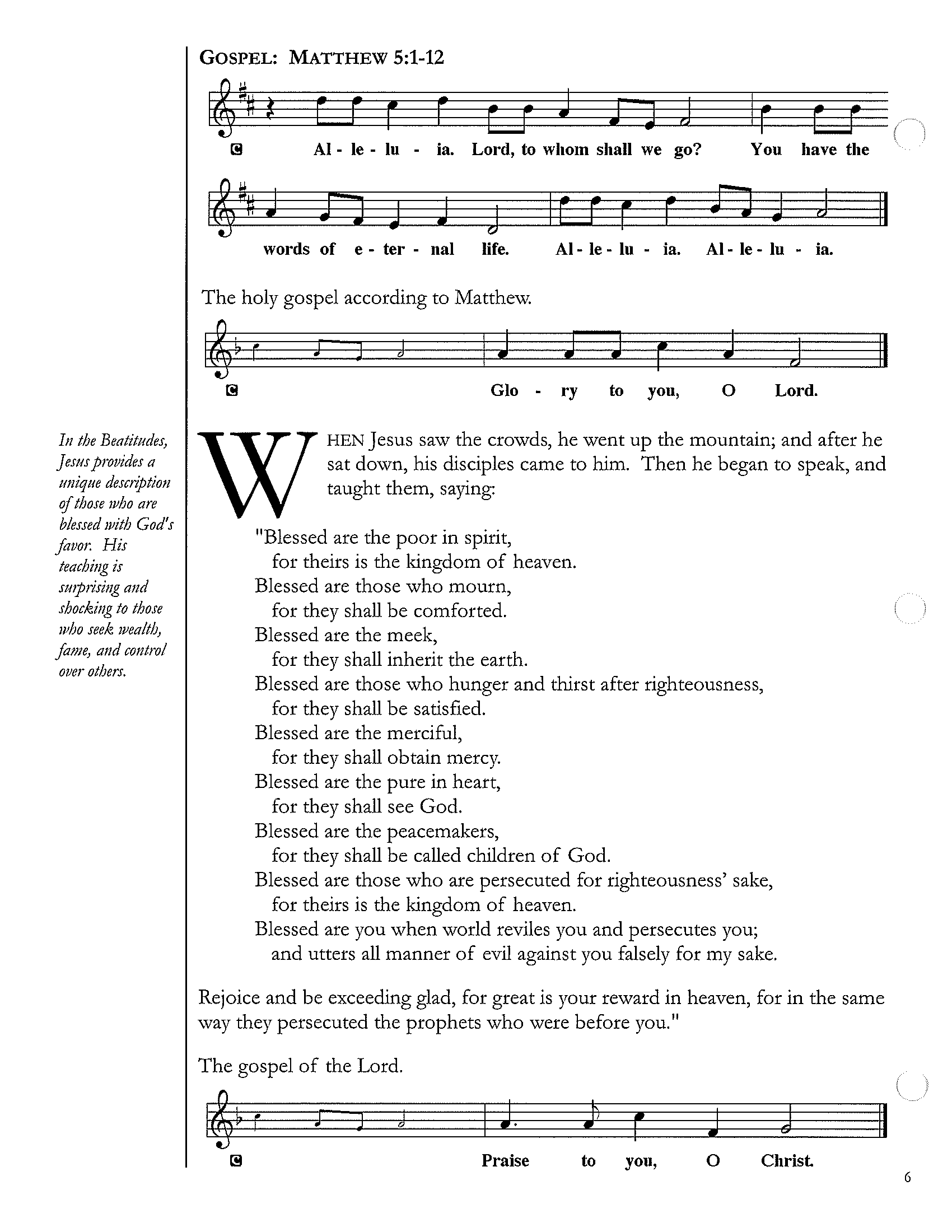
**The Holy Gospel according to Matthew 5**



ALL SAINT’S” SUNDAY

NOVEMBER 1, 2020 REV. JEAN BOZEMAN

REV. 7:9-17 PS.34:1-10,22

I JOHN 3:1-3 MATT. 5:1-12

TODAY IS ALL SAINTS’ SUNDAY.....ONE OF MY FAVORITE SUNDAYS OF THE YEAR. THAT FEELS LIKE STRANGE WORDS TO WRITE AND TO SAY.......

