

# Christ the Lord Episcopal Church Pinole, CA

Celebration of All Saints: November 5, 2023

Reflecting on the Beatitudes

Rev. Dr. Lois Williams

Good morning and welcome to Christ the Lord Church on this day when we celebrate all the saints that have come before us in the name of the Lord.

I have to admit that this is sometimes a sad point during the Fall season of as the leaves finish their last bursts of color and the trees release them to fall to the ground. The clocks have been set back and darkness is ever closing in as the days grow shorter. They say this is the time when those who have crossed the great divide into the other world have easier access to our world as the veils grow thin.

Today we come to celebrate, remember and grieve any needed release for our loss. Just as the trees release. We might also be wondering why we have to lose the people we love, and why does life have to be so hard. I believe Jesus addresses these questions today with the beatitudes.

Our letter from John tells us that we are beloved children of God and just knowing this gives us the freedom to focus more on spiritual things than

material things. But it seems that being children of God does not mean a life without suffering. Jesus suffered and died after all, and so did all his disciples.

So today Jesus tells us how much we are loved, and how God can use our weaknesses not as the burden that society doesn't accept or recognize, but instead as an opportunity for God to work in our lives.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, because God can use that weakness to bring in God's kingdom.

Blessed are those who mourn, because God can use that weakness to help you bring comfort to others which in turn brings comfort to all.

Blessed are the meek, because God can use those who silently listen before they act, those who consider others first, God can use them to save the earth.

Blessed are those who desire righteousness and justice, God can use that desire to save humanity.

Blessed are those that are merciful because they model the love and mercy of God to others and God can use that.

Blessed are the pure in heart because they will express the love that God would like us all to experience in this world.

Blessed are the peacemakers because God needs you now more than ever to save our humanity.

And yes, if you have these tendencies, which I am sure you do, they will get you in trouble at times. Society may not understand that your weaknesses are your strengths, but God does. Jesus was not weak going to the cross; Jesus was not weak as they nailed his flesh; Jesus was not weak when he faced death. We are not weak when we follow in Jesus' footsteps and allow God to work with us.

We are not here in this church by accident, and granted the whole church community has its fair share of wolves among the sheep, but today, we recognize those who have gone before us. Those whose poor spirit, meekness, desire for justice, those that loved mercy, those that were pure in heart, those who build this church, we are, because of those who were before us. We are here because someone brought us to worship, to Jesus and to salvation either by positive or negative means.

Let us honor those who we love but no longer see. Amen.