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St. Timothy's Episcopal Church  
Calhoun, GA  
November 3, 2019

**All Saints: Year "C": Daniel 7:1-3,15-18; Psalm 149; Ephesians 1:11-23; Luke 6:20-31**

**Title: That's What It's All About**

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**This is All Saints Sunday.**

**Now you might think that the reason we in the church have All Saints Sunday is so that we might set aside at least one Sunday of the year to sit back and marvel at those whose lives were so righteous and to be amazed at how good they were. You might think that but you'd be wrong.**

**You might think that we have All Saints Sunday so that we can be reminded that we have examples in history of lives that were so well lived that they have set for us good examples to follow. If you think that you're getting a whole lot closer to why we have this day on our calendar.**

**You might think that we have this day so that we might be reminded of who and whose we are in Christ. If you think that you're so close that, like we use to say when we were kids, you're burning up!**

**But you might be surprised to know that the real reason we have All Saints Sunday is so that we might take a few minutes to consider the question made famous by the song, The Hokey Pokey. That's right. The real reason we have All Saints Sunday is so that we might ponder the question: What's it all about?**

**You know sometimes parents can make kids do the darndest things. When I was a youngster, my parents made me go to Wytch Jones' dance school. That's where I was supposed to learn how to do the waltz, the fox trot, maybe the rumba or the cha, cha, cha. And I tried. I mean I really, really tried. I wanted to do those dances but truth is, you might as well have been trying to teach me how do brain surgery. I just couldn't do it. But my reward for trying was that each week our ball room dancing class would end in a round of the Hokey Pokey. Now I LIKED that part. You know, you put you left hand in. You take your left hand out. You put your left hand in and you shake it all about. You do the Hokey Pokey and you turn yourself about. That's what it's all about.**

**Well, I can assure you that we kids did not take that as a theological statement, but, in a way, it just might be.**

**True story: While I was living in Monroe and serving the good people of St. Alban's, I went into a truck stop one day and saw a rack full of bumper stickers and one of them caught my eye. It said: What if the Hokey Pokey Really Is What It's All About?**

**And I thought well now that's a very interesting question. And I thought I'll just buy that bumper sticker and put it on my truck. My thought was it might cause people to think. It might cause folk to maybe ask themselves, "Well, if it's not the Hokey Pokey, what is it all about?"**

**I even thought that if someone were to ask me why I had that sticker on my car, it might give me a chance to talk to them about Jesus.**

**Didn't work. Believe it or not that sticker being on the back window of my truck really made some of my parishioners very upset. Had people leaving the church over it. Some said that Fr. Frank thought that the Hokey Pokey was more important than Jesus. They were saying I had a bumper sticker on my car saying so. Now mind you, that's a true story. You know I had to get a razor blade and scrape the thing off truck.**

**Well, what is my point? The point is that some people can't recognize a rhetorical question when they see it. No, no – just kidding.**

**No, the real point is that sometimes – maybe too often in fact, we have a tendency to and in fact all too often want to raise that which is ultimately UNimportant to the status of supreme importance.**

**By way of example, let me ask you a question. Who do we idolize? School teachers? Fire fighters? Volunteers working with Doctors Without Borders? People who really make a difference? Do we honor such people and hold them in highest regard or do we maybe swoon over movie stars and athletes?**

**Another true story: When my son was growing up, he really liked basketball. You know, he was the starting guard on his team. He was named to the All Star team and all that. I just mean basketball was a big part of his life. Still is. In addition to teaching history, economics, and psychology, he's the basketball coach. .**

**But the point is, when he was a youngster we were both fans of the Atlanta Hawks. For those of you who don't know, that's a basketball team. But every now and then we'd go to a game. I remember the last one we ever went to. As we were**

driving home that night I was thinking. And I said, “Son, you know what? This outing just cost us \$178.00 – not to mention the gas to get down here and back. The tickets were \$60 apiece. The seats were so high up you could barely see what was going on down on the court. Parking cost eight bucks. The hot dogs and cokes were \$20. The souvenirs were \$30. And for what? We just spent two hours watching grown men bouncing and throwing a ball around. Now, I’ll give you that they bounce and throw a ball really good, but I think I could find better uses for \$178.00.

To my son’s credit, who was only fourteen at the time, he said, “Yeah, it is kinda nuts isn’t it Dad?”

