

1 John 3:1-3

All Saints' Day - Confirmation (Series C)

Lessons for the Day: Revelation 7:9-17; 1 John 3:1-3; Matthew 5:1-12**Numbered With the Saints**

November 2, 2025

“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.”

Dear Friends in Christ, and fellow redeemed, and especially you, our dear Confirmands:

While I like to preach on as many different texts as possible, there are certain texts, certain Scripture lessons that come up again and again. Our text today is one of those texts. Over the years of my service to the Lord and His church as a pastor, I have preached over 40 sermons on All Saints Day and I have used this text as the basis of those sermons several times. I have used it as the basis Confirmation sermons, too. I guess I really like this text! And what’s not to like? These words are so wonderful. They remind us that we are different from the world around us. They speak of the future that awaits us by God’s grace. Most importantly, these words assure you and me and all those who trust in Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Redeemer that we are loved by God; so loved by Him that He has done all that needed to be done so that we could be His children, now and forever. In our lesson from Revelation, we heard St. John say: *“After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’”* (Revelation 7:9–10, ESV) That same apostle is inspired by the Holy Spirit and through his own experience with Jesus to tell us: *“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.”* John assures us that we are part of that great multitude that no one can number; we are part of that glorious group of people gathered before the throne of God. We are numbered among the saints! We are precious and dear to the Lord. We have been forgiven and freed from sin and death through the Saviour who died and rose again for us. Yes, on this All Saints Day and on your Confirmation day, my dear students, how blessed we are to know we are God’s children; that we are numbered with all His saints that we may share in the blessings of life that only He can give.

This is a special day for you young women; you, our dear catechumens. Today you will make your confession of faith in the presence of God and this congregation. You will declare your desire and intent to live as a child of God and as part of His worshipping people. You will speak of your desire to continue growing in faith as you read, mark, learn and take to heart His Word and share in His Supper. We will see you in a new light. You will come to join us at the table of the Lord as you partake of His body and blood in Holy Communion. You will move into new areas of service and life in the congregation.

It is also true that some things don’t change because of this day. We may start to refer to you as communicant members of the congregation, but you already hold the highest position in God’s church. You are a baptized child of God. You, who were once lost, outcast, and enemies of God have been given new life, new birth as His precious, beloved children. God calls us as His own dear children in the waters of our Baptism. He marks us as His own and puts His name on us. He washes away our sin and brings us from death to life through the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He has given us new life in a family that includes not only the members of this church, but He numbers us among all the saints—both those who live in this world, and those who now live with Him in the glory of heaven. That’s who you are, my dear confirmands. That is who we all are by faith!

All Saints’ Day is an occasion to remember and celebrate that we believers in Christ are members of a very special family. John gets right into that in the words of our text today: *“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.”* While waiting to board a plane on which he had a reservation, Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. overheard the piteous plea of a private at the ticket window: “I’m going overseas in three days. I want to see my Ma before I go. I can go home and back only if I travel by plane!” It was explained to him that every seat on the plane was taken. Just then, Brigadier General Roosevelt stepped forward and said, “I’ll surrender my seat to him!” “But,” protested a fellow officer to the general, “this is a matter of rank!” “That’s right,” General Roosevelt quickly replied, “he’s a son, I’m only a general!” God conferred the highest honour upon us when He makes us His sons and daughters!

Everything changes for us when we, by faith, know that we are the children of God. Our lives are different when we know

we are numbered with the saints. In your testimonies this morning, you all spoke of things that are important for us as the children of God. Maliyah, you spoke of prayer—and what is prayer, except talking to our Father, bringing our needs and concerns to Him and finding peace in His love? Julia, you spoke about the 10 Commandments. Those are our loving Father's words to guide His children, helping us to love God and to love our neighbour, including the other saints around us. Keira, you spoke of what Jesus means to you and how He has loved you and brought you into God's family. Each one of you, numbered among His saints by your Baptism into Christ have spoken of something that involves your life as a child of God.

Yet the fact that we are God's children is a miracle of grace beyond anything we can imagine. We sometimes hear about children who are disowned by their families. This happens when a parent, sibling or a relative renounces or no longer accepts a child or a relative as a family member. It typically happens because something the child has done goes against the morals, values or even expectations of the family. Our situation was worse. Our first parents, Adam and Eve, disobeyed God and brought sin into the world. Sin has changed everything. It separates us from God. Our sinfulness has destroyed the father-child relationship we were meant to have with God. As sinners we are outside of God's family, orphans without hope or promise. Why would God want anything to do with us? Yet we hear the beautiful words the Spirit gave to John: ***See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God.*** The Father's love for us is so great that He gave His own Son to bring us back into His family. Jesus set aside all His rights of Sonship in order to save us. He was even willing to be forsaken of His Father when He took all our sin and guilt upon Himself and died for us on the cross. By dying for us and by rising again from the dead, Jesus has brought us forgiveness and the right of adoption as God's children. He has made it possible for you and me to call God our Father.

That is true for you, my dear Confirmands. It is true for each and every person sitting here this morning. It is true for every person watching online, or who will stumble across this sermon at some point. St. Paul puts it this way: ***“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.”*** (Galatians 4:4-5, ESV) Jesus was willing to suffer the shame of the cross to pay the price for your sin. He died the death we deserve. But He also destroyed death by rising again to life! He calls us through His Word of life to know and believe in Him as our Saviour. He gives us His Holy Spirit to bring us to faith. St. Paul assures us: ***for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.*** (Galatians 3:26 - ESV) We have a wonderful place in God's family. We are His beloved children. That is the greatest thing that can be said of us.

Now we are numbered with all His saints. A young girl was touring a great cathedral where she admired the stained-glass windows. The windows depicted some of the apostles and other heroes of the faith. She asked her mother, “who are those people?” Her mother replied, “those are saints”. Later, at school, the young girl said, “I know who the saints are. They are the people the light shines through”. John would understand that description, for he says: ***we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.*** John says that knowing who we are leads us to live as the people of God, even though the world hates us for being the children of God. They hate us because we don't go with the crowd; rather, we are led by the truth of God and listen to our Father in heaven. The devil wants us to be numbered with those who oppose God or who are indifferent to God. The devil, the world around us and even our own sinful hearts will do all they can to lead us away from our loving God. The devil doesn't want us to remember that we are children of God.

Thankfully, Jesus has defeated the devil. That enables John to be really, really clear: God has loved us. The Holy Spirit has called us through the Gospel, through God's Word of Life to know and believe all that Jesus has done for us. John doesn't say we have to work to be the children of God. He says we are the beloved children of God; precious to the One who gave His life for you; saints through the Comforter who abides with you and leads you into this hope. He has numbered you among His people in His church and here with us in this family at Foothills. He has numbered you with the saints; with all those who know the blessings of forgiveness and life in Christ, including all those who even now enjoy the great and glorious life in the glory of heaven that still lies before us.

I said I like these words that the Spirit gave to St. John. They tell us who we are. Although we don't deserve it, we are the beloved children of God. My hope and prayer is that we will all remember the wonderful gift God has given us as His children, even as we look to the glorious day of our Epistle lesson, where John saw that ***great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”*** (Revelation 7:9-10 - ESV) Yes, He is our salvation! He has redeemed us to be His children. He has numbered us with all the saints! That's who we are. That is who we will be forever. Amen.