

Bible Study for Wednesday 28th October 2020

Preparation

In our Bible Study this week we will be reading the following lectionary readings set for All Saints' Day (1st November).

- **Revelation 7:9-17**
- **Psalm 34:1-10, 22**
- **1 John 3:1-3**
- **Matthew 5:1-12**

When exploring this week's readings try following this pattern:

Pray a simple prayer first or remind yourself of the words of Psalm 34:1 "I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth."

Read one of the readings

Pause

Reflect on the reading

Ask yourself

- What does this reading say about God's holiness?
- Does the reading talk to me about saintliness?
- How does this reading challenge or excite me?

If something in particular strikes you from the reading, try reading the whole reading again and see if something more emerges for you.

After your reflection, you may wish to move on to another reading, but you don't have to look at them all.

When you have finished your reflections for the day, pray the final prayer:

Final Prayer: Holy God, your light shines within us all. Do not let not doubts or shadows speak to my heart, rather, let my heart welcome the light of your love. **Amen.**

If you want to read a short reflection please see next page.

Reflection

What does it mean to be a saint or holy person? (both are “Hagios” in Greek).

Thinking about this, I was drawn to Revelation, (Chapter 4) where Moses encountered God’s holiness,

“Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come.” (4:8)

This reading connects with Exodus 3 and the revelation to Moses, at the burning bush. There, standing on “holy ground” Moses meets with God, the great “I AM” of all eternity (I WAS, I AM, I WILL BE).

A Saint generally, means someone belonging to a group of people who have been considered and declared holy by the church, but actually, in the Bible, the word for saint or holy (Hagios) is used to describe God, God’s Spirit and certain people.

Examples of holy people include John the Baptist, who was a holy man, (Mark 6:20) also, more widely, “God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved” (Colossians 3:12) see also “as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; for it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’” (1 Peter 1:15-16). “Holy” is also used as a way to refer to those in the church – 2 Corinthians 13:12 “all the saints send you their greetings.” That language was picked up and used by the Puritans to describe themselves, in the 17th century.

These readings suggest that God wants to share something of God’s own nature, that is, holiness, with human beings.

Looking at the readings set for All Saints’ Day, the Beatitudes from Matthew suggest to me that by living in the spirit of the Beatitudes, it is possible to enter into the heavenly places, become a child of God and to see God. Such things make a person holy, So the beatitudes are not only about being happy or blessed, but also about becoming “holy ones” or saints. In 1 John, we read that as God’s children, “we will be like him, for we will see him as he is” (3:2). Being or becoming holy, it seems, is about God and being in God’s presence rather than about us being alone and being holy individually. Maybe people can only be holy if they become themselves in God’s eyes. In the psalm, which also talks of “holy ones”, we read, “look to [God] and be radiant; so your faces shall never be ashamed.” (34:5) Is this radiance is like Moses’ face reflecting God’s glory?

And then, in Revelation, the vision of a “great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands.” (Rev 7:9) This multitude are surely holy, for who else could stand in God’s presence? They have found their ultimate identity in the Presence of the Holy One.

So here are two questions I ask myself:

- Am I standing on holy ground today?
- If being saintly means sharing in some of God’s holiness, what does that mean for my life?