

John 6 v 37-40 ALL SOULS Lullingstone 5th Nov 2017

Today is All Souls Sunday. What is the Church asking of us today? You probably know the answer! The Church is asking us to remember in a very special way all those who have passed away, not only for those whom we knew, but also for all those who died without us ever knowing of their death. Because we know only a minute part of the ` multitude of people who have died since the creation of the world, God, on the other hand, knows them all, and each one in their individuality. God knows all things: he knows what we are doing now because he watches us, he listens to us, he waits for us to turn to him with the simplicity of a child who confides in his Father full of love and tenderness.

The month of November is a month for remembering.

All around us people are wearing poppies, a symbol that we remember the lives of those lost in war. But today, we come, possibly with some nervousness, to remember quietly those whom we have loved and who have died recently or many years ago. Those whose names George read out at the beginning of the service, and those known only to us, in our hearts.

It isn't always easy to remember, when remembering brings back the pain of our loss. It isn't always easy to remember when the relationship we shared may have had its difficulties or when we feel that there were things we wanted to do or say but didn't get the chance. Sometimes remembering is the last thing that we want to do or are able to do...

So let us not underestimate the courage it has taken for some to come here today, to gather with others who have experienced loss, to remember and honour our loved ones in whatever way feels appropriate for us at this time.

Find comfort in the knowledge that our apparent separation from them is only apparent. The church speaks of the church on earth and the church in heaven. This is said when we say The Lord's Prayer " Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven".

Our Lord said to the penitent thief: This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise. The Letter to the Hebrews says lovingly, consolingly, Seeing we are encompassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses. So go ahead and use your imagination when you think of these loved ones. St Paul said Now we see through a glass darkly. Well, we can think of our loved ones on the other side of that mirror. The point is that the living and the dead are both alike in the

presence of God. Without God's continuous presence, we here on earth would have no being. And whatever the form taken by those who have gone before us, they too enjoy that form only because of God's everlasting love for them.

As Jesus approached his own death we're told that he shared a simple meal with his friends. He urged them to remember him every time they break bread or drink together, we do this when we take communion together, He knew that he was going to die but he wanted his friends to know that he would never leave them.

The reading we had from John comes at the end of the section talking about Jesus being the True Bread from Heaven.

In our reading from verse 37, 38 says " **All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me**"

Jesus did not work independently from God, but in unity with Him. This should give us even more assurance of being welcomed into God's presence and being protected by Him. Jesus purpose was to do the will of God not to satisfy his own human desires. When we follow Jesus we should have the same purpose, to do the will of God, to be faithful to Him.

Verse 39 **And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.**

Jesus says here that he would not lose even one person whom the Father has given Him. therefore anyone who makes a sincere commitment to believe in Jesus Christ is secure in God's promise of eternal life. Christ will not let us be overcome by Satan and lose our salvation, once we have made that commitment. This is backed up by Paul's letter to the Philippians chapter 1 verse 6 which says, **Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:**

When God starts something, he completes it. As with the Philippians, God will help you grow in grace until he has completed the work in your lives. When we feel discouraged, incomplete, unfinished or distressed by the situation we feel ourselves in, remember God's promise. Don't let our condition rob us of the joy of knowing Christ or keeping us from growing closer to him.

Verse 40 says, **And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.**

For those who put their trust in Jesus will be resurrected from physical death to eternal life with God when Christ comes again.

When we lose someone dear to us, it's as though a jigsaw puzzle has been thrown up into the air and all the pieces have been scattered far and wide. As we remember, the pieces start to come together – only the picture isn't quite the same. We have to look closely at what is emerging, but there, in the new picture, is the possibility that we can still love the one we have lost and that the life we did share with them has made a difference to the people we are now

As we begin to remember the things that made us laugh and the things that made us cross, the things that made us proud and the ways they could embarrass us, it's as though the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle are coming back together again...

As we remember with love and thanksgiving our dear ones who have died, let us take strength and courage from the truth of the Gospel and from the triumphant words of St Paul:

I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come; nor height nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus Our Lord. Amen.