

All Saints' Day – 2025

Revelation 7:2-17

1 John 3:1-3

Matthew 5:1-12

Tyler Gamble is a saint. Tyler Gamble Spurgeon is a holy one, washed in the blood of Christ. The water of baptism appears rosy-red to those who walk by faith. God has tucked the blood of His Son into the sacrament of Holy Baptism. The blood that was shed 2000 years ago is the agent for our holiness. The Word of God is a bloody Word (Romans 1:16-17). The Spirit brings Christ's righteousness to us through the Word and the Sacraments. Christ's righteousness invades our being. We become holy because that is what God wills. You can't buy it. You can't achieve it by your moral rectitude. You can't earn it by your level of devotion. Blessedness is a gift. Blessedness is God's grace in action. Tyler is a saint because that is what God wills Tyler to be. God Himself is the active one, accomplishing in this young lad what He has long planned, what He has long constructed. Christ died to make Tyler a saint. Christ rose again to make Tyler a saint. St. John the Divine, St. John the Seer had a vision of heaven, a great multitude clothed in white robes. His tour guide asked John if he knew who this mighty throng was. John wisely demurred. "Sir, you know" (Revelation 7:14). John and you are told: "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" (Revelation 7:14).

Six of our family of faith have been transferred from the church militant to the church triumphant in the last year. During the prayer of the church their names will be read, and a chime will sound. The chime will linger in the air. The chime will bring pain to some and hope to others and both to others still. We remember our dead. We remember our blessed dead. "Blessed are those who die in the Lord" (Revelation 14:13). "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21). For us believers, life in this world ends in heaven. Those we love have preceded us but we are on our way. We are blessed now and it will show. We are Christians! The life of Christ Jesus is in us (John 17:22-23). It *will* show.

The Lord Jesus ascends a mountain to offer a self-revelation. It is the Sermon on the Mount, the first extended teaching which our Lord offers in the Gospel of Matthew. He describes Himself and He describes His church. The Beatitudes begin the Sermon on the Mount. The Beatitudes are descriptive. This is who you are as a Christian. This is God's will in your life. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3). The poor in spirit are those who don't rely on their own resources. The poor in spirit are those who've put their total reliance on God and do not place their confidence in anything that this world has to offer. The poor in spirit have a keen understanding of their own poverty. The poor in spirit know that it is God who provides what we need. Remember, St. Paul describes our Lord this way: "[though] being in very nature God, [he] did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross!" (Philippians 2:6-8 NIV). The Lord Christ is the Blessed One (Romans 9:5). Jesus is the prototype of ALL the beatitudes. The Lord mourned over Jerusalem as they blindly ignored the time of God's visitation (Luke 19:44). Jesus hungered and thirsted for righteousness.

His Father's will was Jesus' food (John 4:31-34) and on the cross His thirst for our salvation reached its apex (John 19:28).

The beatitudes are descriptive – first of Christ, then of you. An elevated life – a Christian leads an elevated life, a life of love and beauty and sacrifice, and fidelity, and trust in God and hope for heaven. There is no life as meaningful as this. Meaning; are you in search of meaning? Self is dull. Self is a spiritual cul-de-sac, a spiritual trash bin, a spiritual coffin. You have the ability to live for self. You have the ability to live *contrary* to the beatitudes. You have the ability to defy blessedness and chase the things that unbelievers chase. The world, the devil, and your own sinful nature will tempt you with filth as though it were the highest treasure. You have the ability to live a life that defies blessedness. You can live a life of pride and judgment and avarice and self-service, a life built on vapor, a life that loves darkness, loves vanity, loves lies. Where will that lead? Where will *that* life end?

You are a saint. The beatitudes are also prescriptive. This is how Christians are to behave. Your awareness, your endorsement of Christ's virtue, your pursuit of this elevated life is how you show the world who you are. "We are [God's] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10). Do you know what that means? It means that the One who rules the universe intentionally presents opportunities in your life for you to manifest who you are... for the glory of His name and the benefit of others. Good works aren't an *option* in a saint's life – they are the natural consequence of who we are in Christ. Repentance – that's a hallmark of the blessed. Humility, taking the lowest seat, considering others more important than oneself – that is a hallmark of the blessed. Forgiving others, praying for those in need, attending this Divine Service, giving of your resources to further Christ's kingdom – those are all hallmarks of the blessed. Devotion to God's Word, using our particular gifts in service to others, teaching children, caring for widows and the fatherless, comforting the hurting – to intentionally pursue these things is a hallmark of the blessed.

Our brothers and sisters in Christ who are in heaven – I'm going to read their names. Their faces are etched in my mind. I knew their laugh, what their habit was as they received Christ's body and blood, and I cherished their friendship. I know that they are safe. I know that they are in Christ's presence. I know that guilt and shame and pain and fear and doubt have been removed from them. The saints in heaven – their worship is around the Lamb that was slain (Revelation 7:9). We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses – the faithful who have gone before us (Hebrews 12:1). They are blessed. In baptism, each of them was crucified with Christ and they no longer lived but Christ lived in them (Galatians 2:20). They are blessed. The love of God was manifested to them as their sins were forgiven, as they were cherished by Christ and His ongoing ministry through the Word and the Sacraments – they are blessed. They rest from their labors, their good works follow them, and every earthly tear is tenderly wiped away by resurrection glory – they are blessed (Revelation 14:13; 21:4). Someday, your name will be read. You are blessed. The glory of blessedness is Christ crucified. You are a saint. You are holy. The glory of blessedness is a triumphant sacrifice and an empty tomb. "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" (Matthew 21:9). Blessed are you, the saints of Christ the King.