

Sermon: “People the Light Shines Through” On All Saints Day (2nd October 2015)

Texts: *Ephesians 1:11–end; Luke 6:20–31*

Occasion: *All Saints’ Sunday*

Introduction – The Light Through the Saints

I want to start my reflection with a question – was there someone or a few special people who influenced your life or just a little help or support they gave you that changed your life or that made you to come to the church. Who was this person?

All Saints’ Day reminds us that our God is not the God of the dead, but of the living—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. As Jesus told the Sadducees, those who have died in faith live in God, for He is the God of the living.

Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, affirms this truth: Jesus was raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of the Father. Every Sunday for nearly two thousand years, the Church has confessed, “*He lives.*”

So when we remember the saints, we do not only recall their lives as beautiful memories of the past—we affirm that they are alive in God’s presence. Their witness continues to encourage us, just as the writer to the Hebrews says: “*We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses.*”

Let me share a simple story.

A man was walking through a beautiful church with his young son. As they wandered through the building, the boy stopped to gaze at the bright stained-glass windows. “Daddy,” he asked, “who are those people in the windows?”

“They are saints,” replied the father.

The boy thought for a moment, then asked, “What are saints?”

The father hesitated, unsure how to explain. Then, as the sunlight streamed through the coloured glass and flooded the church with light, the boy suddenly exclaimed, “I know, Daddy! Saints are the people the light shines through!”

That, my friends, is the heart of All Saints’ Day.

Saints are the people through whom the light of Christ shines—people who, despite their ordinariness and weakness, allow God’s grace to pass through their lives into the world.

1. Saints as God’s Inheritance and Instruments (Ephesians 1:11–end)

Paul tells us in Ephesians that we are God’s inheritance—chosen, redeemed, and sealed with the Holy Spirit.

The saints were not superhuman heroes; they were ordinary men and women who, in their generation, said “yes” to God’s call. They allowed God to shape their lives for His glory.

Paul writes: *“In Christ we have obtained an inheritance, so that we might live for the praise of His glory.”*

That’s our purpose—to reflect God’s glory in our own time and place.

Some saints were teachers, some martyrs, others carers, reformers, or quiet encouragers. But in each of them, the light of Christ found a way to shine.

2. Saints in the Shape of the Beatitudes (Luke 6:20–31)

In Luke’s Gospel, Jesus gives us the Beatitudes—a portrait of the saints in God’s kingdom.

“Blessed are you who are poor... who hunger... who weep... who are hated for the Son of Man’s sake.”

Holiness, in Jesus’ eyes, is not about moral perfection or religious achievement. It is about compassion, humility, and mercy. It is about standing with the poor, comforting those who mourn, forgiving enemies, and loving the unlovable.

True holiness is not about being above others—it is about kneeling beside them.

When we show compassion, when we share in the pain of others, when we act with kindness even when it costs us—there, in those small moments, God’s light begins to shine through us.

3. The Tale of Two Marbles – The Cost of Becoming a Saint

Let me tell you a story.

In a marble quarry, two stones lay side by side. One was destined to become a great statue; the other, a simple floor tile.

When the sculptor began his work, the first marble endured the hammer and chisel, though the blows were painful. The second marble resisted, saying, “I can’t bear this pain.” So the sculptor left him alone.

Over time, the first marble became a beautiful statue admired by all. The second became an ordinary tile—walked upon and forgotten.

Sainthood, you see, is not about comfort—it’s about transformation.

The hammer and chisel of God’s love may be painful, but they shape us into His likeness.

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross once said:

“The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, suffering, struggle, and loss, and have found their way out of the depths.”

That is the story of every saint—from Peter who denied, to Augustine who wandered, to Teresa who loved in small ways.
They were people who let God shape them through struggle.

4. Modern Saints – The Quiet and the Courageous

Saints still walk among us today. They may not be canonized, but their holiness is real.

In times of war, they work for peace.

In places of hatred, they show love.

In cultures of fear, they bring hope.

They are teachers, nurses, parents, neighbours—ordinary people who let God’s extraordinary grace shine through them.

As St. Teresa of Calcutta said:

“We cannot all do great things, but we can do small things with great love.”

That’s what sainthood looks like today—quiet acts of love that light up the darkness.

5. Called to Be Saints Together

All Saints’ Day reminds us that holiness is not for a few special people—it is the calling of all who follow Christ. We are thankful to those saints who influenced our life and made a difference in our lives.

The Church is not a museum for perfect people—it’s a workshop of grace. God is still shaping saints out of ordinary, imperfect lives like ours.

And perhaps the greatest act of faith we can offer is simply to let Christ’s light shine through our cracks—our weaknesses, doubts, and failures—so that His glory, not ours, is revealed.

Conclusion – The Light Still Shines

So I return to that little boy’s insight:

“Saints are the people that the light shines through.”

May we be such people—people through whom the light of Christ shines into dark places, fearful hearts, and wounded lives.

May our churches become windows of grace—places where God’s love streams out into our communities.

And as we live as God’s saints—ordinary yet radiant—may the world see the light of Christ and give glory to the Father who calls us His own.

Amen.