '*sanctus*' is applied to the company of those who believe in Christ Jesus and who strive to live faithfully according to his teachings and his example. In the beginning of the Letter to the Ephesians Paul tells them who is writing and to whom he is writing. *"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus – grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."* (1:1) In Romans 1 Paul said to the Roman church. *"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle... to all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints. Grace to you and peace...."* (1:1-15)

A saint is someone whose life is dedicated to the worship of God and the doing of God's will. A saint is someone who inspires in us the desire to know and follow Christ Jesus. A saint is a person who is an example of faithfulness. Saints are all around us. Saints are people who are holy and people who believe in Christ Jesus and seek to live faithfully. So we are saints. We are called to be saints.

We, who are called to be saints, need to have a time in our worship to think about who the saints of God are and to thank God for them. This is a time to give thanks to God for all the saints and especially for those saints who have touched our lives and showed to us something of Christ's love, something of God's glory.

Think of the saints who have touched your lives. Think of those who have inspired in you a deeper faith in God. Think of those whose love and whose testimonies have awakened something in your soul. This morning we remember our family members and friends who passed away since last All Saints Sunday. And we will remember those who were faithful servants of God and went to heaven before us to be with God during the Communion. Let us take a moment to think of those whom we want to thank God for. Think of those who inspired you to faith. Think of those who's dedication to God and who show God's love have warmed your hearts.

In today's text Paul encourages us, saying, *"My dear brothers (and sisters), stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."* (58) We, brothers and sisters in Christ, are all saints. We can be a saint to one another. Let us give ourselves fully to the work of the Lord at Faith Church. As Paul said, we know that our labor in the Lord will not be in vain. Your time, effort, treasures, and labor will have abundant fruits someday in this world and in the world to come.

On this All Saints Sunday we should all remember those people who are not in our lives any more. When we come to communion and light a candle, let us take a moment to remember them. I would love to have all the saints around this communion table with us. As the apostle's creed says, "I believe in the communion of saints." As we gather around this table, remember that we are sharing Sunday dinner with all the saints in heaven and on earth. Amen.

### **Question for Reflection**

Think of the saints who have touched your lives and those who have inspired in you a deeper faith in God. How did they touch and inspire you?