YET ONE OF MY FAVORITE SUNDAYS TRULY IS ALL SAINTS’.......ACTUALLY I HAVE SHED MANY TEARS ON ALL SAINTS.’.....I WAS STILL RAW IN 1973 WHEN ON ALL SAINTS MY CONGREGATION REMEMBERED MY DAD AMONG THE OTHERS WHO HAD DIED THAT YEAR.....OR 1976 WHEN MY 33 YR. OLD BROTHER DIED OR IN 2007 WHEN MY MOM’S NAME APPEARED THERE IN BOLD LETTERS AND,…….. I COULD SAY THE SAME FOR ALMOST EVERY YEAR WHEN SOME DEAR FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND IS REMEMBERED.

THIS YEAR HAS BEEN AN ESPECIALLY TOUGH YEAR FOR ALL OF US……A PANDENIC THAT HAS KILLED AND CONTINUES TO KILL SO MANY THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE. …A PANDEMIC THAT HAS PUT A SPOTLIGHT ON RACE IN WAYS WE NEVER EXPECTED ---- FOLLOWED BY RACIAL KILLINGS AND STRIFE THAT HAVE CHALLENGED EACH OF US ……. DEVASTATING FIRES LIKE MOST OF US CANNOT IMAGINE…..LOSS OF JOBS……..MANY PLACES OF BUSINESS CLOSING --NEVER TO REOPEN…….A POLITICAL UPHEAVAL IN OUR TO MANY……HURRICANES AND FLOODING…….I KNOW YOU CAN ADD OTHERS TO THE LIST…….2020 IS NOT OVER ……NONE OF THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN SOLVED.

THIS ALL SAINTS’ WILL BE A DAY OF RENEWED GRIEF FOR MILLIONS AROUND THE WORLD......SO WHY COULD THIS BE A FAVORITE SUNDAY?

BECAUSE TODAY IS A DAY OF REMEMBRANCE ……

LET ME COUNT THE WAYS:

1. .IT IS A HOLY DAY.... ….A DAY TO REMEMBER THOSE SAINTS FROM OUR PAST. YES, I LOVE ALL SAINTS BECAUSE I CAN UNAHAMEDLY REMEMBER……. GIVE THANKS FOR,……RECALL… ......HOLD UP THOSE WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE ME. I CAN GIVE THANKS FOR WHO THEY HAVE BEEN IN MY LIFE.....I CAN REMEMBER MY PARENTS WHO GAVE ME LIFE AND NURTURED ME…….....I CAN GIVE THANKS FOR MY MENTORS – MY TEACHERS. MY FRIENDS --WHO HAVE WALKED WITH ME………. YOU, TOO, HAVE YOUR LIST OF THOSE WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE YOU AND ON WHOSE SHOULDERS YOU NOW STAND. TODAY, IN OUR CONGREGATIONS WE WILL NAME ESPECIALLY THOSE MOST CLOSE TO US…….WHO HAVE DIED AND NOW REST WITH OUR LORD. TRULY TODAY IS A HOLY DAY.
2. OUR SECOND TEXT IS MY SECOND REASON FOR CELEBRATING THIS DAY. LISTEN AGAIN TO THE WORDS FROM I JOHN ….“SEE WHAT LOVE THE FATHER HAS GIVEN US, THAT WE SHOULD BE CALLED CHILDREN OF GOD......AND THEN FOR EMPHASIS HE SAYS “BELOVED WE ARE GOD’S CHILDREN NOW.”

