

Today we celebrate All Saints to remember all those in Christ who have gone before us. All the saints, known and unknown, who have been part of building the Kingdom of God. Their time on this earth is permanently etched on our hearts and upon the face of creation. Our Saints are the people who by their words and deeds revealed God's love. They strived to be faithful, and loved faithfully.

When we take time to remember those who have touched our lives, it often evokes deep places where tears reside. Each of us sits by a pool of tears, and every so often we need permission to release those tears. And All Saints worship often elicits tears of memory, of mourning, of that which is no more.

So we come to a verse in our scripture passage this morning. Blessed are they who mourn. Why would Jesus have the audacity to say this? We might wonder where is the blessing in grieving? Is this blessing hinged upon a future hope that those who mourn will someday be comforted? It would be nice if the bible had added one little word - like TODAY. But it doesn't. It simply says that in the midst of our mourning and grieving we WILL be comforted.

In our culture we don't walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Instead we run through it. We don't usually take the time to stop and pay attention to our grief, let alone notice or appreciate the possibility of any blessing in our grief or mourning. We are more accustomed to "getting on with life". Or just getting "over it". As if you could ever "get over" having loved and lost.

If you are mourning now, or if you have ever grieved another's passing from this life into life eternal, what that tells me is that at some point in your life, you risked opening your heart to love. You allowed yourself to become vulnerable enough to open your heart space to another being. I believe that the journey of life and the journey to God is to become vulnerable enough to open our hearts to one another, to risk being hurt, to risk the being left alone, to risk the possibility that we will grieve and we will cry for that which is no more in our lives?

When we open our heart space to another being, God blesses that vulnerability. Because it is precisely in that time of opening and connection and vulnerability with one another that we get a glimpse of pure divine love. It is what we were made for.

As painful as it can be to remember, we are invited to pay attention, to hold and to name, to be thankful for the gift of those lives we have loved and lost. Looking at this place in time we realize all of our relationships have made us who we are today. They also influence how we look at the future.

As Christians we are confident that this is not the end. We are not traveling alone, We're not just fumbling around in the dark. Our path is lit by those who have gone before us; who continue to inspire and motivate those on earth who are still making our way to God.

On this All Saints Sunday, we will acknowledge the Saints, naming them aloud. We will light candles of memory and hope of those who have passed before us. In the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup, let us celebrate our communion with God, with one another, and with all the saints.