

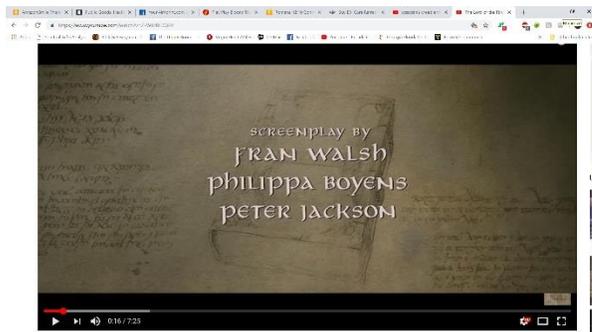
SERMON: November 4, 2018 Who Are My Saints? ALL SAINTS' REMEMBRANCE
TEXT: Romans 12:9-12 (NIV)
SUBJECT: Honoring those who have gone before us
THEME: We remember and honor those who have gone before us in the faith.
PURPOSE: To remember those who have brought us to faith
PIC: "In Remembrance"

(START WITH OPENING CREDITS TO "ARSENIC AND OLD LACE" – CARY GRANT)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSxG2b4Bees>

I was watching an old movie the other day, and I noticed something different –



Lord of the Rings end credits

<https://youtu.be/Z-WKfBtDQ4Y>

Today we usually have are about 5-7 minutes of credits at the END of the movie, with everyone from the "Assistant to the Director" to "Cousin of the caterer's husband's veterinarian"!

Okay, maybe not that bad, but still it seems as if a lot of people who were barely connected with the movie get mentioned! In the old days they rarely showed any end credits – only opening credits listing the actors, sometimes the producer and director, and occasionally the crew.

It got me to thinking – who needs to be recognized in a motion picture? What are there names up there for?

(STOP VIDEO)

If you look in the bulletin today, you will see the names of the Pastor, the Liturgist (the person who reads the scripture and directs the flow of worship), the Praise Team leader, the organist, the accompanist, the ushers, the A/V team –

But where are the names of the choir? How about the ones who folded the bulletins? Those who were here straightening the sanctuary? The Sunday School teachers who have spent weeks preparing the lesson?



https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10156307769799678&set=a.381349129677&type=3&eid=ARCb1QC8swb-ByJsPU_BdNJxmiJiuosaz0LjW4PSzCOGuqcIMAAwpJXqiNjJ42J2yr0KC26amK6Xwdja

I have a picture here of something that happens on a weekly basis that you may not know about – we have someone who, each week, cleans the door handles that you use to come in! She would rather her picture not be up here on the screen for everyone to see, but every week she comes here and does just a little bit to make this a more warm and welcoming place.

How do we recognize those who keep things going here on a daily basis? I may not think that it's that important to list the caterer on a movie set in the end credits, but I'm sure that the actors and the rest of the crew were quite happy to have them there on the day of the shooting!

So whom do we recognize and honor in the church?

This past Thursday was "All Saints' Day", which is the day when we celebrate those who have been saints in our lives. October 31 was what? Halloween. The name comes from "Holy Evening" –

HALLOWEEN = HALLOWED EVENING

It's the HOLY EVENING before All Saints' Day!

So what did you do that was holy on Halloween?

The term "saints" in Protestant churches is interpreted differently than in the Catholic church. We use the interpretation that Paul gave when he wrote to the "saints" of the various churches in his letters. In his understanding, a "saint" was anyone who was dedicated to following Jesus. It was the body of believers! You don't have to have

performed 3 miracles and always have a cheerful demeanor. Saints are those who believe in Christ and are trying to live by His example.

A little later in the service I will be reading the names of some of the saints in our own church – members who passed away in the past year. This is a tradition in the United Methodist Church where we stop and take time to thank God for those whom He has sent to live and serve among us.

I want to ask you right now,

Who has been a saint in your life?

Who helped you to understand your faith?

