**“Blessed Are”**

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Revelation 7:9-17

1 John 3:1-3

Matthew 5:1-12

All Saints’

“Blessed **are** those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs **IS** the kingdom of heaven. … These **are** the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They **have** washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord, and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Bridge

Freeing the Gospel (with **absolution** being a proclamation rather than some penance of efforts that never end in this life so move onto another existence called “Purgatory” to finishing-up the process of working to secure Heaven’s Paradise), **the Reformation was, therefore, for the freeing of “sainthood” from its captivity to a corrupt doctrine**. Before it (and still, today, such that the Reformation must still be argued for), people under false systems aren’t given the security of God’s gifts through Means Promised. Just **waiting** for a **possibility of Heaven** by human effort or decision, deceptions or just inaccuracies about the Gospel-gift deny the **sufficiency of the bloodshed of Jesus** and **what** **that** **Guarantees as gift by baptism and faith**. “**Canonization**” or “**Beatification**” ought to be (and should) be **celebrated here and now** for its here and now security. **Promises-of-it need to, just, be received with an amen**.

Yet **still to this day**, security is **kept from people or only hoped for (without appropriate reason in our being joined to Christ’s sufficiency)** … while that **objective security and correct confidence based on God’s Promises** can be **freeing**. People still get taught though only a **probable good future** when days are given to be truly **enjoyable and at peace** (that **joy** **by virtue of outside-of-ourself reasons** called **the Promises of God upon Means of His bestowal of grace**.

“**SAINTHOOD**” was, in reality, **what Luther fought for in (what got called) the Reformation**.

**Roman Catholic Christians** are still tragically subject to a **system of only potential future “sainthood” … nothing now**. And **Evangelicalism** tragically makes no special point to “sainthood”, **not attuned to the** **reasons why “sainthood” gets accounted** so **celebratory in this life**.

For **Rome**, **Step 1 in the “process of sainting someone (and it’s a long, after this life process)”** is to (upon death from this life) wait 5 earthly years (minimum) to begin an earthly approval process toward Heaven. For 5 earthly years, a person’s soul is (in a place called “Purgatory”) purged of venial (or minor) sins, after which authorities from a person’s parish investigate deeds presumed accomplished by the departed applicant. **Salvation** was (remember, for the church that the Reformation was trying to correct) **God’s work** to start things (and that’s Good) but **human work** (or meritorious deeds / a wrong assumption) to finish the process of saving oneself … which never-ever gets finished while in this life. 5 years (unless there’s an exception) is a minimum-stay in “Purgatory” after death to continue paying “**penance**” (which **isn’t absolution or the forgiveness of one’s sins for the sake of Christ’s bloodshed, but work / personal work**). One has to (in that wrong and tragic system) **save themself … and do that after death**.

Once the authorities of a local church feel that there’s a case for advancing a soul beyond “Purgatory”, “**evidence**” is taken to Rome (**Step 2**) and the Purgatorial “resident” gets **then** able to be called a “Servant of God” … not yet, though, “saint”. A “**case file’s**” opened and, in Rome, the “Beatification” process becomes **official** and **investigators** are assigned.

What’s **investigated** is, then (in **Step 3**), **documented** as a “**file-of-evidence**” (or their “**Acts**”) in **life of** “**heroic virtues**” that the committee can consider writing about.

The final step (**Step 4**) is, then, documentation of “**verifiable miracles attributed to the intercession of a soul while they’re in Purgatory**”. Somehow in this, relation has to be drawn between prayers made **through this soul on behalf of one on earth** which caused healing or provided what the person’s intercessions were called-on for … which is considered **miraculous** **because of** the departed one’s intercessory efforts.

After a case is made for **2 such miracles** **to have come from that soul’s help**, the Pope might rule (**Step 5**), and **that** **ruling** is, then, **what** “beatifies” (or “canonizes”) a saint. “Sainthood” can, **THEN**, be thought **secured** and, I assume, **counted upon** by loved ones waiting for that … something celebrated much later than we do since we’ve named ours **already with Christ, and that immediately upon their having passed from this life**, perfected “sainthood” remembered by us publicly at things like our day’s “All Saint’s Day” remembrance and celebration.

