

- Greetings to one and all in the precious name of Jesus,

SCRIPTURE:

Hebrews 12:1 (NIV) – Larger reading: Hebrews 12:1-12

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us”

STORY:

A little French boy was asked to define a saint. All he could think of were the figures he had seen in the stained glass windows of the church. So he answered, “A saint is a (person) the light shines through.”

OBSERVATION:

Today is All Saints Day and we remember ... we remember all those who have journeyed this way, but journey with us no longer ... we remember those who labored faithfully in the work of the Kingdom of God and have entered into the reward of their faith ... we remember those who established a faith-base for those of us who were to follow ... we remember our loved ones ... we remember even those who we did not know, but committed themselves to a life of service ... we remember and are thankful.

While on this coming Sunday only the list of those who had passed away during the previous year will be read, still we remember many more than that because our lives have been full of individuals who made an impact upon our souls. Whenever, as a pastor, I stand to read that sacred list I have been tempted to add the names of every pastor who had stood in that particular pulpit paving the way for me to stand at that sacred desk. And we remember ...

We remember all those who worked to bring about Christian educational opportunities – Sunday school, youth fellowship, vacation Bible schools, summer youth camp, youth activities week, mission trips, choir trips, mid-week Bible studies, and the list continues – opportunities to grow in the faith because of their faithfulness. And we remember ...

We remember because as Paul writes to the church in Hebrews 12:1 as shared above. I also like how The Message paraphrase that line: *“Do you see what this means - all these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on? It means we'd better get on with it. Strip down, start running - and never quit! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins.”* And that great cloud continues to grow and gathers over us cheering us ever onward. And we remember ...

“The Endless Line of Splendor” is a thin volume in my library. Unfortunately it is no longer in print, but oh, what glorious stories are told within this precious book. Stories of the men and women who worked tirelessly across our great country to establish churches and communities of faith, facing unbelievable odds and dangers ... all in the name of Christ because they knew that others would be following. These pioneers of the faith are much like the story of a hiker who forged a deep and dangerous chasm and then turned back to build a bridge across that chasm. When a fellow traveler asked, “Why are you bothering to build a bridge now? You have already made your way through the chasm.” He responded, “But others will follow.” And we remember ... with thanksgiving in our hearts.

And when our days are numbered and we have entered into “that great cloud” may we be remembered as ones who labored faithfully, building bridges, running the race, never quitting, establishing a place that others can call home ... a place where their faith may grow becoming stronger for their journey so that they can be remembered as faithful servants of the Kingdom.

QUOTE (one of my favorites):

“The only difference between the saint and the sinner is that every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future.” - Oscar Wilde

PRAYER:

May it be said of us that we built bridges for all those who follow. Amen

And the faith journey continues, Pastor Jim

Jmartin450@tampabay.rr.com

386-795-5323

Worship in the sanctuary at 10:30 and online at 1:00. There is a Charge Conference in the Fellowship Hall with our new DS, The Rev. Thom Shafer (he’ll be with us via Zoom). Following the Charge Conference The Council will meet.

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