I can think of many saints throughout my life – the Sunday School teacher who put up with us 6-year-old boys and girls and had such patience to help us to learn about Jesus; the adult volunteers who were there for us each week at youth group and dealt with the combination of raging hormones and questions about God; my parents, who gave me a foundation of faith that could ask questions so that I could learn more.

I remember Miss Roddenberry across the street, who would sometimes watch me when my parents were busy. I remember so many people who gave me more grace than I deserved, and who helped mold me into the servant of God that I am today.

Who has been a saint in your life?

I'll give you a minute or two to think about that. While you're thinking, I want to look at Paul's admonition here to the believers in Rome, and to give us a mission for this week –

This is one of the few letters that Paul wrote to a church that he did not start. In fact, he had never even visited there! Most of Paul's letters were personal letters to people he was close to, and often they were about specific issues or problems with which that church was dealing.

In Romans, however, Paul was writing for a different purpose. He had felt a nudge from God to go to preach the Gospel in Spain, and so he was going to need a lot of cash and resources in order to make the trip.

Typically Paul would go to a new city, find the nearest army base, and hire himself out as a tentmaker for the military as a way to underwrite his ministry while he was there. But for this trip to Spain Paul wanted to try something new – he knew that the Roman church was a more wealthy congregation, and so he wanted to ask them if they would pick up the tab for his entire trip.

In order to do this, however, he had to present his credentials, so basically the book of Romans is Paul explaining what he believes about the Christian faith. It is his highest, most comprehensive work of what Christianity is about.

This section that we are reading today is kind of like his “Proverbs of the faith” – short sayings that are pointed but not always related to each other.

It is possible that this section that we are reading here today could be a poem or a song that was popular in Paul’s time, which the Roman church would have known and Paul used as further evidence that he was a solid person worth helping.

So he says to them,

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰ love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor.

I want to stop right there – “Outdo one another in showing honor.”

What if that was the goal of our church? What if, for one month, we made it a point to deliberately look for and to thank people that are serving?

Most churches whom I have serve with have tried to have a “Volunteer Appreciation Day” when we have a dinner and say “Thank You” to our volunteers. But what if we made it a part of our church culture, part of our DNA that we say “Thank You” on a regular basis?

I’m not talking about just the pastor here, or the choir director or the Trustee chair (although those people should be doing it!), but ***what if there was an expectation that everyone who attends here is expected to find someone and say, “Thank you” to them at least once a month?***

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This past month was Pastor Appreciation Month, and Kim and I thank all of you who sent us gifts and cards and who took us out to eat! We appreciate being appreciated!

But I’m here high-profile. I’m seen every week. I’m one of the stars who gets my name in the bulletin and in the end credits when the movie is over. Thank you for thanking me, and now I have a new challenge for you –

Try to find someone who does something unseen for our church, and thank them.

It could be trimming the bushes; it could be folding the bulletins; it might be answering the phones during the week so that Carol could get more work done!

We have people who come by regularly to pull weeds and to clean up the sanctuary. We have people who go out to St. Matthew's House and Habitat for Humanity to serve food or to make plans for new houses.

We have people who sit through hours of meetings in order to oversee the administrative life of this church.

We have people who take home the prayer list every week and who pray for all of the people on it by name.

When you hear or see something being done for the glory of God around here, please say thank you. You may never know (this side of eternity) how meaningful your words will be to someone who was just trying to be faithful. You can let Jesus speak through you to give appreciation to someone who needs it.

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Who are the saints? We are the saints. Any one of us who believes that Jesus' way of life is better than what the world has to offer; any of us who are committed to letting Jesus speak His words and do His works through us – we are the saints.

In just a moment we are going to read the names of our own saints who have departed from this earth and now live in glory, and after the reading of each name we will ring a bell in their honor. If you've never experienced this before, I pray that it touches you.

And as we are honoring those who have gone before us, I want for you to consider three questions –

***Who have been the saints in my life?
Who is serving around me that I can encourage still today? And
Who will be thanking God for me some day in church when a bell is rung in my
name?***