By mutual consent we never went to another game. Rather we watched the games from the comfort of our living room where we had great seats, the hot dogs were free, and the bathroom was only a few feet away and we didn’t have to stand in line to use it.

So, no. We don’t generally hold in highest esteem those who lives are of exemplary character or whose lives are lived in service to others. Rather we tend to idolize and pay obscene amounts of money to entertainers and athletes. It’s as if being entertained has been raised to the highest level of importance in our lives. If you don’t believe it, just look at the ratings for the TV show, The Voice or maybe American Idol.

Well, hopefully maybe we can agree that being entertained is not the answer to what it’s all about. We weren’t put on this planet to be entertained. That’s not why we’re here. To be entertained is not of ultimate importance. That being the case, the questions remains: What is important? What is it all about?

I know of a Sunday school teacher who once asked a group of students to name someone they thought whose life was lived out truly embracing Christian values. That was the assignment. Some of the kids named people like Billy Graham and Mother Theresa. Named also were a few capital “S” Saints such as St. Timothy. But the teacher’s point in asking was to demonstrate that when we don’t see heroics, we tend to think there is nothing going on. No one named their parents who were sacrificing on their behalf. No one named a teacher who went the extra mile for their benefit. No one named a doctor who gives one day a week to a free clinic. No one named the Nursing Assistant who goes out of her way to make their grandmother comfortable – the grandmother who lives in an assisted care facility.

If we’re not careful we miss seeing the Christian values in the lives of the ordinary saints who surround us -- saints whose lives are not marked by highly visible heroics, but are marked by simple faithful living. Lives lived in the amazing

**grace of God. And lives which are marked by faithfulness in the everyday - in relationships, in parenting, in vocation, in all things.**

**We might be reminded that each of us, in and through our baptism is called to a life which in our ordinary everyday reflects an understanding, and an appreciation, and a desire to live in the faith that we profess.**

**The apostle Paul was very clear about who are the saints. Hear, for example, the opening of Paul's letter to the Corinthians. Therein he wrote: To the church of God which is at Corinth. To those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...**

**Do we imagine that in referring to the Corinthians as 'saints' that the Apostle Paul imagined that all those who made up that congregation would have their own feast day on the Christian calendar some day? Of course not. He called them saints because they had been baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit and because he saw in them a people who were doing their best to answer the question, "What's it all about."**

**A people who, though far from perfect, pretty well had decided that the Hokey Pokey is not the answer. People who, in their day-to-day, did their best to live into the commitments they had made at their baptism. People who say 'no' to the proposition that being amply entertained is what it's all about. People who say 'no' to the proposition that accumulating and hoarding as much stuff as I can get my hands on is the ultimate goal in life.**

**Rather, Paul called those saints who said 'yes' to the Good News of God in Christ, Who say 'yes' to a commitment to love their neighbor and to act like it. Say 'yes' to doing unto others as I would have it done to me. And who say 'yes' to promoting peace and justice respecting the dignity of every human being. A people who say 'yes' to following Christ and to putting their whole trust in his word, his grace and his love. And Paul saw in the people of Corinth a people striving to live such lives as this.**

**Did Paul think they were perfect? Of course not! Paul spent more time correcting and chastising the Corinthians than any other church in the ancient world. Yet, he called them saints because he knew they were a people who had set their hearts and minds on Christ.**

**You know saints are never born. They only become.**

**Well, we have looked at the concept or theology if you will have it, of sainthood. And I hope that we have come to understand that to be a saint is to be a baptized child of God. And that it is much more about who we are than what we have done, or not done, or should have done but did not do. Not because that which we do is unimportant. Heaven forbid. Rather I mean to say that who we are is ever so much more important than our least admirable moments because it is out of who we are from whence comes our doing. If we make it our habit to lean into our better angels and take the paths that a Christ-centered life calls us to, then we are much more likely to do those things that are pleasing to God.**

**Simply put, being a saint is about being one who seeks God in all things, in all times and in all places.**

**Let us seek the mind of Christ in all that we do - in our going out and in our coming in. In our mornings and our nights. In our today's and in all our tomorrow's. And let us rejoice in our growing into and our ever becoming the community of saints that we desire to be. Because dear ones it is in such places where is to be found true joy, true happiness, true satisfaction, and true sense of purpose. And that, dear ones, IS what it's all about.**

**Amen.**