DID YOU HEAR THAT???? ALL SAINTS IS ABOUT BEING GOD’S CHILDREN NOW!!!

TODAY IS A DAY TO REMEMBER THAT WE ARE MADE SAINTS IN OUR BAPTISM. TODAY…..ALL SAINTS’.....INCLUDES ME ----INCLUDES YOU….. LOVED SO MUCH THAT WE HAVE BEEN CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

* LOVED SO MUCH THAT I AM CALLED CHILD OF GOD…. YOU ARE CALLED, CHILD OF GOD
* LOVED SO MUCH THAT OUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN….
* LOVED SO MUCH THAT WE ARE PROMISED LIFE EVERLASTING.
* YES, THIS IS TRULY A HOLY DAY!

1. .

THE THIRD WAY IN WHICH WE CELEBRATE IS LINKED WITH OUR READING TODAY OF THE BEATITUDES IN WHICH JESUS OFFERS A UNIQUE DESCRIPTION OF WHO ARE BLESSED WITH GOD’S FAVOR.

JUST BEFORE THE BEATITUDES Jesus has just announced that the kingdom of heaven has come near (Matthew 4:17) and he has invited the people to repent. The Beatitudes should be read as Jesus’ manifesto for repentance ……..for changing conversion…..turning around, …….. “changing our course of action” and “transformation.”

I want to read a portion of an interpretation by Dr. Raj

Nadella THAT HAS BEEN ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT TO ME…… HE says:

“The Beatitudessuggests that those who mourn will receive advocacy, not just comfort and consolation. Comfort and consolation are helpful and even essential but not nearly sufficient. Merely comforting individuals and communities who are mourning due to hunger, violence and injustice might address the symptoms of their situation but does little to change the roots of their suffering. As followers of Jesus, we are called to advocate on behalf of the oppressed and do everything in our capacity to reverse their current situation. When we see people weeping because of hunger, police brutality or gun violence, our response cannot be limited to thoughts and prayers. As important as thoughts and prayers are, they must be followed by concrete actions.

The human church takes on additional significance when one reads the Beatitudes and remembers the disciples having just been invited to help advance the new kingdom and its manifesto. Such an emphasis on the church suggests that, when we see oppressed people, the question need not, and should not, be: Where is God when people are mourning, hungry, treated brutally by the police and denied mercy in the courtrooms? Instead, the question should be: Where is God's community and what is it doing to reverse the situation? “

Yes, this is a holy day because we celebrate today that God calls each of us to be living Saints in action. THAT IS OUR BAPTISMAL CALL……THAT IS OUR CALL AS SAINTS….. REMEMBER HOW WE LEAVE WORSHIP……GO IN PEACE…..SERVE THE LORD

Does all this sound like too much to be contained in one Sunday? I think not……and that is why I feel so blessed on this day of remembrance……

So, Let me put it this way……

TO EACH OF YOU:

1...... TODAY WE DO GIVE THANKS FOR ALL THE SAINTS WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE US.....WHO POINT THE WAY......

2. – WE DO GIVE THANKS THAT WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD, CALLED.....FORGIVEN.....PROMISED ETERNAL LIFE.

3. DEAR SAINTS......KNOW THAT YOU ARE CALLED TO BE GOD’S SAINTS IN YOUR DAILY LIFE. AND REMEMBER THAT YOU DO NOT WALK ALONE. WITH TRUST IN GOD, YOU WILL BE MORE THAN YOU CAN EVER HAVE IMAGINED.

DEAR SAINTS .....MAY YOU RECEIVE FORGIVENESS AND PROMISE FOR THIS DAY AND ALL YOUR DAYS TO COME.

DEAR SAINTS..........MAY OUR LORD WALK WITH YOU IN TROUBLED and JOYFUL DAYS. MAY OUR LORD GIVE YOU HOPE AND PEACE.

A BLESSED ALL SAINTS TO YOU! AMEN!