**We** remember and, so, celebrate what we’re Promised to **possess even already**: security and confidence through God’s Gospel Promises directed at us on a cross and at a baptismal font and in every absolution that we hear after our confessions: that Jesus died to shed **sufficient blood for all of our sins (every one)** and that we’ve been **baptized / adopted / reborn by washing and Promise in that / “sainted”, Promised to join His resurrection baptismally just as we did His death** knowing for sure that (on Jesus’ coat-tails / connected to Him that **gifted and objective way**) we go **directly to Heaven after a death here or His return** (as the Lord told another dying man: **“today you’ll be with me in Paradise”**). **“Sainthood”** we’re **Promised by baptism and faith … to have it now**, **Guaranteed by what God calls the Promised “deposit”** **of the Holy Spirit securing, in us, an “inheritance” by baptism** so **enjoyable by us in faith every day**. Martin Luther called baptized believers sinners yet, also simultaneously, **saints**: still **in this world** andstruggling with a “saintly” existence given us yet battled by our old self but **Promised** **“sainthood”** (becoming what the Father in Heaven calls beloved and sons and daughters): “See what kind of love the Father’s given to us, that we should be **called children of God**; and **SO WE ARE**. Beloved, we **are** **God’s children** **NOW**.”

Rome (as I said … and the **reason for the Reformation**) denies (tragically) the “**now**” part, missing the Gospel of the **sufficiency of** **Christ Jesus death for sinners**. Evangelicalism misses the Gospel of the **objective Gift of “sainthood” by baptismal Promise**, denying (tragically, as well) the Romans’ 6 **Promise** of that: **“baptized into Christ, buried with Him through baptism into His death, therefore with Him in a resurrection like His”** … so the **Reformation fight for the Gospel (salvation by Promised identifiable and all-accomplishing gift) continues on**.

Text

In our Gospel Reading, Jesus is talking about those who “**Blessed are**” (and **have it, then, to KNOW**) … not a **will be** or **might be**, but an “**ARE**” (an existence by gift and edict). “**Beatification**” is, then, proclaimed as what **He announced and Promised** to disciples yet **on this earth**. It was His Sermon on a Mount to **people still here: Beatified in “Beatitudes”**. So, “**Who are these**” John asked an “elder” about while he was shown the **whole multitude of the saints** in “The Revelation”. “**They** are **those** not who’ve **done** but those who’ve **had done upon them** from out of a **baptismal Promise a “white-robing” of the righteousness of CHRIST**. That “**robing**” “saints” people out of (**even while on this earth**) “the great tribulation” of bondage to Satan into a **Militant** **Church**. While here we are embattled yet fully redeemed and saved and secured, baptized into the gift of “sainthood” / “**sealed**” as John was told of “saints” in the Revelation, to be finally **Triumphant** when perfected at our passing, forever away then from Hell’s even threat.

Jesus spoke “**Beatitudes**” that **were not** “Blessed **would you be if**” announcements, but (rather) proclamations about a **present-existence He bestows upon disciples baptismally and through faith united to Him and His cross and empty tomb**: “**Blessed (or beatified) are** those poor in spirit” (made to know themselves dependent **on God**), “**Blessed (or beatified) are** those who mourn” (of their own sin, acknowledging all of it), “**Blessed (or beatified / saints) are** those meek” (as in humbled before God and accepting that position in His presence), “**Blessed (saints) are** those who hunger and thirst for righteousness” (desiring what God gives like we’re gathered for it), “**Blessed are** those merci**ful**” (knowing how much mercy **God’s granted to us**), “**Blessed are** the pure in heart” (who don’t seek-out other gods, but know, really well, the only True One), “**Blessed are** the peacemakers” (just as we share peace, or forgiveness, beyond us or among ourselves). “**Blessed are** those who are persecuted for righteousness sake” and “when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on the Lord’s account”. Saints become **martyrs by testimony of that “sainthood” in Christ** (**we** gather, visibly, testifying to our faith, cars parked at a church with us so often kneeling at the rail of an altar **doing what God calls us to do**, **baring** **witnessing** by what we **do**). **That’s** **martyrdom**.

**Application**

**Saints are Promised things**: **ours “is (even now)** the kingdom of heaven; **we** shall be comforted; **we** shall inherit the earth; **our** quest for righteousness and desire for mercy gets satisfied. We **get shown** God by His Word and Promises. **Saints are** **called (and we hear it)** “sons of God” … “children of God” now.

With that, a **blessed (indeed) All Saints’ Day … to all of us so Promised**. May we always **rejoice knowing that blessedness as all** **for Jesus’ sake**. Thank you, Lord. Amen.