Sermon- All Saints Day 2020 Nov. 1

Title: “Evil or Good; Sinner or Saint?”

Text: Rev. 7:9-17, 1John 3:1-3

Prayer

Salutation

(Read Rev.7:9-12)

**Bridge**

**Good morning, Sinner! Good morning, Saint! When you woke up this morning and did your devotions, remembering your baptism with the sign of the cross, saying the morning prayer, and thanking God for all He has done, did you consider which of these people you were? If we are honest with ourselves and are able to spiritually discern what we are according to scripture, we know for a fact that we are sinners, lost without a way of reconciling with God without help. And those who have gone before us, they too, had to determine what they were as well. Under the Law, God had shown the people of Israel the way for them to go, the way to follow Him and remain in fellowship with Him. Both God and His people soon learned that to follow the Law comes the knowledge of sin. They found out that they were sinners. For not one man, woman or child could follow the Law perfectly as God intended. To do so was simply impossible. Job declared this in his words saying, “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? There is not one. What is man that he can be pure?”**

**When Adam and Eve ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you would think that this knowledge would penetrate deep into the soul of man so he would never forget what is purely “good”, like he was to start, and purely “evil” as he had become. But I have to say that that first sin has blinded us to even recognizing that knowledge, that is how purely evil our condition became and how it is to this day. Even though God has written His Law on our hearts, we still can’t see nor discern what is good and what is evil. Why do I say that? Because of self-righteousness.**

**In our day and age of humanism and all the other isms we struggle against, there is only grey, good, and evil on a sliding scale, and no distinct black or white. Relativism reigns, and Biblical truth is only truth in so much as your own interpretation goes. It's why we come to the conclusion that we aren't half bad and we think we really don't need a Savior. And when you say this to someone, I have had many people say, “Well that’s your interpretation”. Then I point out that scripture interprets scripture, and the conversation ends in a huff. For you see, many people can’t see nor want to see what is evil and what is good. How is it done? By scripture interpreting scripture, for in that truth is found. Therefore, as we know we are sinners from scripture, let’s look at the texts I’ve chosen for today and start there.**

**Law**

**Both in First John and in the Revelation texts, the theme is PRAISE from a great many people. Why? Because they are saved, counted, redeemed, and included as children of God. That means all of these people in heaven that John has seen have been saved from something. What is that? Sin and the power of the Devil. Remove the “D” from devil and what do you have? Evil. Today, some people are so blind that they don’t recognize that the devil exists at all. This is contrary to scripture. Jesus was tempted in the desert by him, to give you an example from scripture. Today, that same devil tempts us likewise, so that he may confuse us, trick us, and blind us to that same old lie he told Eve, “You won’t die!” Jesus was tempted and prevailed. We don’t even get past day without failing. But to not be able to discern what is good or evil shows just how deeply we have gone into sin since the fall. We are falling for lie upon lie upon lie.**

**Today, that is so true, we must try to discern every day, what is true and what is false. They say that the world doubles its knowledge every twelve days. Consider that, for it makes one feel very ignorant and only a computer could store so much in its memory. Compare that to 1970 when a good encyclopedia set would do. To be able to discern the good from the evil in all that information is seemingly impossible. Or is it? Especially in the world on this secular day of Halloween. Confusing much? For our kids, most certainly. For we adults, unfortunately.**

**We must, as the bride of Christ, His Saints, use the Scriptures to discern this and many other things as we live in the world, so that we are not tempted by the devil and his demons to become part of it. If we do fall to these temptations, we become just like those of the world that John said in verse one of the text that, “does not know us because it did not know Him.” We have to make many decisions every day in order to live in the world. To make a living, to protect our families, to keep from sinning. In order to keep from becoming like those that do not believe and abide in Christ. That is a huge task! Some people go to their horoscopes or to seers with crystal balls and tarot cards, which is also found in the Bible, but it is unequivocally condemned.**

 **But, if we are in Christ, the Spirit guides us and helps us. He places the Word right in our face when we are tempted to make the wrong decision. To do what we know we heard was wrong last week in the sermon. To be kept strong then, we put on that armor of God that Paul speaks of. In order for it not to become rusty, one must allow the Spirit to lead us to use the right piece at the right time when you make those eternal decisions you do each day. The Comforter (because that’s what He is when He helps us), will as Jesus promised, show us the way unto salvation. It’s almost like He grabs you and shakes you saying, “Don’t do that! Remember what you were taught!”**

**This would be a great place for me to insert all of the issues of the day. To say this policy is evil, that candidate is wrong, or this position is inaccurate. I don’t have to stand here and tell you if this or that is wrong or evil. The Spirit does that. Listen to Him! That is what has happened since Pentecost to all the saints whom God has sent the Spirit to. And they have done so, for in John’s vision, if it were not for the Holy Spirit, heaven would have been empty, for we and all men are sinners to the core and we allow the evil one to lead us to be just like Adam and Eve. We are naturally sinners.**

**Gospel**

 **So, you are thinking, “Pastor, how can I be in this great cloud of witnesses, all these saints in the great multitude?” Only by this, for we find in the catechism these words, “We find salvation only in the Gospel, which tells us that Christ as our Substitute fulfilled the Law and suffered and died for us.” On the cross Christ redeemed us by becoming the curse for us for the Word says, “Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” In Baptism, you were joined to Christ, and you became a child of God and one who the Spirit indwells. And this is such Good News! And it is for us all, offered and received by those we will be joining in heaven. They are from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages. Our families! All those that the Spirit has sanctified and brought to faith in Christ and led from the sinful mindset that is hostile to God and that proclaims us sinners. Through the work of the Spirit, we are in the faith and He enables us to lead a godly life. To be able to discern between good and evil. He leads us here- to the Word. Instead of relying on others for your information, go HERE! And we are saved by grace though faith and not by our works. And when we join that glorious throng, clothed in white robes, we will proclaim along with them, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb!”**

**When the blue hymnal came out in 1982, I was amazed. How so? It was the song, “This is the Feast”. I said, even audibly the first time I saw and sang it, “Wow”. For you see, it is by the power of the Spirit it should be sung now before we sing it in heaven for in verse 12 of our Rev. text it says, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.” We, the faithful, the Saints of God who remain in Christ until the end, will receive this blessing.**

**Conclusion**

**So now you know what you are. Yes, you do. In this life a Sinner of great magnitude. But, you are also a Saint, saved by God by His Son, and preserved by the Holy Spirit. You are able to know what is good and evil by the power of the Word. We need not search for answers anywhere else. There is no other place to go, for He has the words of eternal life. Alleluia! We sing that, too! May we all look forward to our sure hope in the Gospel of Christ until His return, waiting in eager expectation, that we may join our loved ones and our great King for eternity. Amen.**

**May the peace of God that surpasses all our understanding keep your minds and hearts in Christ Jesus until that day. Amen.**